

# Analysis of Corn Farmer Income in Sondoang Village, Kalukku District Mamuju Regency

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## ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the income of corn farmers in Sondoang Village, Kalukku District, Mamuju Regency, and to assess the role of government interventions in increasing their income. The study employs qualitative and quantitative methods, involving direct interviews with key stakeholders such as the village government, agricultural extension workers, and local farmers. Data collection methods include interviews, observations, and documentation, validated through triangulation techniques (source, technical, and time triangulation). Results indicate that government support, in the form of seed provision and agricultural extension programs, significantly impacts farmer productivity and income. This research highlights the potential of corn farming as a sustainable income source for rural communities and the critical role of government facilitation in enhancing agricultural practices.

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## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an agrarian country that makes the agricultural sector the main livelihood of its population, and also as a support for development. Why is the agricultural sector one of the pillars of development, because agriculture provides a fairly large portion in terms of income. The development goal to be achieved is a balanced economic sector, where the capabilities and strengths of the industrial sector are supported by the agricultural sector, namely agriculture which can increase the use of natural resources, energy, capital, and technology is also able to improve the welfare of farmers through increasing commodity control. One of the efforts to support economic growth in the agricultural sector is through increasing a variety of agricultural commodities, one of which is food crop commodities. The food crop commodity that is widely cultivated after rice is corn crops, because corn can contribute or contribute to farmers' income.

Corn farming is very good to cultivate, as the demand for corn in the market continues to increase every year, which shows that the cultivation of corn crops not only has economically profitable business opportunities but also provides benefits to the people who work as farmers on a daily basis. Because the planting age of corn plants is relatively short, corn businesses are very suitable for cultivation. Corn is one of the important cereal crops in Indonesia. In addition to being used as a staple food to replace rice for dietary diversification, and made into corn flour or cornstarch, corn is also used as animal feed. In Indonesia, there are three types of corn: hybrid corn, composite corn, and transgenic corn. Hybrid corn has a high production rate, which can reach 8–12 tons per hectare. However, they cannot be used as seeds to be replanted, as their production will drop by 30%. This creates a dependence for farmers on hybrid corn seeds, besides that the price of hybrid corn is much more expensive.

The advantages of composite corn are its short lifespan, resistance to pests and diseases, and can be planted repeatedly so that it does not cause dependency on farmers. The disadvantage of the composite corn type is that the production rate is low, only about 3 to 5 tons per hectare. Examples of composite corn are Arjuna, Bisma, Gajah Mas, and Genjah Rante. GMO corn has the advantage of a larger production capacity of around 8 to 12 tons per hectare, resistant to diseases, resistant to certain pests, and resistant to chemical drugs, but GMO corn also has disadvantages, such as corn seeds must be bought at the store because they cannot be produced by farmers, can cause new pests and diseases that are more resistant to chemical drugs, cause new diseases for livestock and humans, and cause damage to the soil. Examples of GMO corn varieties are BT corn, Terminator corn, and RR-GA21 corn. Corn is an annual plant. One of its lives is completed in 80 to 150 days. The first of the cycle is the vegetative and perturbation growth stage, the second is the generative growth stage. Corn plants are plants that have a high rate of photosynthesis, so they really need sunlight. So, a good location for corn cultivation is an open area in the form of rice fields or fields that are not protected from sunlight. The location for corn planting should not be waterlogged but have sufficient moisture content. Due to the limited supply of rice and the high price of rice, the underprivileged people are unable to obtain rice, so corn can be used as a substitute for rice. Corn plants belong to the type of palawija plants, also known as pangang plants, based on their description and morphology. Corn plants form cobs, or fruits, which are filled with seeds.

Since Indonesia has most agricultural areas, economic development focusing on the agricultural sector and the agricultural industry should be the center of development. Food that the Government prioritizes rice to increase its production. and corn, as both are staple foods and raw materials for industries such as animal feed and food agriculture. Until now, these two types of food are still imported. One of the things that is very important for corn and rice is to know the level of supply (manufacturing). In addition, the demand so that there is no scarcity or excessive number of markets which ultimately has a negative impact on the community as farmers and consumers as producers. Mamuju Regency itself, precisely in Sondoang Village, Kalukku District, many farmers have developed their agriculture in corn farming, even since 2017 until now it continues to increase and not a few farmers have switched from chocolate plants to corn food crops, also not a few farmers who make corn farming as the main source of income for the community in Sondoang Village, Kalukku District.

