Marketing Strategy of Strawberries in Karo Regency

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ABSTRACT

Strawberries are one type of fruit that has a high economic value and has many benefits. Karo Regency is the centre for strawberry commodities in North Sumatra Province with the highest production. The high production of strawberries in Karo Regency is constrained by the marketing process. This study aims to identify internal and external factors that influence the marketing of strawberries in Karo Regency and analyze marketing patterns as well as determine the best marketing strategy for strawberries in Karo Regency. Determination of the sample of farmers by purposive sampling, the number of samples is 30 strawberry farmers who are experienced in this farming. The analytical method used is the SWOT analysis. The results of this study conclude that the strawberry marketing strategy in Karo Regency is in quadrant I am an aggressive strategy (1.09: 0.855) and the strategy that can be applied is the SO strategy, which utilizes experienced human resources in agro-tourism areas such as visitor education sessions on how to plant strawberries, adopting screen house technology in strawberry cultivation, maintaining the quality strawberries to keep prices high and attracting investors in the processing business.

Keywords: Strawberry, Marketing pattern, Marketing strategy, SWOT

BACKGROUND

The growth rate of strawberry farmers continues to increase from year to year, Indonesia's strawberry production in 2019 amounted to 7,501 tons and experienced a

production development of 11.32% (849 tons) in 2020, where the total production in 2020 was 8,350 tons (BPS, 2021). One of the producers of strawberries on the island of Sumatra for Indonesia is North Sumatra Province.

The production of strawberries in North Sumatra Province in 2019 was far above West Sumatra, Aceh, and Bengkulu, which was 102 tons. But in 2020 the production of strawberries in North Sumatra decreased to below the production of West Sumatra and Aceh. Although the development of strawberries in Indonesia continues to increase in line with the rapidly growing demand, the production and productivity of strawberries in strawberry-producing areas are still relatively low when compared to the potential productivity of strawberries.

Table 1 Development of Harvest Area, Production and Average Strawberry Yield in North Sumatra Province in 2017 – 2020

Year	Harvest Area (Ha)	Production (Kw)	Produktivities
			(Kw/Ha)
2017	37	2.965	80,135
2018	37	2.318	62,65
2019	25	1.021	40,84
2020	40	605	15,125
2020 Source : BPS SU		605	15

Strawberry harvested area in North Sumatra Province tends to increase but strawberry production and productivity have decreased. This arises due to marketing patterns that are not balanced with appropriate

cultivation techniques for strawberry plants.

Marketing is one of the most important factors for farming to continue to maintain business activities on an ongoing basis. Marketing in a business has a very

Table 2. Strawberry Production by Regency/City in North Sumatra Province in 2018 and 2019

No	Regency/City	Strawberry Production (Kw)			
		2018	2019	2020	
1	Karo	1903	933	605	
2	Mandailing Natal	250	25	-	
3	Tapanuli Selatan	165	63		

Source: BPS, 2020

In 2020, only Karo Regency in North Sumatra Province will continue to produce strawberries with a production yield of 605 quintals. This can be seen from the large number of rotten strawberries in the garden without being harvested by farmers, and the large stock in the local market of Kota Brastagi itself so prices are low. Strawberry marketing in Karo Regency is carried out in two ways: first, selling fresh fruit to consumers through marketing agents, and second, selling through self-picking agrotourism in farmer's strawberry gardens. The profit of farmers by the second marketing method, namely picking their strawberries (agrotourism) in the garden is much greater than the first marketing by selling fresh fruit to the market. The price of self-picked strawberries in the garden reaches IDR 100,000/kg, while if farmers use them to sell to collectors, the price is only around IDR 25,000/kg. So that in recent years, many strawberry farmers in Karo Regency have developed their own picking agrotourism business by expanding their strawberry fields as well as building various facilities to attract the attention of visitors on Saturday-Sunday and national holidays.

Picking agro-tourism itself hurts the cultivation of strawberry plants, namely, the production of strawberries subsequently decreases due to unskilled harvesting methods from consumers who come directly to the garden, reducing the planting period which should be 3-4 years shorter by 1-1.5

important role because it is the spearhead that deals directly with customers so that relationships with customers are established (Gitosudarmo, years. Even though there are negative impacts, for strawberry farmers in Karo Regency, it is covered by the benefits obtained by choosing this marketing. Currently, self-picking agro-tourism in Berastagi Regency is growing, strawberry harvest area has increased from the previous 25 hectares to 40 hectares in 2020.

