

DIAGNOSTIC STUDY OF CHILD LABOUR IN RURAL AREAS

(WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON TOBACCO FARMING)

// EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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INTRODUCTION

According to ILO, globally there are at least 168 million children in child labour, 85 million of which are involved in hazardous work. Child labour has an impact on long-term and short-term physiological and psychological well-being. The highest incidence of child labour is in the agricultural sector with the involvement of 98 million children (59% of all child labourers worldwide). Child labour is a complex issue and is influenced by many factors, including poverty. Four million children aged 5–17 are identified as child labourers in Indonesia and 58% of child labourers aged 7–14 work in agriculture. Child labour in tobacco growing is of particular concern due to exposure to biohazards such as pesticides and nicotine in tobacco leaves.

ILO Convention No. 138 and 182 set the international legal standards for the minimum age of employment and the Worst Forms of Child Labour. In the tobacco sector, the ECLT Foundation was established to commission programmes to eradicate child labour in tobacco growing communities. Multinational companies also implemented a Sustainable Tobacco Production programme which, among other things, works towards ensuring that tobacco growing is free of child labour. Indonesia has implemented national regulations and a time restricted program to eliminate the worst forms of child labour by 2022 through capacity building and more strict inspection of labour in workplaces. Little is known about the situation of children in tobacco growing communities, which makes it hard to create targeted intervention programs.

To understand the situation of child labour in tobacco growing, the root causes of child labour in tobacco growing, and potential solutions to address this issue, the ECLT Foundation requested that The SMERU Research Institute conduct a diagnostic study on child labour in rural areas, with an emphasis on tobacco growing. This study used two definitions of child labour—from the ILO as well as National Labour Law No. 13 of 2003. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative approach utilised survey method, while the qualitative data collection was conducted using in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, group discussions, and photo-elicitation interviews. The sample area was limited to five villages in East Lombok (West Nusa Tenggara Province) and five villages in Jember (East Java Province). These areas were selected because they are among the main producers of tobacco in Indonesia, hence were purposively chosen and were selected through consultation meetings with the stakeholders. The study interviewed 100 randomly chosen households from each village. The exploratory study was conducted in August 2016, the survey was conducted in October 2016 and the qualitative field work was conducted around December 2016–January 2017.

MAIN FINDINGS

CHILD LABOUR IN GENERAL

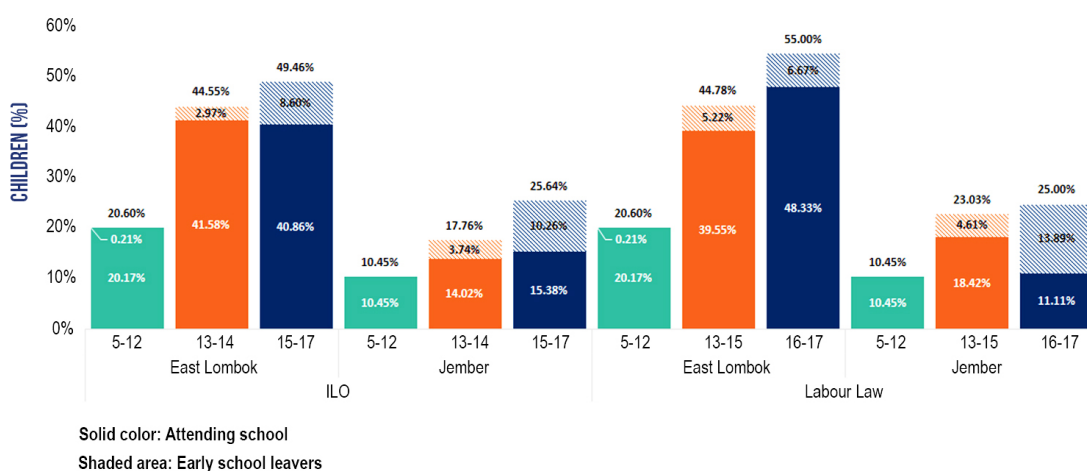
Parents and the community are not aware of the difference between working children and child labour. The generally minimum knowledge and awareness of the concept of child labour is reflected in the high prevalence of child labour in both subdistricts, with 14.31% in Jember and 28.33% in East Lombok (ILO definition).

