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Marko Ilpiyanto*, Nidyawati
Department of Economy, STIE Serelo Lahat, 6HQ4+6VQ, Bandar Agung, Lahat, South Sumatra, Indonesia, 31414.

*) *Correspondence email*: markoilpiyanto2020@gmail.com

Citronella Grass (*Cymbopogon nardus redle*) Marketing Strategy in Gumay Ulu District, Lahat Regency, South Sumatra

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify the marketing tactics that affect citronella grass fragrance sales in the Gumay Ulu District, Lahat Regency, South Sumatra. Interviews and questionnaires were both employed as the primary data gathering methods in this study. The results revealed that capital, labor, raw materials, and time of operation are the factors that have the most impact on the marketing of citronella grass manufacturing in Gumay Ulu District, Lahat Regency. Based on the results of a study, which showed that table t had a value of 1.143,06 while the analysis had a value of 26,00, it can be concluded that some of these elements have a favorable impact on the marketing of fragrant citronella grass in Gumay Ulu District, Lahat Regency. Entrepreneurs of citronella grass are advised to expand capital, enhance the caliber of personnel, and employ premium raw materials in order to improve the results of marketing.

Keywords: Marketing strategy, Workforce quality, Marketing factors, Citronella grass

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, agriculture is significant to the total national economy. This is shown by the vast population of individuals who reside in and work in the agriculture sector (Mubyarto, 2008; Rohansyah, 2015; Riantari, Widyantara, & Sarjana, 2015).

Indonesia's agricultural development has been carried out gradually and sustainably with the goal of increasing agricultural production as much as possible in order to increase farmers' incomes in order to achieve welfare, increasing food production, increasing incomes, and increasing the welfare of farmers Because of this, the government and the society must actively participate in promoting agriculture in order to raise the standard of living and welfare of all Indonesians (Gaja, 2016; Hamid, 2018; Andoko, 2019).

One of the industries that supports the Indonesian economy grow is the agricultural sector. About 100 million people, or almost half of Indonesia's population, work in the agricultural sector, which is still a place for tiny communities. These farmers are Indonesia's food and national economic heroes (Arsil, Li, & Bruwer, 2014; Aprini, 2021).

The Indonesian population derives one of its livelihoods from a variety of agricultural sectors, and the plantation subsector has very promising future prospects for the nation's foreign exchange. The availability of existing and potential land goes along with this Cassel & Vargas (2016) citronella grass essential oil is one of the plantation products that are created and exported. One of the plantation products that can yield oil is citronella grass (*Cymbopogon nardus redle*). Citronella grass can also be utilized as a starting point for the production of essential oils and as a product for export (Rusli, 2000; Bimantio & Wardoyo, 2020)

This citronella grass plant has begun to be developed cultivated by farmers in South Sumatra, particularly in Lahat Regency. One of the regions that has developed this citronella grass plant is in Gumay Ulu District, Lahat Regency. Citronella grass producers do, however, struggle with the sourcing of raw materials, processing after harvest, and marketing. If a farmer employs local types for the raw ingredients, the oil's quality will not exceed export requirements. Only a maximum of 27% citronella grass and a maximum of 82 % total geraniol are present in high-quality local citronella oil. Citronella grass at least 35 percent and total geraniol at least 85 percent are the minimum requirements for Indonesian citronella grass to meet export quality standards.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research of the development of alternative strategies, which are the priorities to be implemented, is the main goal of this research's qualitative methodology. Structured communication contacts, such as in-depth interviews, and observations are used in qualitative investigations. Between December 2021 and March 2022, this study was done. The study was carried out in Gumay Ulu District, Lahat Regency, in accordance with the formulation of the problem and the goal of the study.

Population and Sampling Methods

Informants were used as the study's sample. The selection of informants is done through direct appointment, taking into account those with a history of being criminals or farmers of citronella grass who are in charge of and are familiar with the data required for this study.