In the last two years since the COVID-19 pandemic, according to strawberry collectors in Karo Regency, demand for strawberries from supermarkets in the city of Medan and its surroundings has decreased. Therefore, collectors limit the capacity of fresh strawberries from farmers by lowering the price to IDR 10,000 per kg which is usually IDR 25,000 per kg from farmers if the demanded quota is fulfilled by the collectors. Strawberries can not be stored in the refrigerator (refrigerator) because if the fruit is removed, it will quickly rot and wither. The demand for traders from outside North Sumatra has also decreased due to the entry of competing products from the island of Java, and the emergence of new competitors in Aceh who can supply the local needs of the city itself. Another obstacle to marketing strawberries is how to overcome the shelf life of strawberries which is quite short, only 2-3 days after harvesting, because the fruit does not have a protective shell so it is easily damaged and rots quickly. Management of post-harvest strawberries in Karo Regency is still traditional (90% fresh fruit) so time and market coverage are very limited.

Internal Factors

1. Human Resources (HR)

The quality of human resources is a serious obstacle to agricultural development. The HR factor is seen from the ability to cultivate, the ability

to absorb technology, and the market opportunities. The quality of agricultural human resources in the form of education and skill levels affects the sustainability of the farming carried out.

2. Natural Resources

Natural or environmental conditions that are suitable for cultivating farm products determine the sustainability of the farming. Not all areas are suitable for growing agricultural products. This is an internal strength of a farming business, if its natural resources can support the growth and development of one type of plant, this is a comparative advantage that distinguishes it from other regions. Strawberry fruit plants growing conditions are cold in areas highlands.

3. Production

Agricultural production carries a high risk. The quantity and quality of fruit to always be fresh and according to the market requires great effort. Fluctuating crop yields are a weakness of agribusiness, affecting product prices and farmer acceptance. Continuity of production is also a consideration for farmers to protect customers and markets.

4. Organization

The existence of the organization is really, especially as a medium of communication between farmers and between farmers and outsiders. It is the association needs to protesters in or detonate the extension, marketing, and information supporting the marketing of their farming activities.

External Factors

1. Government Policy

Government policy is a strategic factor in agricultural development, both in terms of expert assistance/extension, capital, technology, regional infrastructure and promotion to the private sector as investors.

2. Customers

Continuity of agricultural production must be guaranteed to maintain the market or customers. Maintaining good product quality and quantity is a priority for farmers for business continuity.

3. Competitors

The existing competitors for this agribusiness mean the entry of strawberries supplied from other regions to the Karo Regency market or to consumers who are markets for the same product. And also other seasonal fruits.

Conceptual Framework

Strawberries as a high-value commodity supported by natural conditions that are considered the potential for strawberry cultivation have encouraged the Karo Regency government to make strawberries a superior product. Research local strawberry marketing strategy was conducted by identifying internal and external factors related to strawberries. Internal factors are factors that influence actors from within the agribusiness system which is the strengths and weaknesses of the agribusiness system in this study, namely farmers and strawberry marketing agents. Internal factors can be in the form of natural resources, finance, operations/production, human resources, and organization. External factors can be in the form of opportunities and threats. External factors are factors outside the agribusiness system which are the opportunities and threats of the agribusiness system. External factors themselves are divided into macro and micro environments. Not all external environment was observed in this study, with limited cost and time, macro external factors observed were government and technology, while the micro external factors observed were customer and competitor market information.

By the internal and external strategic factors that have been obtained, then they are entered into the SWOT matrix. The SWOT matrix can clearly describe how the external opportunities and threats faced by the

company can be adjusted to its strengths and weaknesses it has. This SWOT matrix will produce several alternative strategies that can be applied in the marketing of strawberry agribusiness in Karo Regency.

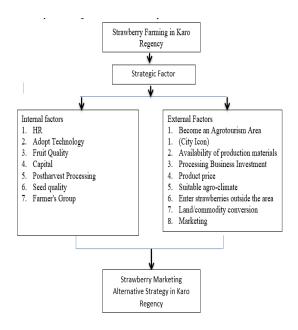


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

The research was conducted in Karo Regency because that area is the highest centre of strawberry producers in North Sumatra Province. The research was conducted descriptively with the survey method. As mentioned by Whitney (1960) in Nazir (2005) that the descriptive method is fact-finding with the right interpretation. The time of study was carried out from May 2021 to July 2021. The respondents in this strawberry farmers study were and strawberry collector's traders. The population of strawberry farmers in this research location was 296 people with a total sample of 30 farmers. Determination of the number of samples of farmers used in this study was purposive sampling, namely strawberry farmers with experience and capacity in this agribusiness. Sampling for traders, the technique used is snowball sampling, which is a sequential sampling method, starting from one respondent and then the respondent shows other respondents. The method of data collection was carried out by the survey method. Using a questionnaire that has been prepared by the researcher for this study. Secondary data were obtained from the Central Bureau of Statistics of Karo Regency and all literature related to this research.

