

Strategies to Generate National Food Security Due to Pandemic


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The Social Development and Welfare Postgraduate Study Program of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences UGM for some time organized Social Development Talks on Saturday (17/10). This 10th event raised the theme entitled "Food Security during the Covid-19 Pandemic" online through the Webex platform. It is also broadcasted live via Youtube channel PSdK / Sosiatri Fisipol UGM.

Subejo, SP., M.Sc., Ph.D., as a lecturer at the UGM Faculty of Agriculture, presented as a speaker. He admitted that this pandemic had a significant impact on national food conditions. Those impacts covered, such as decreased production effectiveness and efficiency (both agriculture and MSMEs), the distribution of various products, and foodstuffs, are hindered. There is no price transmission (the price gap for products and food is swelling). Besides, there is also a decrease in the farmer's income and rural communities, and consumers bear products and expensive food.

"Even in pra pandemic, our food security already experienced problems, such as starvation, production, imports, and so on. Still, when the pandemic came, the problems became more severe," Subejo said.



Subejo stated that several strategies could be implemented to overcome these problems arising amid the pandemic:

1. Relaxation of food production activities for non-red zones by still implementing health protocols.
2. Relaxation of food distribution by still implementing health protocols.
3. Production process assistance includes machine tools, fertilizers, seeds, pesticides, PPE, counseling, and technical guidance.
4. Fourth, supporting incentives include price subsidies, land tax exemptions, agricultural insurance, agricultural labor-intensive, social assistance, and others.

Eventually, distribution and marketing would be efficient in food products by applying to health protocols and reducing direct contact with application-based information technology.

According to Subejo, the government discussed this issue last April and discussed the prediction of prolonged extreme heat. He said President Jokowi ordered the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of State-Owned Enterprises, and the local government to compose new rice fields to guarantee food production. The order's accomplishment began in July with a plan to build a food barn in Central Kalimantan. The granary will be built on 148 thousand hectares located in two districts, namely Kapuas and Pulang Pisau.

However, Subejo said that the new rice fields had important prospects for the medium and long term. More realistic programs in the short term (2020-2021) are the intensification of ricefields and dry land. Those programs covered increasing the planting index and harvested area, optimizing yards, optimizing agroforestry, promoting urban farming, and diversifying food based on local raw materials.

However, Subejo still has an optimistic view of this crisis. He assumed this pandemic is an opportunity to revitalize agriculture. He also said that the country could also save money because the import trail was closed. Besides, this pandemic has also stimulated the growth of innovations and new creations in agriculture.

"Many innovations occurred related to agriculture during this pandemic. I hope the government always gives support to them. Hence, I would rather propose the short-term strategy with incentives and other assistance," Subejo concluded.

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