

Agroforestry Roles for Food Security

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Food availability has become one of the important elements of the basic need of a nation. Even in some countries with adequate economic resources have proven to experience destruction because they cannot fulfill their populations' food needs.

In the context of fulfilling these food needs, the forestry sector can take a stand by optimizing the potential of forest resources as a life support system and a food provider (Forest for Food Production). The two forms of utilization of forest resources' potential are expected to be able to create community welfare, especially for people living in and around forest areas.

As an ICRAF regional coordinator, Dr. Sonya Dewi said food security had become a local and global problem. Globally, more than 820 million people still suffer from hunger. Meanwhile, 2 billion adults and 40 million children under 5 are overweight.

"Zero hunger is a necessity. The second global goal commitment in the Sustainable Development Goals (S.D.G.) has ratified 193 countries, including Indonesia. Based on the Global Food Security Index, Indonesia ranked 62 of 113 countries in 2019. This datum shows an increase from previous years. However, food security is still rough, and there should be an improvement soon," he said on Thursday (22/10) in National Research Update webinar # 4 with the theme "Forestry Sector Support for National Food Sovereignty."



Sonya believed that agroforestry has a role in overcoming the problem of food security in all its aspects. According to her, various agroforestry products can directly provide food and nutrition.

Meanwhile, tree cover increases the intake of micronutrients in Indonesia and Africa through lessening malnutrition. These agroforestry methods contribute to the maintenance of a wide range of environmental services.

"By the impact of global climate change, trees inside and outside forests contribute to food security," he said.

Unluckily, the trend of agroforestry in Indonesia experienced a decline. Throughout satellite imagery mapping, it is estimated that Indonesia's agroforestry area was around 20 million hectares in 1990, falling consistently to 16.6 million in 2005 and to 12 million in 2010. This decline in the agroforestry area was caused by land conversion to intensive agricultural land or into a settlement or infrastructure.


However, agroforestry still benefits farmers' practices across Indonesia, which are geographically scattered and very diverse. At least economically, it successfully contributed 38 - 76 percent of the 750 samples of households in Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi.

"Apart from that, it also provides various benefits at the plot level, food, fiber, fuel, animal feed, wood, medicine. Besides, there are also benefits from ecosystem services, community livelihood security, flexibility and distribution, gender equity, and land tenure," he added.

Ganjar Pranowo, S.H., M.I.P., as a Governor of Central Java, added that Indonesia is currently struggling over food politics. Indonesia remains to sort out which ones should be imported and which ones should not.

He also said that during the Covid-19 pandemic, several countries present and, in the future, have undertaken to limit their export of food to other countries. According to him, this condition is considered a war of struggle after facing the struggle availability of energy in the past and water in the future.

"Forestry, as a resource, both in terms of human resources, technology, and extraordinary science, requires it to be conducted. Food security is not only about fulfilling the food needs, but wider, it is national security. If we can overcome this, we will be a great country," Ganjar said.



Dr. Budiadi, S, Hut, Agr., Sc, as the Dean of the Faculty of Forestry U.G.M., added that the National Research Update Webinar # 4 with the theme "Forestry Sector Support for National Food Sovereignty" was held due to the commemoration of the 57th Anniversary of the Faculty of Forestry, Universitas Gadjah Mada University in 2020. The theme choice is the most relevant theme for health during the current Covid-19 pandemic.

"In the early days of the pandemic, we had discussed how the forestry sector was able to contribute to this pandemic for the national focus," he explained.

According to Budi, forestry for food is an old issue that is often discussed because forest areas can directly contribute to food production. Admit it or not. This fact is also due to around 25 thousand villages located in forest areas. About 5 thousand are in Java, which is accidentally a source of poverty and has not risen for decades.

"These sources can cause instability and integration problems. Therefore food security is not just a matter of fulfilling the food needs. More than that, it is a matter of national security," Budi said.

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