

The Rise of Young Entrepreneurial Farmers in Banten, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT-- *This research aims to understand the development of entrepreneurship among young generation farmers in Banten, Indonesia when they faced deactivation. It used a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. The finding was the emerge of new farmer generation who met the criteria as agricultural entrepreneurs, namely Jawara Farm and Selaras Farm. They moved from peasant agriculture – which is a household-based business – to entrepreneurial agriculture. They made farming activities as a well-managed business to get profits and grow the business independently. Problems they faced were the lack and incompatibility of government assistances as well as the difficulty of capital access. Based on the findings, this research recommended that the government role could facilitate the growth of agricultural entrepreneurs through the right assessment, especially in funding and business assistance.*

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial Farmers, Deactivation, Peasant Agriculture, Government Assistance*

I. Introduction

The agriculture sector in Indonesia experienced a serious problem called *deactivation*, the shift of agricultural resources outside the agricultural sector (Van der Ploeg, 2008). These resource problems include labor, capital and agricultural land that has been shifted from agriculture to the non-agricultural sector.

Banten was one of the national rice barns. It ranked the eighth position among national rice production in 2018 with 1.4 million tons (Katadata.co.id, 2018). Still, Banten experienced serious problem of deactivation. One of the indicators was the numbers of farmers decreasing continuously. See the table below.

Table 1. Number of Farm Households in Banten

o	Regency/Municipalities	Number of farm households (Thousands)	
		2003	2018
	Pandeglang	188	133
	Lebak	203	198
	Tangerang	222	90
	Serang	190	128
	Tangerang Municipality	19	6

	Cilegon Municipality	16	11
	Serang Municipality	30	24
	South Tangerang Municipality	21	6
	Banten Province	892	596

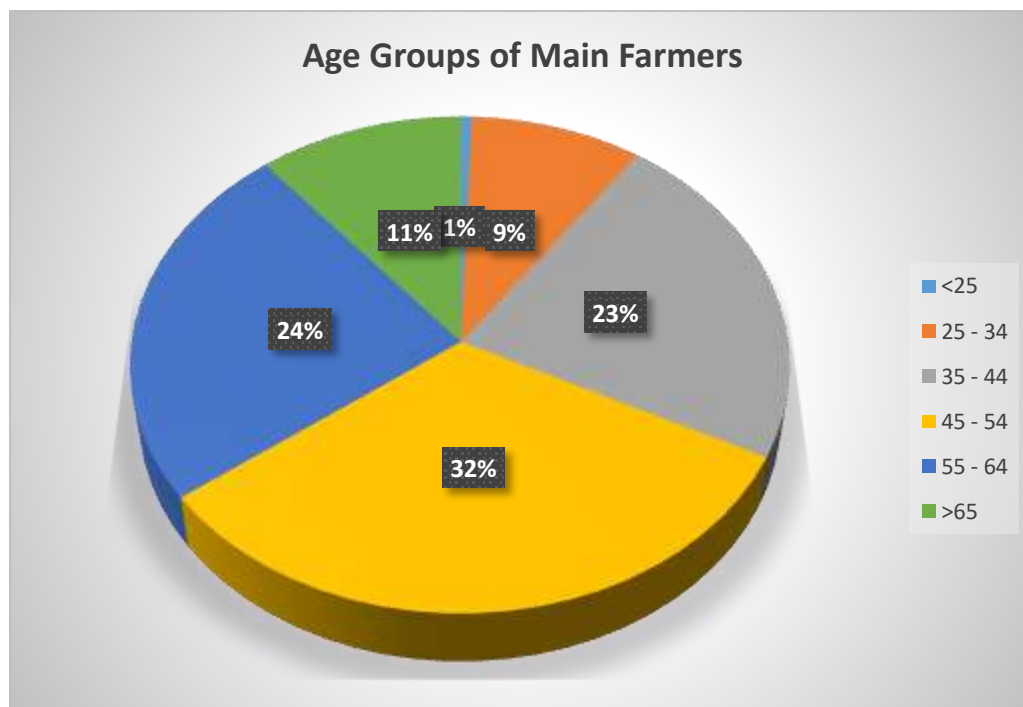
Source: 2013-BPS Agricultural Census Data; Results of SUTAS Agriculture Banten Province 2018, BPS Banten Province

The number of peasant households in Banten had decreased sharply, from 892 thousands in 2003 to 596 thousands in 2018. The biggest reduction occurred in Tangerang Regency, from 222 thousands peasant households switched professions in 2003 to only 90 thousands in 2018.

