

The Production of Indonesian Salt is Only 48 Percent

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Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Mr. Cicip Sutardjo Sharif, in his keynote address stated that in an effort to attain self-sufficiency in salt, the government has implemented Pemberdayaan Usaha Garam Rakyat (People Empowerment for Salt Production - PUGAR) Program. "This program was developed to alleviate poverty, increase employment opportunities and of the most important of all to realize the national self-sufficiency Program," Sharif said in a seminar 'Stategi Swasembada Garam' ('Self-sufficiency Salt Strategies'), Tuesday, 1 November 2011, in Bogor. The seminar was organized by the Faculty of Human Ecology, Bogor Agricultural University (IPB) in cooperation with the Ministry of Fisheries and Maritime Affairs.

As an initial step to realize the self-sufficiency program on salt, PUGAR has been carried out in 40 districts / cities in 10 provinces with a total budget of 90 billion Rupiah. "The government also decided policies to increase production and quality of salt for household consumption and industries," said Sharif. In addition to develop for social salting business, the government has set the zoning of salt business location, land consolidation, distribution and marketing collateral. Efforts to achieve self-sufficiency in salt is not as easy as as people may think. Therefore, the cooperation of various parties, especially with universities is really required.

Furthermore Sharif expressed, that the this year salt production is estimated to reach 1.4 million tons, or only around 48 percent of the total national salt demands of 2.9 million tons. In an effort to meet domestic demand, said Sharif, the government currently has to import about 1.7 million tons of salt with a surplus of 200 thousand tons.

In his remarks, Vice Rector for Academic and Student Affairs, Prof. Yonny Koesmaryono, expressed that salt producing countries have to cover their shortfall by salt importation. "It's an irony," said Prof. Yonny. If the technology problem, according to Prof. Yonny, this will be easily be overcome. But when it comes to the exact of amount of salt demanded by national and macro issues, it requires appropriate strategies to overcome them.

Dean of the Faculty of Human Ecology, Dr. Arif Satria, stated that salt importation is not a small problem, but it requires macro level decisions. "This issue is not simply about technology. Salt business is not just about technology, but also the weather, infrastructure, consumer demand. But the most important of all is the exact information of our salt demand," added Dr. Arif. The Focus Group Discussion preceded the workshop which was expected to produce recommendations for the formulation of policy strategies of national self-sufficiency of salt. (Wied).