Data for this study will be gathered from two sources: primary data collected directly from the research site and secondary data gathered through secondary research and library material. These secondary data are supporting information for the original data, which includes books, scholarly publications, and research journals.

Data collection Methods

In this study, interviews, observations, documentation, and literature reviews were employed as data collection methods. based on official and unauthorized sources of information. Sources are published by the institution as official ones. Unofficial sources are those published by those not authorized to speak on behalf of the organization. The minutes from meetings, accountability reports, correspondence, and diary entries can all be found in this page. The literature review refers to supporting information from diverse publications, including books, research papers, and other scholarly works.

Data Analysis Method

In this study, the data analysis method employs a qualitative descriptive approach using field research methodologies, where internal elements (strengths and

weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats) are explained that would affect the development of citronella grass plants in the area. Research that is descriptive examines social issues, societal norms, and specific scenarios, such as interpersonal interactions, daily activities, attitudes, and worldviews, as well as lingering processes and phenomena' consequences. Instead of employing data that can be statistically analyzed, descriptive research typically describes behavior through observations, interviews, and case studies. Next, perform a SWOT analysis to determine the second objective, which is the marketing opportunities for citronella grass.

Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of the product or service held assists with the SWOT analysis, which is used as a strategy in dealing with opportunities and threats to a product or service. (Gurel, 2017) The stages of activity include identifying internal and external factors, creating surveys, and data analysis (Rangkuti, 2017). Gumay Ulu District, Lahat Regency's marketing strategy is studied using a SWOT analysis. SWOT analysis (Rangkuti, 2017; Istiqomah & Andriyanto, 2017).

Formulating internal and external elements while being aware of the issues being investigated allows for the identification of internal and external factors. The internal strategy factor matrix and the outward strategy factor matrix were the two models that the researchers utilized at this point (Rangkuti, 1997; Andriyanto & Nurjanah, 2015).

Furthermore, the analysis of the IFAS Matrix (*Internal Factor Analysis Summary*) is performed as a strategy formulation tool that highlights and assesses the key advantages and disadvantages of the business's functional areas and serves as a foundation for determining and assessing the connections between these areas (David & David, 2015). The IFAS matrix can be created using the management of the internal environment's conclusion phases.

The EFAS Matrix Analysis (*External Factor Analysis Summary*) is a tool used to examine concerns pertaining to economic, social, cultural, demographic, environmental, political, legal, technological, and informational issues associated to competition in the industrial market.

Matrix Analysis I-E (*Internal-External*) combines the IFAS and EFAS matrices to produce an IE matrix with nine cell types that represent the combined total weighted values of the IFAS and EFAS matrices. If the company's strategy is chosen based on its circumstances and location, it will be more effective. The IE Matrix is a method of mapping the generated IFAS and EFAS Matrices' overall score (Rangkuti, 2017; Abdi, Ashouri, Jamalpour, & Sandoosi, 2013; Basset, Mohamed, Sangaiah, & Jain, 2018; Buyukozkan & Ilıcak, 2019).

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Overview of Gumay Ulu District

Gumay Ulu is positioned at 40 south latitude and 103,150 east longitude, or 030 59' 08" to 040 15' 45" south latitude. Additionally, there is a 63,366 Ha area between 10^{30} 07' 00" and 1030 27' 26" East Longitude (633.66 Km 2). Aproximate distances from the Gumay Ulu District on Palembang City and subdistrict's capital Lahat Regency, are 298 km and 60 km, respectively. Hilly and 400–3,400 feet above sea level, Lahat Regency is located there (asl).

The slope of the topography ranges from 0 to 15 degrees, with a maximum of 45 degrees. Administratively, this region is divided into districts that border the Pagar Alam City region. Lahat Regency is famous for its main plantation crop production, namely coffee plants, and now there are citronella grass plants in addition to coffee because the majority of the residents or people in Gumay Ulu are looking for a living. There are many people who have improved their welfare as a result of growing this citronella grass plant, according to citronella grass farmers.