Based on age group, farmers in Banten were also increasingly dominated by the old age group. The number of young farmers decreased while older farmers increased. Based on the 2018 BPS data, 56.17% of family heads of farmers were in the age range of more than 55 year old; 32.97% were 45-54 year old; 9.02% at the age of 35-44 year old; and under those age ranges were only as much as 1.6%.

In terms of the age group of the main farmers, the majority were in the 45-55 year old (32.37%), followed by 55-64 age at 24.18%, then the age of 35-44 at 22.61% and over 65 years at 11.02%. Meanwhile, the age under 34 year old was only 9.83%, which showed the lack of interest from the younger generation in the agriculture sector. The fact was worrying because farmers were aging community. In the long term, this phenomenon could threaten food sovereignty.

Figure 1. "Age Group of Main Farmers



The findings of Riswanda, Hamid, and Yeni (2017) in their research in Sawarna, Lebak Municipality, Banten Province, found that the skyrocketing tourism industry in Sawarna Beach area made young people reluctant to become farmers. They preferred to work in the more productive tourism sector.

Thus, the emergence of Sawarna as the icon of Banten tourism brought a dark side, the abandonment of the agricultural world, especially by the younger generation.

In fact, regeneration among farmers was very critical to sustain the farming activities. In Europe, European Union's (EU) Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) have specifically targeted young farmers for increased support; with young farmers being seen as more innovative, entrepreneurial and amenable to change (Hamilton, Bosworth, and Ruto, 2015).

Hamilton, Bosworth, dan Ruto (2015) researched farmer performances based on their ages in England. As the result, farmers within the range of 35 - 45 year old showed consistently higher levels of overall productivity, profitability and investment, compared with another age ranges. It showed that that younger farmers demonstrate consistently higher levels of engagement with agri-environment schemes.

Van der Ploeg (2008) divided agricultural actors into three models, namely: the peasants, the agricultural entrepreneurs, and the corporate models. The first was peasant agriculture, which was basically built on the use of sustainable ecological capital and is oriented towards efforts to maintain and improve farmers' livelihoods. Its main features were multi-functionality and labor was provided by families or mobilized in rural communities through reciprocal relationships. Land and other main means of production were also family owned. Production was market oriented and also reproduction of agricultural and family units.

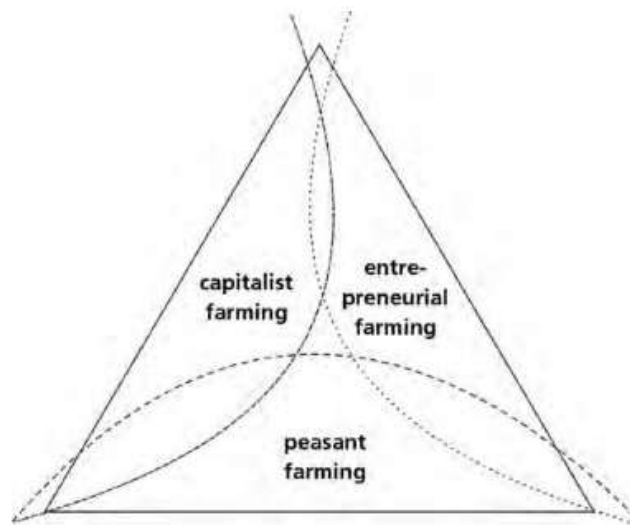
The second type was the agricultural entrepreneurs. This was built on financial and industrial capital embodied in industrial credit, input and technology. While the ongoing expansion, basically through expansion of the scale. Production was highly specialized and fully market-oriented. Forms of entrepreneurial agriculture often emerged from state-driven programs for 'modernizing' agriculture.