Data analysis method using SWOT analysis. A SWOT analysis is carried out to analyze the internal factors of the entrepreneur in the industrial area so that it is known what factors are the strengths and weaknesses. In addition to analyzing internal factors, an analysis of external factors is also carried out to determine the opportunities and threats faced to increase competitiveness. Based on the results of the SWOT analysis, the selected policy alternatives for making strategic decisions are obtained.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Internal factors in the form of strengths and weaknesses in strawberry agribusiness are then analyzed through the IFAS table.

No	Internal Factors	IFAS Matrix		
		Qty	Rating	Value
	Strength			
1	Experiences HR	0,175	4	0,7
2	New Technology Adopted	0,150	3	0,45
3	Fruit Quality	0,175	4	0,7
	Sub Total	0,5		1,85
	Weakness			
1	Limited Capital	0,125	2	0,250
2	Minimal Postharvest Processing	0,135	2	0,270
3	Poor seed quality	0,130	1	0,130
4	Farmer's Group is not active	0,110	1	0,110
	Sub Total	0,5		0,760
	TOTAL	1,000		2,61

Based on the results of the IFAS analysis, the value is above the average of 2.5, which means that this strawberry agribusiness business can be profitable where the internal position is strong enough to have an above-average ability to take advantage of strengths and anticipate internal weaknesses (David, 2006). The biggest strengths of this

business are experienced human resources and good fruit quality with a score of 0.7 and the smallest strength is the adoption of new technology with a score of 0.45. Meanwhile, the internal factor that becomes the main weakness of this agribusiness business is post-harvest processing with a score of 0.270. If the post-harvest processing of strawberries has developed, the problem of crop yields that accumulate during the main harvest can be overcome, farmers do not lose much and help farmers to increase their income without having to reduce selling prices when production increases, then the agribusiness will be sustainable.

External factors in the form of opportunities and threats in strawberry agribusiness are then analyzed through the EFAS table

+	Table 4. EFAS	Calculation	Analysis St	trawberry Ka	b Karo

No	External Factors	EFAS Matrix		
	-	Qty	Rating	Value
	Opportunities			
1	Becoming an Agrotourism Area	0,1	3	0,3
2	Saprodi Availability	0,095	3	0,285
3	Suitable agro-climate	0,105	3	0,315
4	High product price	0,110	4	0,44
5	Processing Business Investment	0,09	4	0,36
	Sub Total	0,5		1,7
	Threats			
1	Marketing narrows	0,175	2	0,35
2	Enter the Strawberry outside the	0,170	2	0,34
	area			
3	Land/commodity conversion	0,155	1	0,155
	Sub Total	0,5		0,845
	TOTAL	1,000		2,545

The score of external factors of opportunities and threats in strawberry agribusiness in Karo Regency is 2,545. The subtotal score for opportunities is 1.7 and this is higher than the sub-total score for threats which is only 0.845. This shows that this strawberry agribusiness business can take advantage of existing opportunities to

face threats. The biggest opportunity that can be exploited is the high price of strawberry products with a score of 0.44 and the smallest opportunity is the availability of production facilities with a score of 0.285. Meanwhile, the biggest threat faced by strawberry marketing farming in the research area is narrowing marketing with a score of 0.35 and the smallest threat is the conversion of land or commodities to other agricultural commodities with a score of 0.155.

The Position of Strawberry Agribusiness in the SWOT Analysis Diagram

Based on the results of the analysis of the IFAS matrix, the total strength score (strength subtotal) is 1.98 and the total weakness score (weakness subtotal) is 0.9 and the difference between the two total scores between strengths and weaknesses is 1.08 (X) and on the EFAS matrix, the total opportunity score (opportunity subtotal) is 1.755 and the threat total score (threat subtotal) is 0.885 and the difference between the two total scores between opportunities and threats is 0.87 (Y). According to Rangkuti (1997), the two results of the summation analysis are included in the SWOT analysis diagram. Scores on internal factors become points on the X-axis, while scores on external factors become points on the Y-axis. The meeting between the X-axis points and Y-axis points describes the position of agribusiness and strawberry marketing strategies in Dolat Rayat District, Karo Regency.

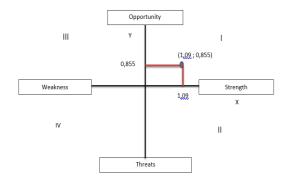


Figure 2. Strawberry Marketing Strategy SWOT Analysis Diagram Karo

The strategy that can be applied is the SO strategy, which is a strategy that supports all strengths to take advantage of existing opportunities. Aggressive strategies are applied, namely, strategies to strengthen the quality of human resources, adopt new technology and improve fruit quality. Based on Table 5.7, there are various alternative strawberry marketing strategies obtained internal factors (strengths and from weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats) in Dolat Rayat District, Karo Regency.