Concern around the issue of child labour is enhanced by the general lack of understanding of the variety of hazardous working conditions for children. The majority of working children in this study are classified as child labourers, mainly due to the hazardous nature of their work. In East Lombok, from 187 child labourers there are 167 children who were exposed to hazardous work or 25.30% of the total population of children in the villages in East Lombok. Meanwhile, in Jember 80 children out of 95 child labourers were exposed to hazardous work, or 12.05% of the total child population in the villages in Jember.

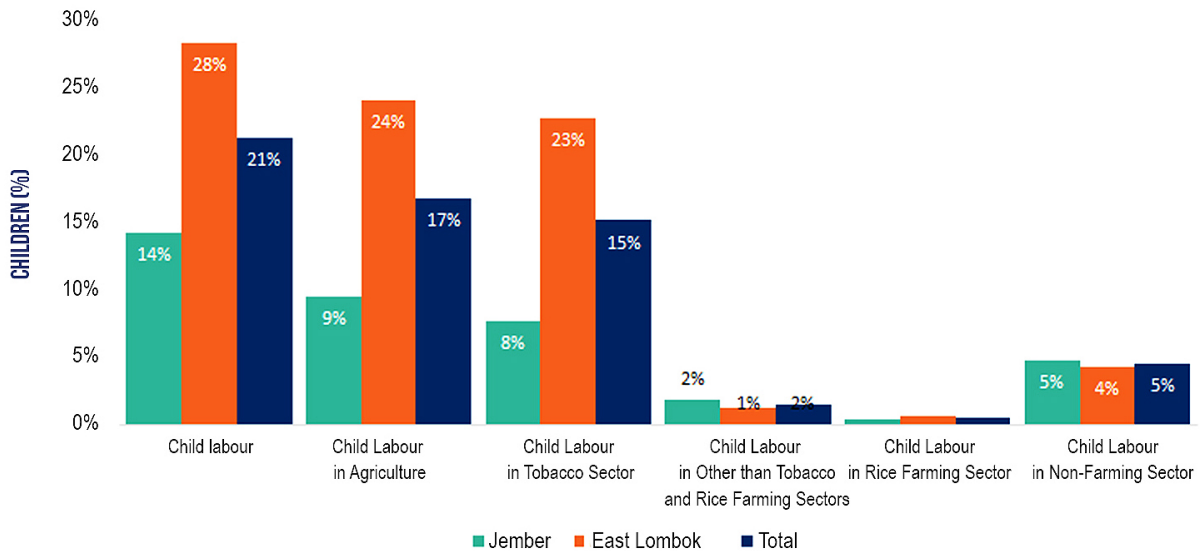
The highest prevalence of child labour was found in the age group of 15–17 (ILO definition) with 49.46% in East Lombok and 25.64% in Jember, and in the age group of 16–17 (Labour Law definition) with 55% in East Lombok and 25% in Jember. These findings are in line with the qualitative study, which found a high tendency for adult migration in the study villages, which then pushes the labour demand towards children. Children in these age groups are often not considered to be children by the community and are assigned with heavier tasks, such as transporting bundles of tobacco leaves from the field to the furnace.

The majority of child labourers are involved in the agriculture sector, at 66.32% in Jember and 85.03% in East Lombok. Meanwhile the rest are dispersed amongst non-agriculture sectors (wholesale, construction, services, etc.); 33.68% in Jember and 14.97% in East Lombok. As tobacco is the predominant cash crop in the sampled villages, the highest prevalence of child labour among agricultural commodities is in tobacco growing.

PREVALENCE OF CHILD LABOUR BY AGE GROUP AND EDUCATION



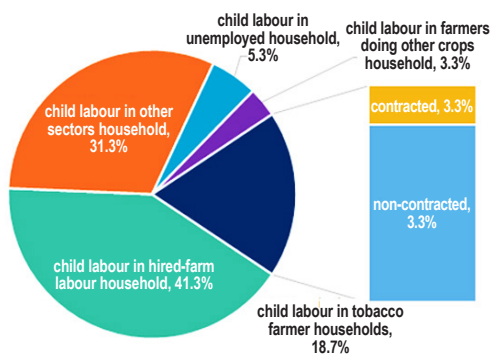
PREVALENCE OF CHILD LABOUR BY WORKING SECTOR