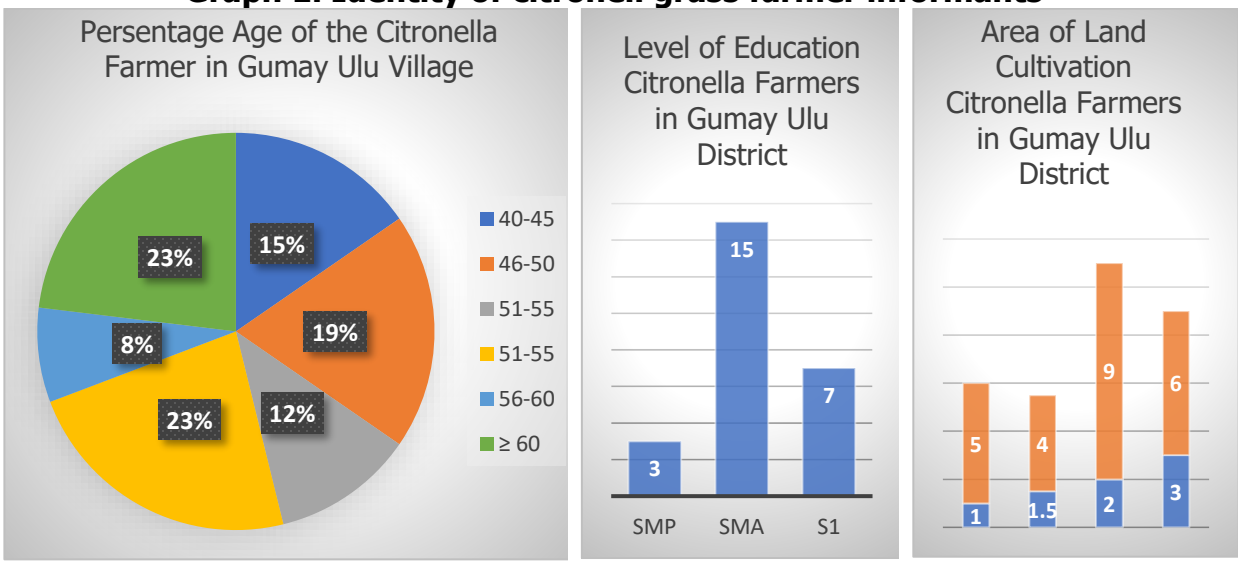
This is due to the fact that this variety of coffee is simpler to grow, better suited for highland climates, disease-resistant, and has higher demand than arabica coffee (AEKI, 2016).

Informant Identity

A description of the situation or circumstances as well as the person's position is included in the identity of this informant. Informants are particularly beneficial for smooth

research and make it simpler for researchers to find the information they require. The 25 citronella grass farmers and 3 citronella grass traders who participated in this study served as the informants. Information was gleaned from the informant about data on internal and external factors, weighting of the IFE and EFE matrices, and weighting on a priority scale to establish the priorities of the numerous alternative strategies developed. The graph below reveals the person who served as the farmer's informant for citronella grass:

Graph 1. Identity of citronell grass farmer informants



The three citronella grass merchant informants, two of whom have junior high school diplomas and one of whom has a high school diploma, are all over 60 years old. two responses with over five years of trading experience and one with less than five years.

The strategy carried out in the marketing process of citronella grass, Lahat Regency, South Sumatra Province

Identification of Internal and External Factors

A SWOT analysis (*Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threatment*) was utilized to address the issue pertaining to the marketing strategy of the citronella grass farmers in Gumay Ulu Village. Rangkuti (2000) claims that internal and external strategy analysis make up SWOT analysis.

