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Obstacles of Field Agricultural Extension In Socializing the Program to Corn Farmer Groups in Teon Nila Serua District, Central Maluku Regency

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the constraints of agricultural extension workers in socializing the program to corn farmer groups in Teon Nila Serua District, Central Maluku Regency. This study uses a purposive sampling technique, namely the selection of samples based on certain characteristics with records of people who understand the real problems and conditions in the field. One way is through in-depth interviews from one informant to another and so on. The results showed that the obstacles faced by agricultural extension workers in Teon Nila Serua District in socializing the program included farmer participation, distance, time, and facilities and infrastructure. Each member is expected to participate in every group meeting, the goal is that members can obtain solutions to the problems they face

Keywords: Performance, communication, counseling, farmers.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an agrarian country rich in agricultural, forestry, plantation, livestock and fishery products. These natural conditions provide opportunities for the majority of Indonesian people to carry out business activities in agriculture and those related to agriculture.

Production and productivity of food crops are classified into two major sections, namely national strategic food commodities and local food commodities. One of the national strategic commodities in Maluku is corn. Based on the Agricultural Service Work Plan (2022), corn production in 2020 was realized at 24,733 tons or 41.65% of the target (59,384 tons). Compared to 2019, corn production has decreased significantly by 46.5%. Corn production in 2019 was 46,222.6 tons. Corn productivity in 2020 was 3.56 which exceeded the target rate of 2.34 (152.14%).

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This is the impact of a national program that has contributed to increasing the area of corn harvested in Maluku. It is inseparable from the active role of agricultural extension workers in carrying out extension activities to the main business actors or farmers to make agricultural development successful. According to Saputraet al., (2022) agricultural extension workers are civil servants who are given full duties, responsibilities and authorities as well as rights by authorized officials in agricultural organizational units to provide encouragement to farmers so they want to change their way of thinking, working and way of life in a way that is more in line with the times and the development of more advanced agricultural technology.

Counseling is part of efforts to educate the nation's life and promote general welfare which internally contains the intention to fulfill the human rights of every citizen within the scope of agricultural development, the role of extension has an important position. The extension system is a must to meet the needs of food, boards and clothing as well as industrial raw materials. With the implementation of a good extension system, it is expected to a productive contribution in the form of increasing indicators in the agricultural sector in general. So that field extension agents play a very important role in the socio-economic field, including: Directing farmers in mutual cooperation, working with farmers, connecting the hands and tongues of farmers to the government, changing the behavior of farmers who cannot become able, those who do not know to know, and unwilling to be willing, directing farmers to agribusiness, and fostering farmers in seeking great opportunities. According to Saputraet al., (2022) Agricultural extension is a non-formal education system that is practical for farmers and their families in rural areas to achieve a change in improving their standard of living.

At the sub-district level, a non-structural work unit called the Agricultural Extension Center (BPP) has been formed in each sub-district or several sub-districts form one BPP, whose function is as a meeting place for agricultural extension workers, main actors and business actors. BPP Teon Nila Serua District is one of the sub-districts in Central Maluku Regency, Maluku Province. BPP Teon Nila Serua has 13 extension workers with 17 assisted villages and for each village there are 3-12 corn farmer groups. In line with the Agricultural Development Strategic Command Program (KONSTRATANI) as a sub-district level agricultural activity center which is an optimization of the tasks, functions and roles of the Agricultural Extension Center (BPP) in realizing national food sovereignty,

The fundamental problem currently faced by BPP extension workers in TNS sub-districts is that socializing the program to each farmer group in each assisted village does not always run smoothly because there are still several 3 IJEBIR, Volume 01 Issue 01, 2022 Copyright at authors some rights reserved this work is licensed

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under aCreative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License . constraints, among which extension agents find it difficult to correlate among group agencies in reviewing the activity of farmer groups, extension agents still find it difficult to arrange schedules between fellow farmer groups, and work that is not carried out properly in accordance with the program.

Based on the description above, the authors are interested in conducting research on the constraints of agricultural extension workers in socializing the program to corn farmer groups in Teon Nila Serua District, Central Maluku Regency.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research was conducted at the Office of the Agricultural Extension Center (BPP) Teon Nila Serua District (TNS) Central Maluku Regency which is one of the corn production centers and the research was conducted from December 2022 to January 2023.

The type of research used is a qualitative descriptive method, that is, a method in researching an object, whether in the form of human cultural values or others, aims to describe, describe the relationship between existing elements or examine certain phenomena. The use of a qualitative approach in this case is because the researcher wants to know a clear description or description and object of the effectiveness of communication at the BPP Teon Nila Serua District. The research subject was the Teon Nila Serua Agricultural Extension Officer. And what will be the object of research is the effectiveness of agricultural extension communication in disseminating the program to the public.

Sources of research data consist of primary data and secondary data. Primary data is data obtained by researchers directly from competent informants using several data collection techniques. Primary data obtained from observation and interviews, direct debriefing with the informant. While secondary data is data obtained by other parties or indirectly.

The data is obtained fromdoing research isField Work Researchnamely direct field research which is the object of this research, using observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis technique used in this study is an interactive analysis model (Interactive model of analysis) which was developed by Miles *et al*., (2014) namely Data Collections (data collection), Condensation Data (data condensation), Data Display (presentation of data) and Drawing and Verifying Conclusions (conclusion).