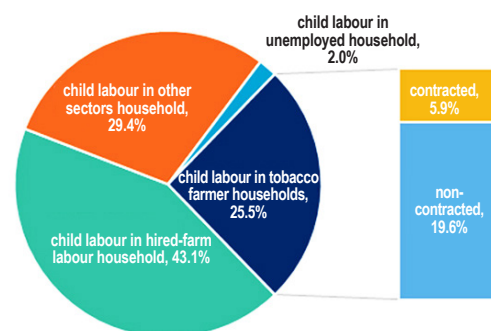
CHILD LABOUR IN TOBACCO GROWING

The majority of child labourers live in farm labour households, at **43.14% in Jember** and **41.3% in East Lombok**. However, among the tobacco farming households the status of farmers as contract farmers or non-contract farmers, and whether the farmers own land or lease land does not decrease the probability of a child being a child labourer. Within the tobacco farming household population, only a small percentage are contract farmers—3.3% in East Lombok and 5.88% in Jember.

EAST LOMBOK



JEMBER

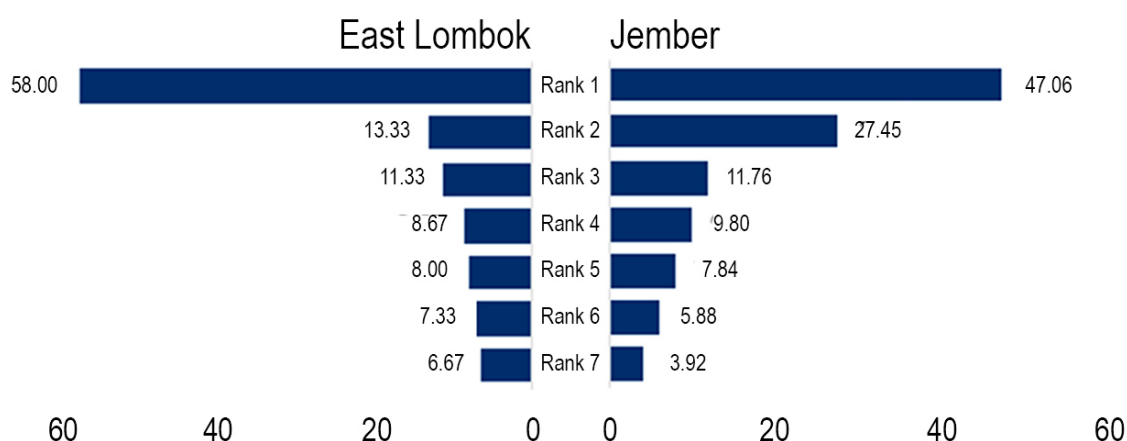


Several variables which are consistent significant predictors for children being involved in tobacco growing are age, household head employment, and proportion of child labourers per subvillage. Older children are more likely to be involved in tobacco work. In addition, parents' employment as hired-farm labourers increases the probability of children working in tobacco growing by 28%. The study also finds that the high proportion of child labour in tobacco per subvillage significantly increases the probability of children working in tobacco farming by 33%.

The majority of children in the study villages are involved in post-harvesting tasks, specifically in tying/mengelantang (58% of all tobacco child labourers in East Lombok) and sticking/nyujen (47% of all tobacco child labourers in Jember). A small proportion of child labourers are also involved in other stages of the process, such as curing.

Older and male children have a higher median number of working hours compared to younger and female children. For those aged 13–14, the median number of working hours is 3–6 hours per week, while among those age 15–17, especially male children, the median number of working hours reached up to 12 hours per week. There were also children whose working hours are beyond what is permitted for their age limit. Of all child labourers aged 13–14 years old, 18% in East Lombok and 33% in Jember work between 15 and 84 hours per week. Meanwhile, of all children aged 15–17 years, 8% in East Lombok and 14% in Jember were identified to be working more than 40 hours, and up to 84 hours per week.

