

Food & Agribusiness Management (FABM)

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C2-2-3, Block 2, CBD Perdana 3,
Persiaran Cyberpoint Timur,
Cyber 12, 63000 Cyberjaya,
Selangor.
Tel: +603-86879842

EDITORIAL STAFF:

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Technical Editor

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Technical Editor

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E-mail:

info@zibelinepub.com

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Contents

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2, 2023		
No	Editorial	Pages
1	PROFITABILITY AND RESOURCE USE EFFICIENCY OF CAPSICUM PRODUCTION IN CHITWAN DISTRICT, NEPAL	66-70
2	ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF TEA FARMING IN JHAPA DISTRICT, NEPAL.	71-76
3	EFFECT OF DIFFERENT SEED PRIMING METHODS ON RICE (<i>Oryza sativa</i> L.) CV SUKKHA DHAN-3	77-81
4	EFFECT OF DIFFERENT METHODS OF APPLYING INSECTICIDAL TREATMENTS FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF FALL ARMYWORM (<i>SPODOPTERA FRUGIPERDA</i>) IN DANG, NEPAL	82-86
5	EMPIRICAL ANALYSES OF FINANCIAL CREDIT ON SMALLHOLDER FARMER'S PRODUCTIVITY MODELLING FARMERS CREDIT ALLOCATION FROM RURAL BANKS IN SIERRA LEONE	87-95

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Editorial

Food and agribusiness have a massive economic, social, and environmental footprint—the \$5 trillion industry represents 10 percent of global consumer spending, 40 percent of employment, and 30 percent of greenhouse-gas emissions. Although sizable productivity improvements over the past 50 years have enabled an abundant food supply in many parts of the world, feeding the global population has reemerged as a critical issue. If current trends continue, by 2050, caloric demand will increase by 70 percent, and crop demand for human consumption and animal feed will increase by at least 100 percent. At the same time, more resource constraints will emerge: for example, 40 percent of water demand in 2030 is unlikely to be met. Already, more than 20 percent of arable land is degraded.¹ Moreover, food and energy production are competing, as corn and sugar are increasingly important for both. Such resource scarcity could lead to political unrest on a large scale if left unaddressed. Agricultural technologies that raise productivity even in difficult conditions and the addition of land for cultivation in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, and South America may ease the burden, but meeting the entire demand will require disruption of the current trend.

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Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM),
Bandar Baru Nilai, 71800 Nilai, Negeri
Sembilan