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DISCUSSION

Constraints faced by agricultural extension workers in the Teon Nila Serua subdistrict, Central Maluku Regency

Based on the results of interviews with several extension workers, it was stated that there were several obstacles faced by extension workers in socializing the program to the community, including the lack of understanding or acceptance from a small part of the community, this was allegedly due to different educational factors. In addition, the large number of farmers who belong to old age causes farmers to often forget the information that was given by agricultural extension workers. So that what has been socialized is not implemented optimally.

Furthermore, some farmers are also not serious in pursuing their fields because they also do other jobs such as motorcycle taxi drivers, car drivers, construction workers and others. This causes a lack of effectiveness in carrying out planting in accordance with the recommendations of agricultural extension workers so that it has an impact on production results.

“Because their time is divided with other work, they pay little attention to the condition of the plants in the field. This causes many pests to attack corn and there is no treatment to overcome them thus causing the production is not as much as expected.” Said one of the BPP agricultural extension workers, Teon Nila Serua District, Central Maluku Regency.

Farmer participation in meetings and activities is also still low, only reaching 50% - 60%. This is due to personal busyness and doing work as a daily worker is preferred by members of the extension team (Allenet *et al*., 2015). The role of the extension worker is also very much needed to provide encouragement and motivation for the awareness of farmers in the group.

“As we hope that the formation of farmer groups will make it easier to deliver socialization materials in the form of coaching in empowering farmer groups to have independence, be able to implement innovations, and be able to analyze farming business, so that farmers and their families can earn increased and proper income and welfare. However, there are some farmers who are indifferent to their duties in farmer groups, resulting in a lack of cooperation in farmer groups. In addition, farmers who were not at the location (returning home) when the extension officers were conducting counseling and did not want to ask the farmers who were present so that these farmers did not know what had been socialized by the agricultural extension agents. This is one of the constraints for extension workers in disseminating the program”.

Distance is also an obstacle for BPP TNS extension workers. Where extension agents have to go to the location by taking 1-2 hours to walk through the hill. So that

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time efficiency is very difficult in carrying out outreach activities in the field. In addition, the location of the gardens is scattered and the infrastructure is incomplete so that the extension workers only occasionally visit the farmers' gardens to see deficiencies. Several BPP TNS extension officers also stated that facilities and infrastructure were very important to carry out outreach activities. If the facilities and infrastructure do not support the socialization activities will be too late.

In addition, the counseling schedule is required 4 times, but extension workers can only do counseling 1 or 2 times a week. This is due to time and labor constraints faced by farmers. However, extension officers still communicate with farmers via mobile phones to find out the progress experienced by farmers in the field.

According to Lubis (2022) the constraints faced by agricultural extension workers in efforts to develop Farmer Groups are awareness of the management and members of farmer groups, interest in groups, farmer groups are formed based on domicile, number of extension workers, facilities and infrastructure supporting extension activities, implementation of group capacity assessments Farmers and Inadequate access. Rahmawati (2022) also stated that in the implementation of agricultural extension there were several obstacles faced by farmers, namely related to poor communication relations between extension agents and farmers, there were other urgent activities, farmers' lack of awareness of the benefits of groups.

Indicators of success in farmer extension programs have a major influence on determining the capacity of extension agents while on duty. Whereas extension workers who have low capacity have an impact on extension activities, especially the main actors and business actors where they serve as extension services. It is hoped that agricultural extension workers can plan work and be able to carry out counseling that has needs according to the object, namely farmers. the competence and performance of a good extension worker is needed in order to achieve what is the goal of managing an agricultural business that is capable of producing good agricultural products. n activities will be too late.

Factors that influence the level of success of agricultural extension agents in TNS District in realizing the program for the community

Based on the results of observations, the success rate of agricultural extension TNS District in realizing the program to the community is very influenced by several factors including the experience/work period of the extension workers, the level of participation in the activity of farmers, training for extension agents, and the availability of the necessary facilities and infrastructure.

According to Hutapea (2012), there are two factors that affect the performance of agricultural extension workers in working professionally, namely: a) Internal factors;

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namely factors that come from the instructor himself. Internal factors consist of: formal education, training, age, motivation, utilization of extension media, and agricultural extension service tenure/work experience. b) External Factors; namely factors that come from outside the instructor himself. Some of the external factors considered by extension agents related to the performance of agricultural extension workers are: availability of necessary facilities and infrastructure, reward system, distance to work area, number of assisted villages, number of assisted farmer groups, information technology, level of active farmer participation, organizational relationships, and support coaching and supervision.

Furthermore, Refiswal (2018) states that age, distance to work area and the number of assisted villages have a negative effect on the performance of extension workers; while formal education and work experience have a positive effect on the performance of extension workers. Age and number of assisted villages have no significant effect on the performance of extension workers; while formal education, work experience, and the distance of the work area have a significant effect on the performance of extension workers.

CONCLUSION

The constraints faced by agricultural extension workers in Teon Nila Serua District in socializing the program included farmer participation, distance, time, and facilities and infrastructure.

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