RANK OF CHILDREN IN ACTIVITY IN TOBACCO SECTOR



Top Activities Involving Child Labour in East Lombok:

- Rank 1: Tying tobacco leaves into bundle
- Rank 2: Fertilizing the plant(s)
- Rank 3: Inserting tobacco leaves into the oven
- Rank 4: Hanging bundles of tobacco leaves, removing leaves from the oven, Removing the ties of tobacco leaves
- Rank 5: Planting
- Rank 6: Picking tobacco leaves, Arranging tobacco leaves inside the oven
- Rank 7: Carrying tobacco leaves (from the field to the home/warehouse), Arranging tobacco leaves

Top Activities Involving Child Labour in Jember:

- Rank 1: *Penyujenan* - the process of bundling tobacco leaves using a stick prior to hanging them to be dried
- Rank 2: Drying and curing tobacco leaves
- Rank 3: Carrying tobacco leaves (from the field to the home/warehouse)
- Rank 4: Weeding grass on the seedbeds, Hanging bundles of tobacco leaves
- Rank 5: Watering the land, bundling tobacco leaves, Arranging tobacco leaves
- Rank 6: Applying pesticide, Watering seed beds, Planting, Fertilizing the plant(s), Using water-can to water the plant(s), Cutting off the top leaves, Fertilizing, picking tobacco leaves, Tying tobacco leaves into bundle
- Rank 7: Spreading seeds, Placing the seeds into containers ready for transport, Mounding, Packing tobacco leaves

Child labour's wage contribution to per capita household income was higher among children in East Lombok than children in Jember (14.2% vs. 8.9%). In calculating this number, children's income was weighted using the probability of children working in the tobacco sector for each month over the past year. Children's contribution toward their household's income depends on the economic condition of the family. Children from poor households contribute their income towards purchasing basic necessities (e.g. rice, food, cooking oil, etc.), school needs and pocket money. Meanwhile, children who come from families with a higher economic status usually work to save on the costs of labour (so that parents do not need to pay other labourers). Children also reported using their income for personal enjoyment, such as buying phone credit, mobile phones, secondhand motorbikes, and other personal care items.

The types of personal protection equipment (PPE) used by children tend to be very limited. In both districts, more than 75% of child labourers neither use safety gear nor have received safety education when working in tobacco growing. Of all children who reported using protective equipment, the majority reported using head protectors (around 20%) (i.e. hats and caps) and respiratory protectors (around 10%) (i.e. face masks).

Child labourers and adults perceived most work in tobacco growing to be light work and not harmful as long as there is no direct immediate impact on the health of the child. This represents the general lack of awareness and comprehension around the hazards of child labour in tobacco growing. While a number of adults, mainly village officials and contract farmers, are able to identify general potential hazards, such as exposure to fertilizers, pesticides and working at heights, many are still oblivious to the hazards of green tobacco leaves. In fact, the general understanding is that the hazards of tobacco leaves are in the cured tobacco leaves, due to its pungent smell causing asphyxiation and difficulties in breathing.

Many people in the study villages are not aware of the hazard that comes from green tobacco leaves, as advocacy around GTS was found to be limited to students in the community from selected primary schools (through the After School Programme) and to contract farmers. Therefore, members of farm-labour and non-contract farmer households were not aware of Green Tobacco Sickness (GTS). Furthermore, health workers in the study location also admitted that they have never provided information related to Green Tobacco Sickness (GTS). Their concern is more focused on the hazards of fertilizers and pesticides and from the activities of hanging and unloading bundled tobacco leaves inside the curing barn.

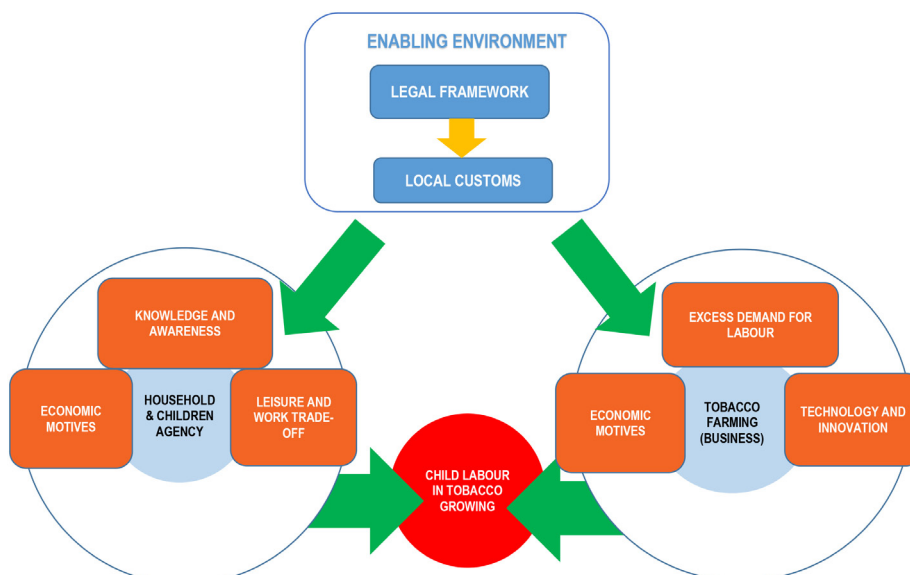
ROOT CAUSES OF CHILD LABOUR IN TOBACCO GROWING