Internal Factor Analysis. analysis of internal factors identifies factors in the form of the enterprise's strengths and shortcomings. The following are the strengths and weaknesses of farmers and merchants of citronella grass: (A). Internal qualities that promote corporate growth are examples of strengths. Farmers benefit from having: (1). Citronella grass products are expensive. (2). In Gumay Ulu, the basic ingredient for making citronella oil is the citronella grass product. (3). Because the citronella grass plant is grown at an elevation of 1,000–1,400 meters above sea level, citronella grass farmers in Gumay Ulu has the benefit of a smell in the form of a distinctive "*strong bitter*" fragrance. (4) Gumay Ulu produces a lot of citronella grass, particularly from farmers who have engaged in breeding. In order to help citronella grass growers, production can reach 3–4 tons per hectare in 2020. (5). The labor force, which is readily available, also originates from Gumay Ulu's neighboring settlements. This not only makes it simpler for farmers to hire workers, but it also creates job chances for locals. There are 2 components of labor, namely: (a) Labor for the production of fragrant citronella grass products Many farmers are involved in the labor-intensive process of growing fragrant citronella grass products, and additional family members and outside laborers are also engaged. (b) Post-harvest labor.

(B). Internal weaknesses that could have an impact on how business is conducted are listed among the weaknesses: (1). There are numerous marketing companies involved, reducing the merchant's profit. Each distributor of coffee goods must pay fees as a result of the transit of goods from one location to another. (2) Farmers' post-harvest knowledge and abilities are lacking because they practice unusual post-harvest practices like cutting the rainbow, which involves chopping all the leaves at once starting with green, yellow, and green. up till the wounds on the concrete road and the ground. Farmers have not yet mastered the post-harvest process, so traders instinctively purchase fragrant citronella grass commodities that occasionally still have easy leaves. (3) Low trader profits, particularly now that the Covid-19 outbreak has led to the availability of citronella grass, whose primary ingredient is citronella grass leaves, are low due to the low purchasing power of the populace. (4). Citronella grass farmers struggle

to learn about market conditions, particularly in regards to the price at which citronella grass is sold, due to a lack of technological knowledge available to them. (5). In the marketing of citronella grass, there is currently no network of interagency cooperation, particularly between farmers and traders.

External Factor Analysis. The process of analyzing external factors involves interpreting those factors as opportunities and risks. Opportunities that farmers or traders might take advantage of to grow their businesses are among these elements. There are several businesses that require citronella grass, and the citronella grass plant is one of the plantation crops that is frequently used as a raw material for the citronella grass industry. These are the chances that citronella grass farmers and traders can take advantage of. Second, citronella oil is currently in demand because it is already recognized as a natural medicine free of chemicals. Third, the number of nations exporting citronella oil is variable, and this includes the Netherlands each year. Fourth, public assistance Government regulations are generally generic in nature and do not directly address citronella oil at this time.

These policies include all plantation products and include the KKPA credit policy, regional and infrastructural development regulations, and general institutional development regulations such the formation of farmer groups and other guidance. Fifth, easy access to transportation plays a crucial part in marketing operations because it enables people to satisfy their daily needs, transfer commodities or agricultural products, and make it easier for them to use public transportation to get from where they are to where they are going. Farmers of citronella already have access to decent roads and trucks for moving fragrant citronella grass produce.

Threats are outside elements that may make citronella marketing difficult. First, the production of citronella from other districts posed a challenge to growers and traders of the plant. The cost of buying citronella oil from farmers to collectors decreases as more citronella oil is produced in other districts. Other districts in issue produce citronella grass in the Linggau, Empat Lawang, and Muara Enim Regencies. Second, the end product lacks competitiveness. The fact that citronella grass quality is poor puts Gumay Ulu Lahat,

a citronella grass grower and trader, in danger because if the herb's quality deteriorates or is poor, the herb's price will drop. On the other hand, if the citronella grass quality is high, the price will also go up. Citronella grass quality is influenced by the oil content and leaf form, however Gumay Ulu Lahat still has relatively primitive post-harvest technologies.

