

Student Venture in Business Combat: From Ideation to Competition Realization

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Prologue

Norshakinah, Afif, and Aiman saw their goats breeding in abundance. Being a breeder is normal, but if they want to progress and succeed, they have to turn farming into a profitable business opportunity. Acknowledging the inherent limitations of traditional small-scale farming, the three of them set out to strategically transform their current goat-rearing operations into a strong and expandable business in order to capitalize on the growing market demand for products made from goats. Yet, they have lacked entrepreneurial skills, so they partnered with Ammar and Farah. Their expertise in business, food science, and agriculture created a balanced synergy, paving the way for an innovative student venture, Harvest Herd Farm (H2F). They foresaw an opportunity to integrate modern agricultural techniques, a strategic business model, and sustainable agriculture to create a value-added product line that would differentiate them from traditional farmers. They asked themselves if they were confident enough to grow the project into a successful business venture.

"If we are willing to sacrifice and be brave enough to take risks, why not?"

Under the dim glow of the café lights, five pairs of eyes met, each filled with ambition and the spark of possibility. Although they possessed the necessary abilities, know-how, and steadfast support from Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK), it was insufficient to ensure success. They understood the need for synergy in addition to expertise to make their vision a reality.

Pioneering Smart Agribusiness for a Sustainable Future

Sustainable food solutions had always been a belief of the groups. Their journey from a simple agricultural project to a full-fledged sustainable agricultural business was nothing short of remarkable. But the real test was just beginning. Food security and market trends had become major global challenges, motivating the group to establish a business entity in agribusiness.

Under the blistering sun, the UMK student huddled under a tree outside their lecture hall. Despite coming from different academic backgrounds, agriculture and entrepreneurship, they were united by one mission, to tackle food security challenges using agricultural technology and innovation. Shakinah, an agriculture major, expressed her concern, "The population is growing fast,

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KEYWORD

Entrepreneurship, Student Venture, Agribusiness, Sustainability, Business Idea

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but fewer people are interested in food production. What's worse is that a lot of food is wasted and fresh produce becomes too expensive". The tech enthusiast, Afif, gave a nod. "Inefficiency is another issue that farmers are facing," he continued. Leaning forward, Aiman's eyes were full of excitement. "What if we develop an intelligent and sustainable farming system for an agribusiness?" Ammar and Farah were resolute and took over the task of writing proposals and validating the business. They then spoke with local business owners, government organizations, successful farmers, and lecturers; the responses were encouraging. "They love the concept! But we need a business idea that could minimize costs and is easy to manage, since we're still students," Farah explained.

They started working on their Business Model Canvas. What is their main concept? Sophisticated chili fertigation techniques and a goat farming system driven by the Internet of Things. Leading the way in the development of a clever, useful self-cleaning goat barn, Aiman and Afif significantly changed the process by fusing innovative techniques, automation powered by the Internet of Things, and sustainable farming practices. They reduced their reliance on pricey bran by growing grass for goat feed. Under the knowledgeable supervision of university lecturers and other students, the goats, which originated from superior Dorper breeds in Australia, flourished.

In the meantime, Farah, a skilled chili farmer, used fertigation methods and careful attention to detail to guarantee premium-quality Kulai Chili plants. Farah dedicated herself to learning fertigation techniques and carefully balancing water and nutrients in order to maximize chili growth. By employing a drone to combat crop pests and the Y-trellis method to maximize plant spacing and sunshine exposure, she decreased the danger of disease and enhanced air circulation. This approach not only increased chili yield but also satisfied supplier requirements. With each harvest, her premium Kulai Chili plants—which were primarily large, vibrant, and healthy—grew stronger, securing high demand and proving her skill at precision farming.

Their marketing plans? It was all built on their strong business network. By using key contacts, they were able to secure cooperation from UMK, FAMA, the Department of Agriculture, and the Veterinary Department, ensuring a trustworthy supply chain. Their commitment to produce high-quality goats and their solid connections with livestock farmers and breed suppliers made it simple to sell goat breeds. Due to its exceptional quality, their premium Kulai chili—which was made utilizing precise fertigation techniques—became quite popular among suppliers eager to purchase it. Aspiration-driven, Ammar and Farah spent a lot of time brainstorming before launching their company. Following market research and feasibility studies, they produced a solid business plan that included their strategy, target market, and competitive advantage.

After days of relentless preparation, the team spent weeks polishing every aspect of their business plan. They worked tirelessly under the direction of their lecturers, sharpening their pitch, refining their slides, and obtaining authentic testimonies to support their arguments. They stood erect on the day of the competition, their practiced presentation projecting confidence. The judges were fascinated by their strategic planning, inventiveness, and vision. Cheers broke out when the results were revealed—they had won the business challenge, demonstrating that hard effort, collaboration, and knowledgeable mentoring could transform ideas into triumph.

“H2F: Empowering sustainable agriculture for a food-secure future,” Farah declared with confidence.

The judges found it fascinating. One grinned and leaned forward. He declared, "This is agriculture's future. “When H2F won RM15,000 and was proclaimed winner, the room exploded in cheers. Their triumph gave Universiti Malaysia Kelantan pride in addition to validating their concept.



Figure 1: Student's name and field of study



Figure 2: Goat Inspection Using Ultrasound Technology



Figure 3: Lecturers Share Expertise on Crop and Livestock Farming Methods



Figure 4: A Victory in SSM Business Combat 2024 Competition

Discussion the Business Idea

After winning cash prizes in the PROBEST competition, the team's persistence paid off, and they used the money to launch their student-led goat farming enterprise at UMK. From these humble beginnings, five motivated UMK students established H2F Student Venture. Their success persisted as they were armed with state-of-the-art methods and modern agricultural expertise.

