

Indonesian Agribusiness, Liberalised or Protected?

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Agricultural Social Economics Department at Faculty of Agriculture UGM hosted *National Seminar on Research Outcomes of Agricultural Social Economics 2017* event recently. This seminar is a forum for academics, researchers, enthusiasts, government, and society to share ideas and findings related to innovative technology in agriculture.

Raising theme *Sustainability of Agribusiness in Indonesia amidst Globalisation: Liberalisation or Protection?*, the seminar on Saturday (29/7) presented speakers from several disciplines. They are: Ir. Sunarso, M.Si. (Chairman of Indonesian Agriculture Scholars Association), Ir. Abdullah Firman Wibowo, M.M. (Director of BNI Sharia Bank), Prof. Dr. Ir. Dwijono Darwanto, M.S. (Agricultural Economics Professor from UGM), and Prof. PM Laksono (Antropology professor from UGM).

Prof. Dwijono said currently both locally and nationally, global economy penetration has created strange and peculiar moment. This is because there has no clear agreement being made by related parties.

"As a matter of fact, every one, farmers, citizens, government, and businessmen that have this moment shall have the right to progress and receive benefits corresponding to their respective contributions," said Dwijono. But instead, according to Dwijono, the people and farmers that have



produced the rice turned out to be the one that are marginalised by government that produces regulations and businessmen that produces services.

On the other hand, Sunarso said, one of current agricultural problems affecting farmers is where the sector is going to be driven, liberalisation or protection. “The real challenge is that policy makers ought to establish a point where it is most balanced between liberalisation and protection,” said Sunarso.

He further asked the capacity of small scale farmers with limited technology that have to compete with large scale corporations with full mechanisation. “Can our farmers actually be competitive in the liberal market system?” questions Sunarso.

Sunarso explained in determining the point of liberalisation or protection, we need to have a long vision in advance. “The food sector cannot actually be left to the liberal market,” said Sunarso. He proposed suggestions to resolve this issue, including by forming national food authorities.

Dean of Faculty of Agriculture UGM, Dr, Jamhari, S.P., M.P. suggested the need to determine the clear proportion of liberalisation and protection of each commodity. This is because each commodity has different levels or limits of liberalisation. “There has to be clear regulations on when and to what extent the commodities need to be liberalised or protected,” said Jamhari.

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