Third, climate and weather issues. In the medium and long term, climate change poses a threat to citronella grass producers in the form of excessively high temperatures, droughts, and rainfall in citronella grass production areas. Citronella grass production may be negatively impacted by this environment and weather, particularly during the harvest. Fourth, the cost of citronella grass offered by rival companies. It's only that competitors offer citronella grass at a lower price, and the quality of citronella grass from competitors is likewise good. There isn't much of a price difference between the scent of citronella grass in Gumay Ulu Lahat and in other districts. This particular competitor is from Muara Enim Regency. Fifth, uncertain market conditions are a threat to citronella oil owing to the current Covid-19 epidemic, which forces the industry to shut down and hinders the selling of citronella grass products, potentially resulting in losses for producers and merchants of citronella grass.

IFAS and EFAS Analysis

The strengths and weaknesses of the citronella grass farmers in Gumay Ulu Village, Lahat, make up the *Internal Factor Analysis Summary* (IFAS), an internal factor. The next stage is to give weights to each of these internal aspects after identifying the citronella farmer's advantages and disadvantages. The table below displays the IFAS matrix:

Table 1. IFAS (*Internal Factor Analysis Summary*)

Internal Factor Matrixs				
No	Strength	Rating	Weight	Value
1.	Commodity prices of citronella grass are high	2	0,08	0,16
2.	As factory raw material	4	0,16	0,64
3.	Unique benefits for relieving itching	3	0,12	0,36
4.	High production of citronella grass oil	3	0,12	0,36
5.	The availability of labor	4	0,16	0,64
	Sub-total	**16**	**0,60**	**2,16**

	Weakness			
1.	Multiple marketing channels	2	0,08	0,16
2.	Low post-harvest knowledge and skills of farmers	2	0,08	0,16
3.	Low merchant profit	2	0,08	0,16
4.	Insufficient information technology	2	0,08	0,16
5.	There is no cooperation network between institutions	3	0,12	0,36
	Sub-total	**11**	**0,40**	**0,84**
	Total	**27**	**1,00**	**3,00**

Source: primary data, 2022 (processed data)

According to the findings of the *Internal Factor Analysis Summary* (IFAS) in Table 4.1, the strength component (Strengths) is 2.16 and the weakness factor (Weaknesses) is 0.84. This number indicates that, in terms of marketing commodities, coffee has a higher strength of 72 percent compared to weakness of 28 percent and achieved the value of the horizontal axis (X), that is, the value of the strength factor in weight times the rating of 2.04 or 72 percent.

External Factor Analysis Summary (EFAS)

Farmers of citronella grass in Gumay Ulu Village, Lahat, own an external factor called the External Factor Analysis Summary (EFAS), which consists of opportunities and risks. The following table displays the EFAS matrix:

Table 2. EFAS (*External Factor Analysis Summary*)

Faktor External Factor Matrixs				
No	Opportunity	Rating	Weight	Value
1.	Many factories require citronella grass as a commodity	3	0,13	0,39
2.	The demand for citronella grass on Gumay Ulu District is a lot because it is already famous	3	0,13	0,39
3.	The number of exporting countries for citronella grass oil	2	0,09	0,18
4.	Government support	3	0,13	0,39
5.	Adequate transportation access	3	0,13	0,39
	Sub-total	**14**	**0,60**	**2,16**
	Threat			
1.	Local citronella grass oil production is still of low quality	3	0,13	0,39
2.	Have no competitiveness	2	0,09	0,18
3.	Climatic and weather factors	3	0,13	0,39
4.	The price of citronella grass oil from competitors	2	0,09	0,18
5.	Unstable market conditions	2	0,09	0,18
	Sub-total	**12**	**0,53**	**1,32**
	Total	**26**	**1,14**	**3,06**

Source: primary data, 2022 (processed data)

According to the findings of the *External Factor Analysis Summary* (EFAS) in Table 4.2, the opportunity component (Opportunity) has a value of 1.74, whereas the threat factor (Threat) has a value of 1.32. According to this value, commodity marketing has a higher chance of 56.86 percent compared to the threat of 43.14 percent and the obtained vertical axis value (Y), which is the value of the opportunity factor in the weight times the rating of 1.74 or 56.86 percent.

