Nutritional Problems Not Only Malnutrition
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Posted by admin on 01 March 2011

The problem of malnutrition in Indonesia will be difficult to resolve as long as poverty persists and the prices of goods rise. This was expressed by Professor of Nutritional Sciences, Bogor Agricultural University (IPB), Prof. Ali Khomsan in the Afternoon Dialogue of RRI, Tuesday (25/1) in Bogor. Many factors cause children to suffer from malnutrition, for example, poverty, eating difficulty/low appetite, low awareness among mothers of healthy nutritious foods. "Often, for practical reasons children are given only crackers, soy sauce and rice," explained Prof. Khomsan.

People need to understand the characteristics of children suffering from malnutrition, namely bodyweight below the standard, which is indicated in the red graph on KMS (Card Towards Health), thin, less energetic, weak and pale.

Healthy and nutritious food does not always have to be expensive and purchased. It can be grown by a family utilizing the homestead for example by raising chickens, eels, fish and planting vegetables. Prof. Khomsan also regrets that the cadres of Posyandu (Integrated Health Service) make little effort to encourage the housewives to utilize the homeyards to meet the nutritional needs of their family. Further, according to Prof. Khomsan, Posyandus have so far only served to weigh children under five years old, conducted immunization, and provided additional food with no further consideration. "Quite often the additional food remains unchanged, that is, green bean porridge or one egg cooked to get the attention of children," said Prof. Khomsan with concern.

Actually, the nutritional issue in the world is related to not only undernourishment but also overweight, which frequently occurs in Europe and America. "The diseases related to overweight are among others heart disease, diabetes mellitus, stroke and so forth. Overweight results from unhealthy eating patterns, which tend to be excessive," says Prof. Khomsan. It is here that the welfare gap is seen between the developing countries and the developed ones. (mtd)