The SWOT matrix is used to formulate alternative strategies for developing a business. This method can clearly describe how external opportunities and threats are faced by stakeholders so that they can be adjusted to their strengths and weaknesses. This matrix produces four cells of possible alternative strategies, namely the S-O strategy, the W-O strategy, the W-T strategy, and the S-T strategy.

Table 5. Strawberry Marketing Strategy SWOT Matrix

IFAS	Strengths	Weakness
EFAS Opportunities	Experienced HR Adopt New Technology Good Fruit Quality Strategi S-O	1 Limited Capital 2 Minimal Postharvest Processing 3 Poor seed quality 4 Farmer's Group is not active Strategi W-O
Becoming an Agrotourism Area Suitable agroclimate Availability of production materials High Product Price Processing Business Investment	human resources in agro- tourism areas such as education on how to grow strawberries (S1, O1) 2. Adopt screen house technology in strawberry cultivation (S2, O3)	1. With government assistance, to become an agro-tourism area, increase credit access to financial institutions (W1,O1) 2. Adopt yield processing technology by seeking investor partners in processing business (W2,O5) 3. Looking for quality seeds from relevant agencies that are in accordance with the Brastagi agro-climate (W3,O2,O3)
<u>Threats</u>	Strategi S-T	Strategi W-T
1 Marketing narrows 2 Enter the Strawberry outside the area 3 Land/commodit y conversion	Provide training to farmers on how to market products through social media (S1, T1) Maintaining quality against competitors (S3, T2) Making crops intercropped with other seasonal crops to increase farmers' income (S2, T3)	Adopting high-quality seeds from the relevant agencies (W3, T2) Re-activating poktan, in order to increase bargaining power at the farmer level (W4, T1, T2, T3)

SO Strategy (Strength-Opportunities)

SO (Strength-Opportunities) strategy is a strategy that uses its strengths to take advantage of existing opportunities. The SO (Strength-Opportunities) strategy that can be applied to the strawberry marketing strategy in Dolat Rayat District, Karo Regency are:

- 1. Utilizing experienced human resources in agro-tourism areas such as visitor education sessions on how to grow strawberries (S1, O1).
- 2. Adopt screen house technology in strawberry cultivation (S2, O3).
- 3. Maintaining the quality of strawberries to keep prices high (S3, O4).
- 4. Attract investors in the processing business (O5).

W-O Strategy (Weakness-Opportunities)

W-O strategy aims to improve internal weaknesses by taking advantage of external opportunities. Strategies that can be used by business actors are:

- 1. With government assistance, to become an agro-tourism area, increasing credit access to financial institutions (W1, O1).
- 2. Adopt yield processing technology by seeking investor partners in the processing business (W2, O5).
- 3. Looking for quality seeds from the relevant agencies by the agro-climate of Berastagi City (W3, O2, O3).

ST Strategy (Strengths-Threats)

The ST strategy is a strategy that uses the internal strengths of strawberry farming to avoid or reduce external threats. Strategies that can be used by strawberry agro-tourism business actors are:

- 1. Provide training to farmers on how to market their products through social media (S1, T1).
- 2. Maintaining quality against competitors (S3, T2).
- 3. Making crops intercropped with other seasonal crops to increase farmers' income (S2, T3).
- 4. W-T (Weakness-Threats) Strategy

W-T strategy is a defensive tactic directed at reducing internal weaknesses and avoiding external threats.

- 1. Adopting high-quality seeds from the relevant agencies (W3, T2)
- 2. Re-activating farmer's group, to increase bargaining power at the farmer level (W4, T1, T2, T3).

CONCLUSION

- factors in strawberry 1. Internal agribusiness in Karo Regency are strength factors including experienced human resources, adoption of new and good fruit quality. technology Weakness factors include limited capital. minimal post-harvest processing, poor seed quality and an inactive farmer's group. External factors are opportunity factors including being an agro-tourism area, availability of production facilities, suitable agroclimate. high product prices processing business investment. Threat factors include narrow marketing, entry of strawberries outside the area and conversion land/commodity of functions.
- 2. Based the **SWOT** on analysis, agribusiness and strawberry marketing strategies in Karo Regency are in quadrant 1 is an aggressive strategy (1.09: 0.855) and the strategy that can be applied is the SO strategy, which utilizes experienced human resources in agrotourism areas such as visitor education sessions on how growing strawberries, adopting screen house technology in strawberry cultivation, maintaining the quality of strawberries to keep prices high and attracting investors in the processing business.

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