The third type was large-scale corporate (or capitalist) agriculture. The corporate agriculture sector consists of a large network of mobile agricultural companies in which the labor force is largely or even exclusively based on paid workers. Production was directed and regulated as a function of profit maximization.

This research would focus on the first two, namely peasant agriculture and entrepreneur agriculture. Various problems written in the background of this study referred to a condition called **deactivation**.

Deactivation implied that the level of agricultural production decreases. Deactivation could also be interpreted as the release of resources needed in agriculture, converted into financial capital and invested in other economic activities. Including labor that came out of the agricultural sector (Van der Ploeg, 2008).

Figure2 Types of Farming by Van der Ploeg



Clarks (2009) identified several characteristics of on-farm entrepreneurial:

1. Novel redeployment of the bases of agricultural production

The entrepreneurial farmers shifted the usage of land, labour, and capital to be more competitive through increasing business income as well as generating new employment.

2. The adoption of a new market orientation

To boost the result, the entrepreneurial farmers did the business activities through responding wider interests at any market opportunities which could pave the way to the direct customers.

3. Capitalizing on endogenous resources:

The entrepreneurial farmers were very local based. They used it for their identity or image while empowered the local community resources, connecting 'product with place'.

4. New forms of governance

The entrepreneurial farmers embraced the integrated form to manage the business activities.

5. Community involvement/support

The entrepreneurial farmers needed to involve their surrounded communities to grow the business.

6. Management of space and natural resources

The entrepreneurial farmers managed to have more sustainable way to do the business.

The study will describe the phenomenon of young entrepreneur farmers in Banten, the reasons of their emergences, and the obstacles they faced. Also, how their relations were with various parties such as the private sector and government.

II. Methods

This study used a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. A qualitative approach was used to further explore and understand meaning hidden behind social or humanitarian issues (Creswell, 2015: 4). Qualitative research was perfect for exploring social phenomena with efforts such as asking questions to informants such farmers in Banten as well as other parties such as government and the private sector. Other gathering data methods used in this research are focus group discussion, observation and documents study. Then the data were analyzed inductively starting from agricultural problems in Banten specific to the general problem, as well as interpreting the meaning of the data obtained. This research conducted in Banten, Indonesia.