The agricultural sector is one of the main backbones of the economy of rural communities in Indonesia. With a significant contribution to national food needs, this sector plays an important role in supporting food security and improving people's welfare. Among various agricultural commodities, corn plants occupy a strategic position because in addition to being a staple food, corn is also used as a raw material for the animal feed and bioenergy industries, so it has a dual role in supporting the national economy. Sondoang Village, located in Kalukku District, Mamuju Regency, is one of the areas that has great agricultural potential, especially in corn cultivation. This potential is supported by the availability of a large enough land, both in the form of lowlands and hills, which is suitable for the development of corn crops. With the characteristics of plants that have a short harvest cycle, corn is one of the main choices of farmers to support the family economy. Therefore, the utilization of this agricultural potential is very important to increase corn productivity while supporting the development of the agricultural sector in Sondoang Village. Corn farming has an important role in supporting the economy of the people of Sondoang Village, Kalukku District, Mamuju Regency. Corn has been one of the main sources of income for most farmers in the region, given its characteristics as a short-lived crop with a fast harvest cycle. The income from corn cultivation is used to meet the basic needs of farmer families, such as daily food costs, household needs, and the education of their children. Moreover, income from corn farming also contributes significantly to the stability of the family economy, especially in rural areas that generally rely on the agrarian sector. The sustainability of income from corn allows farmers to have better access to their living needs, as well as being the main support in facing economic dynamics at the local level. Thus, corn

is not only an agrarian commodity, but also one of the main pillars that supports the economic resilience of farming families in Sondoang Village.

Corn cultivation in Sondoang Village has received significant support from the government, especially through the Mamuju Regency Agriculture Office. The support includes superior corn seed assistance distributed to farmers, periodic counseling programs to increase farmers' capacity in managing land, and technical assistance in implementing more efficient agricultural practices. These measures aim to encourage increased productivity while overcoming the challenges faced by farmers in running corn farming. However, although government support has had a positive impact, several key challenges remain obstacles in optimizing maize cultivation. One of the biggest challenges is limited access to subsidized fertilizers, which has an impact on increasing production costs. In addition, the lack of capital owned by farmers often limits their ability to adopt more modern agricultural technologies or methods. Most farmers also still use traditional methods of land management, which although they have been implemented for a long time, tend to be costly and inefficient. Therefore, more sustainable efforts are needed to overcome this challenge, both through the provision of supporting facilities and increasing farmers' access to more adequate agricultural resources. This study has important significance in analyzing the income of corn farmers in Sondoang Village, Kalukku District, Mamuju Regency, as well as identifying factors that affect their income levels. As one of the main commodities in the region, corn is not only a major source of income for farmers, but also a support for the local economy. Therefore, a deep understanding of the income generated from corn farming is urgently needed to evaluate the economic impact caused while determining strategic steps for improvement. Through this income analysis, the research is expected to identify more effective strategies to improve farmers' welfare. This includes optimizing cultivation practices, increasing access to resources, and developing more efficient crop distribution patterns. In addition, the results of this research can provide valuable input for the government in designing policies that support the sustainability of the agricultural sector in Sondoang Village. This data-based policy and empirical analysis is expected to be able to provide concrete solutions to various challenges faced by farmers while ensuring more inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research was conducted in Sondoang Village, Kalukku District, Mamuju Regency, for two months, using a mixed-method approach that integrates qualitative and quantitative methods to obtain a comprehensive understanding. The qualitative approach is inductive to identify patterns and relationships from field data, while the quantitative approach uses statistical analysis to measure the influence of independent variables on dependent variables. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants, namely the Village Secretary, agricultural extension workers, and 10 corn farmers, as well as through direct observation of corn farming practices. Secondary data is collected from a variety of literature sources, including books, scientific journals, and related documents. Data collection techniques include semi-structured interviews to explore farming practices and the role of the government, systematic observation to record field conditions, and documentation as relevant data support. Data analysis is performed by triangulation of sources, techniques, and time to ensure validity, while thematic analysis is used for qualitative data, and statistical analysis is applied for quantitative data. This approach aims to describe in detail the management of corn farming, the role of the government, and its impact on farmers' income in Sondoang Village.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The Role of the Government and Corn Farming Management in Increasing Farmers' Income in Sondoang Village, Kalukku District, Mamuju Regency Interview with Mr. Rahmat. B, Secretary of Sondoang Village, gave a clear overview of the condition of corn farming in this village and the role of the government in supporting the increase in farmers' income. Based on his explanation, most of the land