The results of calculating the IFAS (*Internal Strategic Factor Analysis Summary*) and EFAS (*External Strategic Factor Analysis Summary*) matrices, which result in a horizontal axis value (X) of 2.16 for the strength factor (Strengths) and a vertical axis value (Y) of 1.74 for the opportunity factor.

Internal External Matrix

The IE matrix (*external internal*) is a portfolio matrix that places the business in a nine-cell view. The *Internal-External Matrix* (IE Matrix) is a strategy formulation tool used in the matching stage that focuses on merging the weighted results of the IFE matrix and the EFE matrix to produce logical alternate strategies. The EFE matrix and the IFE matrix are used to calculate the company's position in the IE matrix. The X axis displays the total score for the IFE Matrix, while the Y axis displays the total score for the EFE Matrix. The following table shows IE:

Table.4.1. Internal External (IE) Matrix

		Total Weighted Average		
		Strong 3,00-4,00	Medium 2,00-2,99	Weak 1,00-1,99
Total Weighted Average EFE	High 3,00-4,00	**I** **Growth and development**	II Growth and development	III Wake and keep
	Medium 2,00-2,99	IV Growth and development	V Wake and keep	VI Achieved
	Low 1,00-1,99	VII Wake and keep	VIII Divest	IX Divest

Source: primary data, 2022 (processed data)

According to Figure 4.1 of the IE Matrix presented above, the marketing of citronella grass goods is currently in quadrant I, which indicates that it is expanding and

developing. Production, quality, collaboration with marketing agencies, and information technology all need to be created and grown in order to effectively sell citronella grass.

SWOT Analysis

The design of a marketing plan based on a SWOT matrix is the next step, and it is done using information from informant interviews, fieldwork with citronella grass producers in Gumay Ulu District, Lahat Regency and documentation. Four different strategies are applied and discovered through the research of internal and external aspects in a marketing plan based on the SWOT matrix. In Figure 2 below, you can see the SWOT matrix:

Figure 2. S-W-O-T Analysis

Internal / **External**	**Strength (S)** 1. Commodity prices of citronella grass are high 2. As factory raw material 3. Unique benefits for relieving itching 4. High production of citronella grass oil 5. The availability of labor	**Weakness (W)** 1. Multiple marketing channels 2. Low post-harvest knowledge and skills of farmers 3. Low merchant profit 4. Insufficient information technology 5. There is no cooperation network between institutions
Opportunity (O) 1. Many factories require citronella grass as a commodity 2. The demand for citronella grass on Gumay Ulu District is a lot because it is already famous 3. The number of exporting countries for citronella grass oil 4. Government support 5. Adequate transportation access	Strategy (S-O) 1. Improved quality of citronella grass 2. Increased production of citronella grass to meet market demand 3. Cooperation with marketing agencies	Strategy (W-O) 1. Supporting institutions for marketing such as cooperatives 2. Information improvement training 3. The need for market information
Threat (T) 1. Local citronella grass oil production is still of low quality 2. Have no competitiveness 3. Climatic and weather factors 4. The price of citronella grass oil from competitors 5. Unstable market conditions	Strategy (S-T) 1. Improving knowledge and skills of citronella grass farmers post-harvest (2,1) 2. Adaptation to climate and weather changes (3,3) 3. There is a need for government intervention to assist marketing by providing information and market access (4,5)	Strategy (W-T) 1. The need for farmers to be given training to increase post-harvest knowledge and skills (2,2) 2. The need for a tool for determining the oil content (3,3) 3. Strengthening cooperation between farmers and traders in the marketing of citronella grass (1,1)

Source: primary data, 2022 (processed data)

Discussions

The following are some alternative methods based on the SWOT analysis matrix above:

S-O Strategy. Using strength to take advantage of opportunities is this strategy. SO strategies consist:

(1). To remain competitive, citronella grass quality needs to be improved. Enhancing the quality of citronella grass so that it can compete in the market requires timely harvesting, drying, and storage of citronella grass leaves in a covered area rather than cutting them in the ground or on the street.