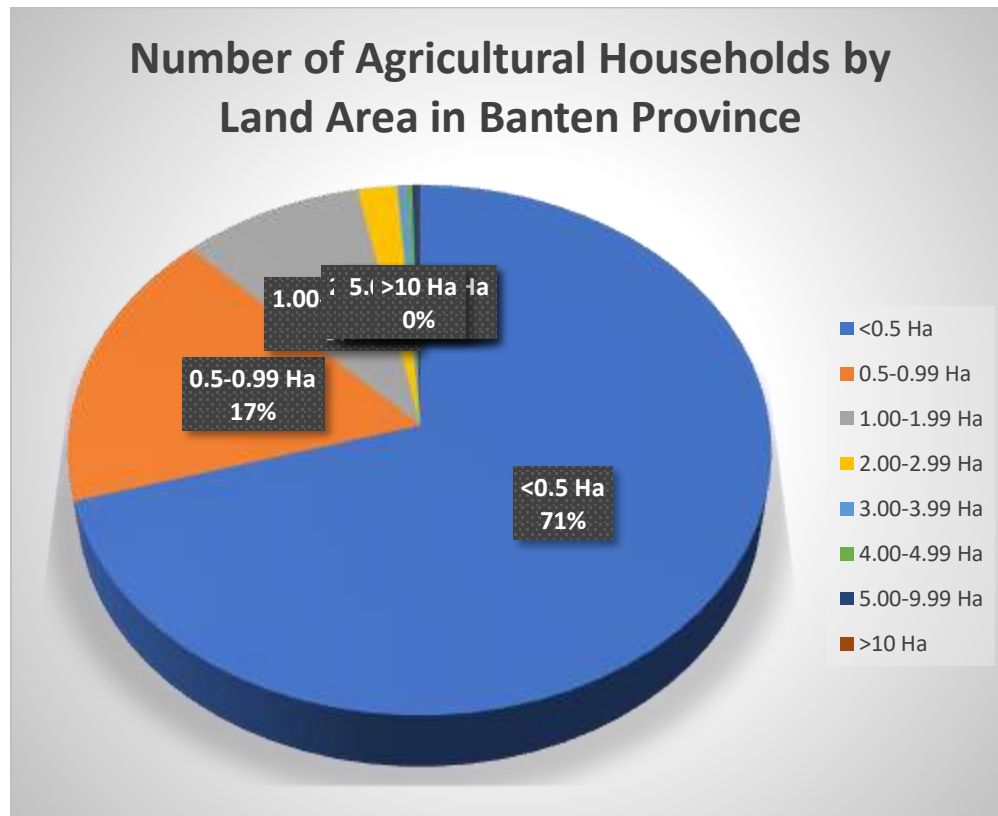
III. Result and Discussion

In the case of Banten, Indonesia, the agriculture facing deactivation. The loss of resources, especially land in the form of land use change, and the drastic reduction in the number of agricultural workers and farm households.

Deactivation mainly occurs in peasant agriculture where agricultural products are unable to guarantee its survival, let alone improve the quality of life. Especially for rice farmer. Becoming a rice farmer has only reached a promising economic level if the land area is more than 2 hectares. Meanwhile, the data shows that most of the farmers in Banten have a land area of less than 0.5 ha. Look at the data below.

Figure 3

Number of Agricultural Households by Land Area in Banten Province



Source: Agriculture Province Banten Province SUTAS 2018, BPS Banten Province

There were 71% of farm households in Banten only had less than 0.5 Ha land area. Moreover, 17% of the households controlled about 0.5-0.99 Ha land; 9.15% controlled 1- 1.99 Ha; 2% had 2 - 2.99; followed by other households who had a very small percentage of land area.

Hence, for small farmers, rice farming was clearly not economically profitable. For example, Jabidi, a farmer in Waringinkurung, revealed:

"Previously, farmers were only planting rice, with its price was four thousand rupiahs per kilogram. If we produced 1 ton of rice, we would get around 4 million rupiahs while waiting for harvest time around 4-5 months. So rice planting was not enough, only for daily consumption, not for sale. We couldn't cover the rice planting cost, especially to meet our daily and other needs. If you just rely on planting rice it is difficult. "(Interview with Jabidi, 18 June 2019)

Tauchid, Head of the Banten Provincial Agriculture Office, said the same thing:

"If the farmers are cultivating 1/2 hectare, what will the maximum result be? It is only 3 tons of rice. How if it succeeds? Assuming the price is Rp.4,000/kg, the result will be 12 million. But it is nothing compare with the cost needed. With the profit only around 4 million rupiahs and waiting period of 4 months, do you think it is enough to provide one wife and four children properly? "(Interview with Tauchid, 19 June 2019)

Proof that agriculture sector in Banten was less promising could be seen from the low exchange rate of farmers (Nilai Tukar Petani) in Banten. This was shown by the decreasing exchange rate of farmers in Banten, from 110, 06 in 2013 to 99.7 in 2018. The number below 100 showed that increasing farming production cost smaller than increasing consumer goods cost and production price therefore a number of Banten farmer had low purchasing ability to fulfill daily needs and farming production cost (BPS Banten, 2018).

