Indonesian Agriculture Should Learn from Brazil
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Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Bogor Agricultural University, Dr Ernan Rustiadi, encourages Indonesia to cooperate with Brazil in the field of agriculture. Brazil is viewed by Dr Ernan to have developed successfully through the country's tropical agriculture. In fact, Brazil is expected to be an agriculture-based 'economic giant' in the world.

Dr Ernan said that this drive is just a shortcut in the various efforts that Indonesia actually still can do for the advancement of agriculture. One effort is to develop research, especially in the field of breeding. However, said Dr. Ernan, such research will not be of any use if the government does not have much attention and adequate funding to disseminate and apply research results in question.

"So far, Indonesian cooperation in agriculture has been oriented to Japan, Europe countries and America, which in fact have different climates. Meanwhile the cooperation with other tropical countries is lacking," said Dr. Ernan, citing another reason for the encouragement for Indonesia to cooperate with Brazil.

Dr Ernan put forward the idea at the Coffee Morning titled "Better Future of Indonesia Agriculture" organized by the Public Relations and Protocol IPB's Executive Secretary, Tuesday (24/4) in Baranangsiang Campus of IPB Bogor.

Dr Ernan, who recently made a working visit to Brazil's Agriculture Ministry, said that since the 1970's Brazil has hardly experience fuel crisis although the country is not an oil-producing country. Why is it so? Because the country's agricultural commodities such as corn and sugarcane are directed to make ethanol and biodiesel or vegetable-based fuel that turn out to able to meet the needs of its citizens for fuel.

Meanwhile, another product of sugar cane from Brazil in the form of sugar is exported to several countries, including Indonesia. "Our sugarcane farmers have to compete with the sugar from Brazil," said Dr. Ernan.

Dr Ernan also warns that in 2020 that Brazil is ready to open five million hectares of land for oil palms to produce plants-based fuels.

"As for oil palms, Brazil is still learning, while Indonesia is already leading and even become the world's biggest exporter of CPO (crude palm oil or palm oil). However, if we are just a little off guard, then our CPO can be defeated by Brazil as well," said Dr. Ernan, while saying he agrees that it is better for Indonesia to export butter than CPO export. (Mtd)