The factors that contribute to the phenomenon of child labour in study locations, especially in tobacco growing, can be distinguished into three categories:

- the enabling environment that refers to the underlying contributing factors, which influence and are implicated in both pull and push factors;
- push factors, which occur within the household's and individual children's agency and drive children to undertake economic activities and become child labourers; and
- pull factors, which are factors that attract children to participate in economic activities and fundamentally reflect the conditions of the labour market.

There are two interlinking underlying factors of the high prevalence of child labour. The first is that in local norms and customs working children are regarded positively. Children's involvement in tobacco growing has been integrated into local parenting practices, and it is generally an accepted local norm that once an individual is regarded as an adult they are expected to have their own earnings. The second factor is the existing legal framework related to child labour that has not yet provide clear definition of light works and hazardous works that are suitable for agriculture working activities, particularly in tobacco growing that has a specific hazard factor.

The push factors include (i) lack of comprehension and awareness surrounding the issue of child labour; (ii) lack of alternative facilities for children's activities; and (iii) economic motives, which include household poverty and children's economic agency. On the other hand, the pull factors include: (i) excess demand for labour in the village, especially during tobacco harvesting season; (ii) lack of technologies and innovations that can reduce and replace labour intensive works, particularly in the works that are mostly conducted by child labourers; and (iii) economic motives of the business that is mainly the need to maintain selling prices by immediate handling of tobacco leaves.



RESOURCES AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

The series of interviews and discussions throughout this study have identified existing resources that can be used to develop and implement a more sustainable effort to eliminate child labour in rural agriculture area, particularly in tobacco growing. At the community and village levels, there are resources that can be utilised to support the elimination of child labour, which include: (i) community forums that can be used to facilitate awareness raising activities, (ii) public facilities for children that can be improved to provide alternative activities for children, (iii) village regulations that can strengthen law enforcement and help link the formal regulations with local norms, and (iv) village funds that can be utilised to provide financial support for various community activities related to the elimination of child labour.

The district governments of East Lombok and Jember already have child labour elimination programmes—such as routine monitoring and inspection of child labour, participation in the PPA-PKH programme, and initial work to develop child-friendly districts—which can be further developed to support the elimination of child labour. Existing regulations on tobacco farming and commission on tobacco can also be used to support the awareness-raising activities and strengthening the regulatory framework on the prohibition of child labour in tobacco growing. In addition, they also receive DBHCHT that can also be used to support various initiatives pertaining to the elimination of child labour in tobacco growing.

The central government already produced a series of laws and regulations which can be improved to better govern the prohibition of child labour, particularly in tobacco growing. The existing road map for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour that is targeting to achieve an Indonesia free of child labour by 2022 can also enriched to effectively address the issue of child labour in tobacco growing. In addition, the various initiatives supported by tobacco companies and NGOs can be leveraged to cover wider areas and more children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the complexity of the factors behind the high prevalence of child labour, we recommend: (i) the improvement of the national policy, and (ii) a pilot program that can be initiated in East Lombok and Jember.