The low welfare of farmers was also caused by their difficult access to credit. A study conducted by Mulyaqin and Haryani (2013) showed the difficulties of poor farmers' access to credit in Banten. The agricultural banking special credit scheme: The Food and Energy Security Credit (Kredit Ketahanan Pangan dan Energi, KPPE) channeled through BRI bank was not accessible to farmers at all. The reasons were because 1) Most farmers did not have certificates for their land yet; 2) Farmers did not understand the procedure of obtaining credit, 3) The credit procedures through bank was very complicated; 4) Banking interest was very high; 5) Fear of not being able to pay installments. Another reason was that farmers do not have collateral as a requirement to get credit (Mulyaqin and Haryani, 2013).

Other problem was the shrinking of agricultural land. Conversion of agricultural land, especially irrigated fields, threatened the efforts to maintain national food self-sufficiency, especially in the province of Banten, which in turn would threaten food security. In Waringin Kurung Area, the place of Jabidi and Agis, many paddy fields changed ownership and changed functions to non-agricultural land, especially housing. Based on data from the Banten Province Food Security Council in 2016, the average annual rate of conversion of agricultural land to non-agriculture in Banten is 237 ha.

In 2012-2014 there was a decrease in the area of irrigated rice fields in Banten Province from 156,930 hectares to 107,809 hectares (reduced by 31.30 percent). Actually, the Government of Banten Province had tried to stem the rate of land conversion through the implementation of Regional Regulation (Perda) No. 5 of 2015 concerning Protection of Sustainable Agricultural Land (LP2B). The proportion of sustainable food agriculture land was more in Pandeglang Regency with an area of 53,951 ha, then followed by Serang Regency 41,098.17 ha, Lebak Regency 40,170.3 ha, Tangerang Regency 29,295 ha, Serang City 3,022 ha, Cilegon City 1,736 ha, Tangerang City Selatan 150 ha, and Kota Tangerang 93 ha (Pertanian.go.id, 2016).

However, because there was autonomy in the Regency / City, so even though the land area has been determined, it would still depend on the political will of the regency / city regional head reflected in the Regional Regulation on Spatial Planning (RT / RW) of each region. Until now, most of the regions had not been able to determine the location of food enduring land that cannot be converted. In other words, eternal land existed only in numbers, but there was no exact location.

That's why young people who jumped into agriculture were more interested in entrepreneurship agriculture, not the traditional one. They made agriculture as a business activity to make a profit. This research described two forms of young agricultural entrepreneurship activities in response to the phenomenon of agricultural deactivation in Banten. As Van Der Plog (2008) said, agricultural entrepreneurship is usually inseparable from various agricultural modernization programs programmed by the government. So this research also wanted to see the effectiveness of the agriculture government program with the agricultural

entrepreneurship. There were two cases of young generation entrepreneurial farmer here: Jawara farm that focus on animal husbandry and Selaras Farm that focus on horticulture.

Jawara Farm

Jawara Farm (Jawara) was an agricultural business in Serang City, Banten, initiated by Nur Agis Aulia (Agis) and his colleagues in 2013. At first, Jawara began the farming business through growing cucumbers, string beans and mustard greens. Yet, they felt the difficulties of being farmers because limited income earned every two or three months.

Learning from those experiences, Jawara planned a more well-organized model for the farming business. They divided the crops planted and harvested with different timeframe, i.e. every one, three, or six months. Jawara planted around 300 kilograms horticultural crops and got income also from the sale of papaya seeds, red chili, eggplant, and tomatoes. (Kompas, 2016).

In 2016, Jawara started livestock business, through seeing an opportunity of using the animal dung as fertilizer for the plants. The first attempt was raising cattle and goats. From here, the business processes in agriculture and animal husbandry continued to increase. Adding with online marketing and good branding, the business growth fast, much more profitable than the previous one.

For the dairy business, Agis supplied cow's milk to the nearest residential area. But over time, this dairy business was considered very helpful in its financial cash flow because it could generate daily income. It turned out that the price of goat's milk was more profitable than cow's milk, goat milk's price was around fifty thousand per liter while cow's milk was only 15 thousand per liter. Hence, Jawara decided to bought Australian goats which could produce more milk (Agis Interview, 2019).