used for corn farming is not mountainous areas, but dry hills that are suitable for corn plants. The use of this land, in addition to not causing a negative impact on the environment, actually provides benefits in the form of greening barren land, reducing dust pollution, and improving the surrounding air quality. In terms of government support, Mr. Rahmat explained that the government has a significant role in increasing the income of corn farmers. The forms of support provided include the distribution of corn seeds for free through the Mamuju Regency Agriculture Office. This assistance is in the form of grants, without the obligation to return, and is sourced from the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBN). In addition, the government also routinely coordinates with agricultural extension workers to provide assistance to farmers in optimizing vacant land, not only for corn but also other crops. Agricultural extension workers play an important role in providing guidance related to planting techniques, fertilization, and pest management.

Mr. Rahmat also noted that the majority of the people of Sondoang Village began to switch from cultivating cocoa plants to corn. This is because corn has a shorter harvest cycle and a more stable economic value than chocolate. This shift provides faster and more consistent income opportunities for farmers. Based on his observations, most farmers who are serious about managing corn farming have experienced a significant increase in income. With the support of the government and agricultural extension workers, farmers in Sondoang Village can utilize previously unproductive land for corn cultivation, thus not only increasing income, but also supporting village economic development. Therefore, the success of corn farming in Sondoang Village is a positive example of the synergy between the community, the government, and agricultural extension workers in improving the welfare of farmers. Interview with Agricultural Extension Officer of Sondoang Village, Kalukku District, Mamuju Regency An interview with Mr. Abraham R. Palamba (AB), an agricultural extension worker of Sondoang Village, provided a detailed overview of corn farming practices in this region, the role of the government, and the community's response to the extension program. In the interview, Mr. Abraham explained that although corn is usually grown in lowlands, farmers in Sondoang Village also utilize hilly land with a slope of up to 8%, which is considered suitable for corn cultivation with certain techniques. The cultivation of corn in the highlands is possible thanks to the characteristics of corn plants that are adaptive to different types of soil, although capital constraints often prevent farmers from meeting the recommended fertilizer doses. **The Role of the Government in Supporting Corn Farmers** Mr. Abraham emphasized that the government has a significant role in increasing farmers' income. The Mamuju Regency Food Crops, Horticulture and Livestock Office, for example, has distributed assistance in the form of superior varieties of corn seeds to farmer groups in Sondoang Village. In addition, the village government routinely provides briefings through counseling on planting distance, balanced fertilization, and pest control, which greatly helps farmers in increasing production. This counseling is conducted at least twice a week, with agricultural extension workers and, on several occasions, other related agencies.

The response and participation of farmers in Sondoang Village shows high enthusiasm for the extension program. They are not only present regularly but also actively ask questions and discuss the challenges they face, such as pest control and the proper use of fertilizers. Agricultural extension workers also often make direct visits to farmers' land to provide technical assistance, ensuring that farmers implement appropriate cultivation practices. **The Impact of the Extension Program on Farmers' Income** According to Mr. Abraham, this extension program has had a positive impact on farmers' income. Farmers who participate in counseling regularly generally experience an increase in crop yields and income. This success, according to him, is not only measured by the size of the crop yield but also by the satisfaction of farmers with the results of their work. The existence of agricultural extension workers in Sondoang Village plays an important role in supporting the success of corn farming. The assistance provided helps farmers overcome technical obstacles, increase crop yields, and ultimately improve their welfare levels. This support is one of the main factors that encourage the productivity and sustainability of corn farming as the main source of income for the people of Sondoang Village. Collaboration between farmers, extension workers, and the government has had a real impact on the development of the agricultural sector in the region.

