

Poll on Food Bill by DPR Commission IV

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Increasing imports of food products and low competitiveness of Indonesian food products have led to a thought to change the paradigm of food development, which currently only focuses on food security in the direction toward Food Sovereignty and Independence paradigm. This is what lies behind the initiative introduced by Commission IV of the House of Representatives on Bill on Amendments to Law no. 7 year 1996 on Food. The food bill is being discussed in the House of Representatives Commission IV together with the Government. "Law No. 7 of 1996 on Food is not able to answer a variety of issues and development challenges of food," Ir. E. Herman Khaeron, M.Si, Team Leader of Commission IV, said at UGM Multimedia Room, Thursday (2/2).

He said that while the team with 13 members and two researchers from the Secretariat General of the House of Representatives gathered opinion at UGM to get input on the Bill. By holding a Forum Group Discussion (FGD), the Standing Committee of the Food Bill hoped to get input from the academicians, government, experts and community leaders. "We at the House of Representatives Commission IV frankly want to get an answer, how should the concept of food sovereignty and independence be implemented given there are fundamental differences between the House and the Government about the future direction of food development?" Herman Khaeron said.

Herman revealed in the realization of food sovereignty, local food is necessary to support food security. Regarding the difficulty of changing the culture of community in consuming food, he hoped local food can be developed through diversification. In addition to the development of a sovereign and independent food, it needs a strong institutional food.

In his view some of the institutions that deal with the current food are less effective. Therefore, the House felt the need to form the National Food Authority in order to organize Food Sovereignty, Food Independence, Food Security and Food Safety. Therefore, the Agency for Food Security, Food Security Council and Bulog will be merged into National Food Authority. "The agency would be a government agency under the President and responsible to the President," he explained.



However, the government in DIM 633-656 bill of Food initiated by the House and Government DIM, want the existing food agency to still remain. Therefore, in view of the government, Agency for Food Security, Food Security Council and Bulog and national food affairs institutions (based on Government DIM 765-770) will still exist. "Therefore, we need input on how food institution should be established," he continued.

In a poll with some agricultural scientists, food experts, trade specialists, industry experts, experts in health/nutrition, legal experts, economists, Provincial POM agency, relevant NGOs also discussed the possibility to be open to private role in the management of national food stocks. However the desire is contrary to the obligation of the state (government) as the guardian of food prices stability which is affordable to the public. Experience shows that food price instability always occurs every year and failure to stabilize proces makes the country the defendant.

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