He also fostered a symbiotic relationship of mutualism with local farmers by becoming a member of the Green Leaf Farmers Group. The number of members of the group was 25 people with livelihoods generally farming. Farmers could take goat and cow dung from Jawara Farm to be used as fertilizer. In return, Jawara got grass or any plants for feeding the animals.

Furthermore, the community saw new opportunities for providing religion-related sacrificial cattle meats, namely 'qurban' and 'aqiqah'. This kind of business was very promising because of the large demands and broad markets. In fact, revenue from the sacrificial meats could cover the whole business operations for one year. It showed that the Jawara Farm business had been already well managed.

Besides, Jawara recruited young people who concerned about the stagnant condition of agricultural sector in Banten Province. At first, there were only ten students from prominent universities in Indonesia, i.e. Gadjah Mada University, Padjadjaran University, and Bogor Agriculture Institute, joined the Jawara formed the *Banten Bangun Desa* (Building Village in Banten) community. They did activities in the agricultural business, from learning to farm and raise livestock, developing business plans, marketing products, to recognizing opportunities in the villages. In 2016, the community-based organization had one hundred members, spread in four villages in Serang Regency and two villages in Pandeglang Regency. Other student organizations and farmer groups also joined the club (Kompas, 2016).

Spreading the wings, Jawara Farm cooperated with Malaysian entrepreneurs to provide sacrificed cattle meats for Malaysian market as well as in Indonesia (for the Malaysian customers). In 2019, Jawara sold more than five thousand animals for sacrificed rituals 'qurban'.

Agis did not know the exact number of youths who were benefited from the *Banten Bangun Desa* program. However, he himself had taught more than 1,000 people. In addition, there were also many visits to Jawara Farm, from State-Owned-Enterprises (SOE-BUMN) retirees, to private employees, to see agricultural opportunities (Kompas, 2016).

Personally, Agis also became a role model as a youth to be a farmer. His success was shown in various television and newspaper media at the national level. He was also invited to be a motivator in various ways for young people to become farmers, amidst their reluctance to become farmers. Even though there are only a few agricultural graduates who choose to become farmers. At Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa University in Banten, only about 10% of agriculture graduates become farmers. (Interview Putra, 2019)

Figure 4
Agis in One Television Talkshow



Source: Bantenperspektif.com

To expand the business, Jawara got capital loan from Financial Technology Institution (Fintech) who could fund them quickly with profit sharing schemes. One of the fintech company was Agraria Farm (Agrifarm). They did not utilize loan facilities from banks to avoid complexity and interests.

Agrifarm Fintech initially provided a capital loan to Jawara Farm around 55-60 million rupiah. After the first project was successful, Agrifarm then funded the farming networks recommended by Jawara Farm such as Sarnata to lease land of 1.5 hectares to grow sweet corn, Selaras Farm to grow sweet corn, cucumber, and Oyong; and a goat farmer for 50 goats in the Kronjo area, Tangerang. Agrifarm's total investment in two years is around 2 billion rupiah with a profit-sharing system and no collateral. (Interview with Hadi, Co-Founder of Agrifarm, 2019)

Selaras Farm

Besides Jawara Farm, one of prominent agricultural businesses in Banten was Selaras Farm (Selaras), founded by a young man called Rizky Pratama. According to him, a farmer should not only be a cultivator, but also a marketer or a seller himself. Hence, he tried to modernize the agricultural management system into an integrative one, covering from upstream to downstream chain.