Because of their commitment and skill, they were able to reach yet another milestone: they were honored to represent UMK in the prestigious SSM Business Combat 2024, ready to take on the challenge again. The group created their Business Model Canvas with great care.

Business Model Canvas				
Key Partners	Key Activities	Value Propositions	Customer Relationships	Customer Segments
Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK) (land and academic support) FAMA, Department of Agriculture, Veterinary Department (industry support) Local livestock farmers and breed suppliers Government agencies and research institutes	Semi-intensive Dorper sheep farming Y-fertigation chili cultivation Processing and selling goat and lamb meat Selling seeds, fertilizers, organic compost, and Effective Microbes (EM) Community training programs (fertigation, farm management) Marketing and sales (business competitions, networking)	Sustainable "closed-loop ecosystem" farming with minimal waste Premium-quality Dorper sheep & fresh Kulai chilies Cost-efficient farm management (20% savings on expenses) Meeting Malaysia’s high demand for local sheep and chilies Creating job and training opportunities for students & vulnerable groups	Direct sales to suppliers and wholesalers Community engagement through training programs Business partnerships with government agencies and universities	Agribusiness suppliers (livestock and crop distributors) Food industry players (restaurants, sambal producers) Government and agricultural agencies Small-scale farmers and entrepreneurs
	Key Resources		Channels	
	8-acre land at UMK Jeli Dorper sheep breed ("The Angus of Sheep World") Kulai chili plants Farming technology (Y-fertigation, semi-intensive livestock system) Expertise from students and lecturers Funding from business competitions and investments		Direct farm sales Government procurement programs Retailers and food industry players Social media and business competitions	
Cost Structure		Revenue Streams		
Farm infrastructure and maintenance Livestock feed and veterinary care Fertigation system setup and maintenance Marketing and promotional expenses Training programs and community initiatives		Sale of Dorper sheep and fresh chili Processed food products (sambal, marinated meat) Agricultural supplies (seeds, fertilizers, organic compost) Consultation and training services Government funding and business competition winnings		

Figure 5: H2F Business Model Canvas

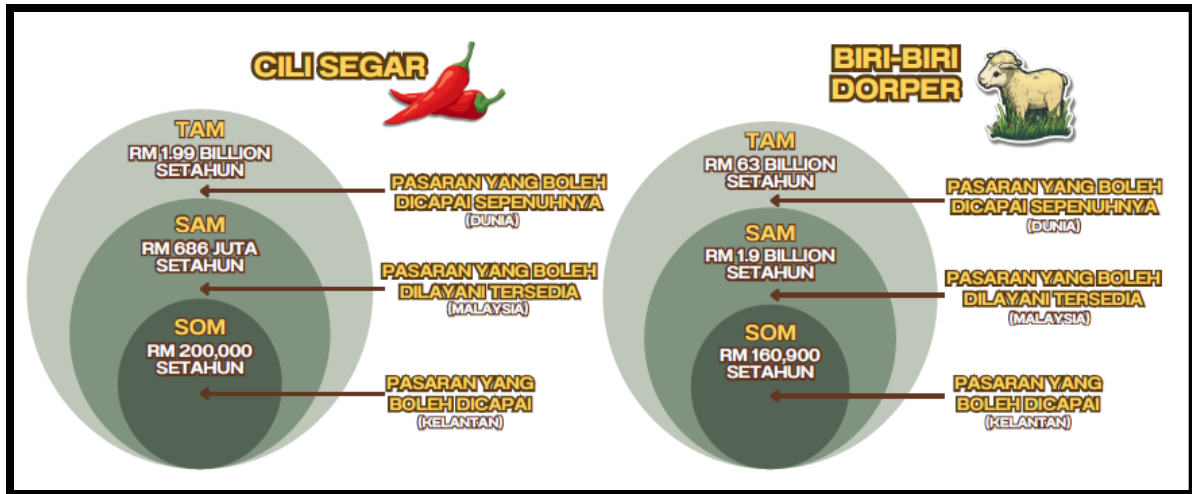


Figure 6: Market Opportunities for Goat Farming and Chili Crops



Figure 7: Fertigation and Livestock Operations

H2F's first significant accomplishment, winning the business competition, brought them national prominence in addition to a financial boost. This accomplishment made it possible to receive more funds and mentorship. The group recognized that in order to improve their market position, they needed to make a strategic change. They intend to shift their emphasis from fertigation and small-scale goat breeding to a more comprehensive agribusiness strategy that incorporates innovative farming practices and value-added food processing processes.

The challenges faced in the early path to establishing H2F was is insignificant. The customer acquisition, financial struggles, and operational difficulties was fully absorbed by their university positive environment in both managing farm logistics and supplies with unlimited experience and resources. Their commitment to revolutionizing agribusiness also has kept them moving forward.

Epilogue

The fields, where robust goat pens grew tall and lush chili fertigation flourished, were bathed in a golden light from the sun. As they stood there in the middle of their thriving agribusiness, they could not help but think about how, only a few months prior, they were five students with a notebook, an idea, and a vision. Back then, they believed that having confidence and a well-thought-out plan would be enough. However, reality—unexpected disappointments, sleepless nights, and the weight of responsibility—had tested them. Now there was a new barrier in the way. Graduation day was slowly drawing near. They would no longer be involved in the company they co-founded. Aiman looked at the landscape thoughtfully and uttered:

"We've built something bigger than just a student project. But if we're not here to run it, what happens next? Who takes over?"

After they graduated, the safety net will be disappeared. No mentors to help them along the way, no more university funding and others. They now had to decide between looking for steady employment or starting their own companies. Without the supports, would they make it? The question persisted, were they really prepared for the real world, where passion would not suffice? Awaiting was the future.