The results of interviews with 12 corn farmers in Sondoang Village provided an overview of corn farming management practices, the role of the government, and the impact of the extension program on increasing farmers' productivity and income. The interviewed informants included farmers from various backgrounds and experiences, who provided diverse views on the potential and challenges of maize cultivation in this village.

**Corn Farming Management** Most farmers stated that they use hilly and lowland land to plant corn, considering that this crop has the characteristics of a short harvest cycle. Corn is one of the main choices because it provides a faster source of daily income compared to crops such as cocoa which take longer to harvest. Farmers also strive to increase productivity through the selection of superior varieties such as Bisi and MK Sumo, as well as the application of cultivation techniques such as optimal planting spacing and fertilization. However, limited capital to buy fertilizers and agricultural tools is a major challenge, especially after the reduction of subsidized fertilizers by the government.

**The Government's Role in Corn Farming** The Government, through the Mamuju Regency Agriculture Office and the village government, provides significant support to farmers. Assistance in the form of corn seeds in grants is the first step that encourages farmers to start or expand corn cultivation. In addition, agricultural extension workers regularly visit villages to provide technical assistance, including training on balanced fertilization, pest management, and good land management. The farmers appreciated the government's role in providing this support, which is considered a form of serious concern for their welfare.

**Impact of Extension and Assistance** Extension programs that are carried out regularly by agricultural extension workers have a positive impact on farmers' income. The farmers admitted that after participating in the counseling, they were able to increase their crop yields because they understood more efficient cultivation techniques. For example, some farmers mentioned that extension workers' instructions regarding planting spacing and fertilization provided more optimal results than previous practices. However, this success also depends on the area of land owned and the awareness of farmers in managing land properly.

**Challenges and Opportunities** Although the management of corn farming in Sondoang Village shows promising results, some challenges still exist. Farmers with narrow land have limitations in increasing income. In addition, there are still many farmers who use traditional methods, which require a lot of labor and high costs. Agricultural extension workers suggest the application of modern techniques to address these challenges, including the optimization of vacant land and the efficient use of agricultural tools. Based on the interviews, it can be concluded that corn farming in Sondoang Village has made a significant contribution to farmers' income, especially with the support of the government and agricultural extension workers. However, the optimization of farming requires more attention to the provision of supporting facilities such as subsidized fertilizers and advanced training. The sustainability of the extension program and assistance from the government is urgently needed to ensure the improvement of the welfare of corn farmers in Sondoang Village, as well as encourage the agricultural sector as the main economic pillar in the area.

## CONCLUSION

The management of corn farming in Sondoang Village, Kalukku District, Mamuju Regency, shows that the concept of agriculture cannot be generalized as a universal truth. Each agricultural system has characteristics that are influenced by the local paradigm, cultural values, and ideology of farmers. This indicates that the success of farming in Sondoang Village depends on how the value system and culture of the local community are integrated with modern agricultural principles. This local paradigm is a great potential that can support the sustainability of the agricultural sector. Corn farmers' income, which is a key indicator of success, shows a significant increase. This reflects the success of farming productivity which is supported by two main dimensions: effectiveness and efficiency. Effectiveness can be seen from the ability of farmers to achieve quality and timely production targets, while efficiency is related to optimizing the use of resources, such as land, labor, and production costs. This dimension is the key in determining the success and sustainability of corn farming in Sondoang Village.

The role of village governments and agricultural extension workers is very important in supporting this success. Through various programs, such as seed assistance, training, and technical assistance, they have helped farmers increase their productivity and income. Optimal farmers' income is reflected in the value received after the sale of crops, both physically and non-physically. This is in accordance with Sukirno's theory (2018:28), which states that revenue is an important element in business, because it is the main indicator of success. The results of this study are in line with the findings of Anugrah Qodrat Ramadan Putra (2020) in Pasempe Village, Palakka District, Bone Regency, which shows that corn farming is efficient and profitable with an R/C Ratio of 2.79. This proves that corn farming, when managed well, can be a very profitable sector and worthy of development. Thus, this study underscores the importance of integrating local values with modern agricultural principles, continuous support from the government, and focusing on productivity to promote farmers' welfare. Corn farming in Sondoang Village not only contributes significantly to farmers' income, but also becomes a model for the sustainability of the agricultural sector at the local level.

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