According to the official website, selarasfarm.com, Selaras cultivated the 2,500 m² productive plantation area with a wide variety of local and organic vegetables. Selaras Farm, like Jawara Farm, chose to produce vegetables instead of rice. It claimed the farming method was environmentally friendly – without using pesticides and chemical fertilizers, so the vegetables produced were healthier for consumption. With the concept “from our farm to your table”, vegetables produced from the plantation were directly sold or distributed to consumers. (Interview with Rizky Pratama, 2019)

Another interesting innovation offered was a delivery system for special consumers who lived in Serang City and surrounding areas. Compared to the old method of distribution, it gave more benefit to younger – millennial famers. Through the message service availability, customers could only stay at home and waited less than 24 hours for the ordered products. Below was the info graphic explaining the Selaras Farm delivery system.

Figure 5 Delivery Services by Selaras Farm



Moreover, Selaras made the plantation area as an education park (edupark) for student. It opened the educational facilities for farming, gardening, caring the plants, as well as harvesting. Using the land not only for farming but also for tourism purpose was an economically strategic step proven to attract more income.

Lastly, Selaras did not only sell plantation products, but also livestock, i.e. chicken and beef. Controlling the whole chain from upstream to downstream made efforts for achieving more significant income become possible. To grow the business, it was unavoidable to seek bigger financial supports. Yet, instead of getting them from bank as well as government, Selaras sought loan from financial technology (fintech) recommended by Jawara Farm.

Government Support

Van der Ploeg (2008) stated that the entrepreneurial agriculture was often emerged from state-driven programs for 'modernizing' agriculture. In Banten case, how did the Government's agriculture program meet the needs of entrepreneurial farmers?

a. The Local Government through Agricultural Office of Banten Province

The local government through the Agricultural Office of Banten Province had several programs to support farming activities. Agus Tauchid, the Head of the Office conveyed that some routine programs were counseling on agricultural cultivation and providing various subsidies.

The flagship program was a cattle-buffalo insurance premium sold to the farmers for only Rp. 40.000,00. The real price was Rp.200,000 for each animal, but it was subsidized by the government for Rp. 160.000,00. The compensation for animal lost, dead, or stolen, would be as high as Rp.10.000.000,00 for each animal.

Another insurance program was for rice farmers named AOTP (Assurance of Rice Crops). The premium was only Rp. 36.000,00 for a hectare farming area. The compensation in case of crop failure due to flooding, drought and soon, would be as high as Rp. 4.000.000,00 per hectare. Still, many farmers and breeder in Banten who had not responded yet to the program (Interview with Tauchid, 2019).

Aside from the above-mentioned programs, there were also provincial government programs such as counseling, seed assistance, livestock, fertilizer, training and agricultural equipment. Mostly, those programs were distributed to the farmer groups based on the proposal submitted. Yet, it seemed like the programs did not match with the farmers' real needs. Farmers resold goods they got from the government programs, then bought another goods for production needs (Interview with Agus Tauchid; Itang Interview, 2019).

Various programs at the local government level are still targeting farmers in general. There are no programs specifically targeting young farmers. Likewise with various schemes, still see agriculture in the framework of traditional agriculture, not business activities.

b. The Central Government through Banten Agricultural Technology Development Agency

The central government through the Banten Agricultural Technology Development Agency (BPTP) had a Young Agricultural Entrepreneurship program. One of the derivatives is the Millennial Farmer Program

in the form of training for millennial farmers and their assistants (extension) as many as 80 people from 7 districts / cities in Banten Province.

The training provided was in the form of: 1) KUB Chicken Cultivation Technology, 2) The Use of Android-Based Agricultural Technology Applications, and 3) Hydroponic Plant Installation Manufacturing Technology. (Rukmini interview, 2019)

However, the obstacle was that participants sent by the District / City Agriculture Office did not meet the specified criteria. Participants from Serang Regency, for example, were not participants who met the criteria of farmers who were millennial or adaptive to technology (Rukmini interview, 2019).

But millennial farmers who had been a national level role model like Jawara Farms' were not touched by the program. Surprisingly, this was inseparable from the political aspect. Young farmers who have different political affiliation was difficult to get government assistance. For example, Agis who have different political affiliation with the Regent facing difficulties to access information, assistance and programs from the Serang District Agriculture Office (Agis Interview, 2019).