(2). Increasing citronella grass production to keep up with demand. Citronella grass producers have been doing pruning to improve production of the aroma so that citronella grass can satisfy market demand. Additionally, through being aware of and comprehending sound agricultural practices, including ploughing, planting, fertilizing, upkeep, breeding, breeding, harvesting, and post-harvest procedures.

(3) Cooperation with marketing agencies. By fostering cooperation, effective communication, and shared obligations between farmers and other marketing institutions, this cooperation is one of the efforts that may be made to carry out marketing.

S-T strategy. To deal with threats, this strategy employs force.

(1). Improving postharvest processing is one element of ST's strategy. Maintaining the quality of the produced citronella grass seeds is the goal of postharvest processing improvements for citronella grass commodities. Cutting and storage are both involved in the processing of citronella grass. It can be cut by performing the cutting procedure promptly and not picking it too soon. Following that, the leaves go through a purification process that involves distillation to obtain a high oil content.

(2) There must be adaptation to weather and climate change, as well as mitigation (prevention). The term "*climate change*" refers to a rise in the average temperature of the earth's surface that affects other climatic factors, such as rising sea water

temperatures, increased air evaporation, altered rainfall patterns, and altered air pressure, all of which affect the world's climate patterns.

(3) The need for government intervention to support the marketing of citronella grass by offering knowledge and market access. By providing market data and ensuring market access, the government also assists in the marketing of citronella grass.

W-O Strategy. This strategy seeks to reduce weaknesses in order to seize opportunities. The W-O's plan entails:

(1) There needs to be a support structure, like cooperatives, for the selling of citronella grass. In order for farmers to compete in carrying out agricultural activities and to increase the welfare of citronella grass farmers, supporting institutions for the marketing process are required, namely by establishing rural economic institutions like cooperatives.

(2) Improvements in information technology. This attempt to boost production is made possible by the development of information technology. As a result, plants and the quality of citronella grass will be able to compete on a large scale and gain market share.

(3) The need for market information. Market information can be obtained by identifying the relevant market, analyzing primary demand and selective demand, determining market segments, analyzing competition, and identifying potential targets. Market information is needed to determine the development of the market situation and conditions.

W-T Strategy. This W-T strategy seeks to reduce weaknesses while addressing risks. The strategy of WT involves:

(1). Following the harvest of the citronella grass, farmers of the plant must undergo training to advance their knowledge and abilities.

(2). To ensure that the production of citronella grass is competitive in the market and of high quality.

(3) The need for a device to gauge citronella grass content. A tool is required to assess the quality of the citronella grass in order to ensure that it is safe to store for an extended period of time and is not readily damaged.

(4) Encourage stronger collaboration between citronella grass farmers and factories in the marketing of citronella grass to aid in the smooth marketing of citronella grass products and make it simpler for marketers to gather market information from other traders and factories that require additional citronella grass raw materials.

CONCLUSION

According to the results and analysis presented above, it is clear that the marketing strategy employed was to increase the quality of Gumay Ulu District, Lahat Regency, citronella grass in order to maintain market competitiveness. Need to work with marketing firms. Additionally, more market data ought to be available. The existence of organizations that provide marketing support, such cooperatives, comes next. Additionally, government assistance is available to increase market access.

According to the results of this study's S-W-O-T analysis, it is necessary to increase or improve the quality of citronella grass by offering instruments for calculating citronella grass yield as well as cutting and refining for quality citronella grass oil. By offering training and counseling to citronella grass farmers, there is also a development in the skills of the farmers. To enter the era of the free market, there must first be training in online marketing and information technology.

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