In improving the national policy, first and foremost, the government should devote more resources to improving the enabling environment. This can be achieved by providing operational guidelines for the prohibition of child labour in tobacco growing, through revising the Ministry of Labour and Transmigration Decree No. 235/2003. Concurrently, the Roadmap towards a Child Labour Free Indonesia in 2022 should be complemented with a sectoral-specific strategy focusing on various agriculture sectors where child labour prevalence is high,

including tobacco growing. The strategy should also determine concrete steps, including the roles and responsibilities of each institutions, and the time frame for action. In addition, the prohibition of the employment of children in tobacco growing should be included in the national as well as regional (provincial and district) tobacco regulations. Furthermore, the strengthening of existing regulations should be accompanied by stronger law enforcement as well as more intensive advocacy to influence informal norms—local customs and norms—in the community.

To further maximise the national efforts to eliminate child labour, interventions should be directed to enhance people's awareness on the different types of hazardous works, their consequences and the existing regulations prohibiting child labour in tobacco growing. The existing social protection programmes should also be improved or modified to better address the child labour issues. In addition, the child-friendly district programme should also include measures to address child labour in accordance with local problems, and devote all possible funding resources including DBHCHT, village funds, and support from business communities. Lastly, in addressing the pull factors which are driven by the shortage of labour, there should be a more intensive effort to develop new technologies and innovations in tobacco handling and processing in order to replace children and adult workers, especially in the hazardous stages of the tobacco production process.

For the pilot program in East Lombok, the measures could include:

- Establishing formal and informal regulations by the village (such as awig-awig) to provide a legal framework for the action taken to address the issue of child labour in the village.
- Training for health officials on the potential risks and hazards of working in tobacco growing, as well as the health and safety risks of working in tobacco growing.
- Intensifying socialisation and advocacy on the prohibition of child labour by involving local NGOs and utilising school teachers and informal education institutions (pengajian)
- Continuing socialisation by tobacco companies on the prohibition of child labour for contract-tobacco farmers, as they have been mandated.
- Forming a community-based monitoring committee led by appointed village cadres, school teachers, and health officials to monitor children's involvement in tobacco growing, especially in activities agreed as hazardous.
- Addressing the lack of platform for children which leads to their preference of working in tobacco growing, developing a public library and sport facilities would be necessary to provide children with a productive yet safe platform for their leisure activities.
- Establishing a partnership between the plantation agency and the local school of agriculture to develop technologies which will reduce the need of children's involvement in tobacco growing, especially in hazardous activities.
- Initiating an incentive-based program to address the economic motives of child labour in tobacco growing.

For the pilot program in Jember, the measures could include:

- Formulating village regulations containing all the explanations on child rights, the prohibition of child labour, prohibition of child marriage, and other regulations considered important for the children's needs. The prohibition of child labour in tobacco growing should explicitly state the hazardous stages to avoid confusion among the villagers. In addition, the regulation should include the mandatory use of PPE for both adults and children involved in tobacco growing.
- Formulating village regulations which regulate the requirements for farmers and companies to build their tobacco warehouses outside the residential areas to avoid children engaging in tobacco cultivation. If they are unable to do this, farmers and companies should provide childcare or a children's playground situated near warehouses to prevent children from helping their mothers tie tobacco leaves and to allow the children to play in a safer environment.
- Ensuring that tobacco companies follow one of the best practices introduced by some tobacco companies using the STP Guidance, which is conducting Farmers Register Survey (Survey Register Petani).
- Establishing a partnership with local NGOs who will perform an assessment to select the village location for the pilot. This should be established prior to the implementation of the pilot programme in Jember. The selection of pilot villages considers criteria such as village staff's understanding of child labor issues, the presence of facilities such as Smart House or ASP (After School Programme) at schools located in the village, and availability of resources.
- Inviting tobacco companies to share their experience in implementing the After School Programme or Smart House programme in order to replicate the success of these programmes. To support activities at the ASP and Smart House, the available resources should be effectively mobilized.
- Establishing the Smart House in subvillages can be an option. The Smart house can be built at various places at the community level, in places that can be easily accessed by children, such as the TPQ (Qur'anic learning center) at Karang Taruna (youth forum) or a community centre.
- Addressing the poor understanding and awareness of child labour among children and parents by conducting a mapping of influential figures in the village who have the capacity to participate in the socialisation programme on children's rights for the community members. This initiative should also involve formal and informal educational institutions, PKK, Majelis Taklim, Karang Taruna, farmers and farm labourers—and most importantly—health workers and village leaders.
- Encouraging tobacco companies to develop new technologies and innovations in tobacco cultivation. ■