Then, various aid schemes delivered by the central and regional government also did not meet the needs of farmers. Agis said that the main need was the accompaniment of a business scheme, not just the issue of cultivation. During this time counseling focuses on aspects of cultivation. Other assistance for farmers was also obtained through the process of submitting proposals through the Farmer Group Association such as HKTI or KTNA. While there was an age gap between these farmer organizations and young farmers groups such as Agis and Pratama.

The Rise of the Entrepreneurial Farmers Generation?

With the criteria of Clarks (2009) about the characteristics of entrepreneurship in the world of agriculture, we could analyze Jawara Farm and Selaras Farm. The following was the analysis:

1. Moving to New Bases of Agricultural Production

Both Jawara Farm and Selaras Farm left rice farming. Jawara Farm focused on animal husbandry, while Selaras Farm focused on horticulture. Rice farming was avoided because of limited land area and a long business cycle. Choosing livestock as well as horticulture was actually due to the need to earn regular income and the potential for growth. Rice farming tended to be detrimental and the results obtained were more for self-consumption.

2. Expanding New Market

Jawara Farm and Selaras Farm provided delivery orders for their products directly to consumers. In addition to serving local and regional markets, Jawara Farm also expanded to overseas markets by collaborating through Malaysian businessmen to provide sacrificial animals, both in Malaysia and Malaysians who carried out qurban in Indonesia. Religious event such as Qurban became niche market for Jawara farm.

3. Utilizing Endogenous Resources

The farming business of Jawara Farm and Selaras Farm always involved local residents around as the main human resources. In addition, they cultivated the local plants for the supporting

resources. For example, Jawara used the rice fields and grasslands around the farm as the source of animal feed, obtained by the local community.

4. Applying New Governance Method

The Jawara Farm and Selaras Farm were run using new business governance method. This was different from the traditional governance in peasant farming, where assets and workforce were household-based. Therefore, the new governance demanded profit and needed to use various innovations in business. They diversified the business and built relations with capital owners (Fintech) for business development. Information technology was also the main support for the business.

5. Involving Community

Both Jawara Farm and Selaras Farm involved the surrounding community for their businesses. For example, they recruited young people – especially from around the farm – to do internship there. The interns didn't only work but also studied the integrated business schemes. After that they could build their own business by becoming partners or truly independent. In addition, thousands of people from various places also came to learn the farm business.

6. Managing Space and Natural Resources

Both Jawara Farm and Selaras Farm developed environmental-friendly agriculture. Selaras Farm implemented organic farming, grew the vegetables without using pesticides and chemical fertilizers. Not only healthier for the consumption, the products also had added value. Meanwhile, Jawara Farm partnered with a group of local farmer members of the Green Leaf Farmers Group. Farmers could take goat and cow dung from Jawara Farm to be used as fertilizer. In return, Jawara farm got grass or wild plants for animal feed.

IV. Conclusion

From the above writing, it can be concluded that there had been a generation of young farmers who met the criteria as agricultural entrepreneurs. From the two cases, Jawara Farm and Selaras Farm could be said as examples of agricultural businesses occupied by young people in Banten. They moved from agriculture as a household-based business which was the character of peasant agriculture to entrepreneurial agriculture. They made farming activities a well-managed business using a market and innovation approach to get profits and made businesses grow.

Actually, the government had various programs in agriculture. Local government programs were still aimed at peasant farming, focusing on assistance and extension in agricultural cultivation. Other programs from Central Government were also very limited in scale and have not been able to meet what was expected: business assistance.

Even in funding, the role of government did not exist. The party providing financial assistance for them was agriculture fintech, which provides a profit-based capital loan. The bank considers that agriculture credit was too risky and that agricultural entrepreneurs felt the burden by the interest and the

complex loan system. However, optimistically we could see that agricultural entrepreneurship grows from below and through independent means. This research also concluded that the role of the government should be able to help agricultural entrepreneurs grow only if it was truly based on their needs.

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