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Analysis of Salt Policy Regulations and Their Impact on Salt Farmers' Welfare: Achieving a Balance Between Regulation and Protection

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Abstract: Indonesia possesses considerable potential for salt production, particularly in Cirebon Regency, West Java, given its extensive maritime territory. However, challenges such as low productivity, poor quality, and limited access to technology and capital impede the development of the local salt industry. The preponderance of salt farmers' reliance on conventional methodologies engenders an incongruity between domestic market demand and production capacity. The present study undertakes a rigorous examination of the extant regulations pertaining to salt policies and their impact on farmers' welfare in Waruduwur Village, Mundu Sub-district. The present study employs a qualitative case study approach to investigate the role of government policies in overcoming capital and technological barriers, including the application of geomembrane technology. It is hypothesized that the findings will provide recommendations for balancing effective regulation and farmer protection. The implementation of these recommendations is expected to improve farmers' welfare, reduce import dependency, and enhance the competitiveness of local salt in the national market.

Keyword: Indonesia's Salt Potential, Capital and Technology in Salt Production, Government Policy and Farmer Welfare, Salt Cooperative

INTRODUCTION

Given its status as an archipelagic nation with an extensive maritime territory, Indonesia possesses considerable potential for the utilization of marine resources, including salt production. In accordance with the stipulations outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which was adopted on December 10, 1982, in Montego Bay, Jamaica, the maritime territory of Indonesia has been delineated as encompassing an area of 3,257,357 square kilometers, of which approximately two-thirds is

comprised of oceanic waters. This extensive maritime domain harbors a wealth of untapped natural resources, prominently including salt. Salt has been a pivotal commodity in Indonesian culture for millennia, playing a substantial role in the nation's economic landscape, particularly within the industrial sector, domestic consumption, and food production. Nevertheless, despite this immense potential, Indonesia's national salt production has been incapable of meeting domestic demand. Consequently, the country frequently imports salt to address supply shortages.

Despite Indonesia's considerable potential for salt production, the sector continues to encounter various challenges that impede the optimization of production. A significant challenge confronting the field is the ineffectiveness of national development strategies, which are not yet supported by adequate technology. Furthermoregovernment policies that are less favorable to salt farmers and a reliance on traditional production methods have resulted in low competitiveness of Indonesian local salt. The quality of salt produced by traditional farmers frequently falls below industry standards with regard to purity and quantity. The aforementioned factors result in a deficiency in the capacity to satisfy domestic and industrial market demand, thereby necessitating the importation of salt.

According to data from the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (KKP) in 2022, the number of salt farmers in Indonesia was recorded at approximately 2,431 individuals. This figure constitutes a negligible percentage of the total workforce in the country. Moreover, the financial compensation received by salt farmers is comparatively modest and does not accurately reflect the labor exerted by these individuals. Additionally, the limited area of salt ponds represents a significant challenge for farmers seeking to increase production. Pambudi and Bendesa (2020) recorded the area of salt ponds and non-salt ponds in Indonesia at approximately 22,587 hectares. However, the establishment of new ponds is a costly endeavor and a complex process. This is one of the factors contributing to the low national salt production capacity.

Cirebon Regency, West Java, is one of the regions with significant potential for salt production. This region's economy is predominantly reliant on the salt farming sector, which constitutes a significant source of income for a considerable segment of the local population. As indicated by data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), salt ponds in Cirebon Regency are distributed across multiple sub-districts, including Losari, Suranenggala, Kapetakan, Gebang, Pangenan, Gunungjati, and Mundu. Salt farmers in Mundu Village, a locality in Mundu District, exemplify the role of micro-entrepreneurs in managing salt ponds to satisfy the demands of the local community and the domestic market. Nonetheless, in spite of its considerable potential, the salt production sector in Cirebon is confronted with numerous challenges, both with regard to production and quality.

In order to enhance the quality and quantity of salt production, it is imperative that farmers adopt technologies that can assist in the production process. Geomembrane technology is a technological advancement with the potential to enhance the efficiency and quality of salt production. This technology can assist in reducing the water content in salt and increasing its purity. However, the implementation of this technology remains constrained, particularly in Waruduwur Village, Mundu District, where numerous farmers continue to adhere to conventional practices that have been handed down through generations. Despite the considerable potential of geomembrane technology to enhance agricultural productivity, its implementation is often hindered by the substantial financial investments required, which can be a significant constraint for farmers with limited financial resources.

In addition to technological limitations, salt farmers face another challenge: limited access to capital. In many coastal communities, such as Waruduwur Village, salt farmers encounter significant challenges in obtaining financing to develop their businesses. These farmers have expressed concerns regarding the perceived lack of attention from the local

government in providing adequate financial assistance and empowerment programs. However, the local government has, in reality, provided facilities related to capital issues, namely through the Salt Cooperative Program, which was formed through salt farmer groups. The question remains as to whether the Salt Cooperative Program can carry out its role well and help improve the welfare of salt farmers through its programs, such as access to capital and technology. These programs are mandated by the local government and Law No. 7 of 2016 concerning the Protection and Empowerment of Fishermen Fish Farmers , and Salt Farmers. This law serves as a legal basis for the state to protect and empower salt farmers, or it may be viewed as a platform created by the elite for their own personal interests. Consequently, the implementation of this policy has not been entirely optimal, particularly with regard to facilitating access to capital and technological empowerment for salt farmers. The Salt Cooperative has played a pivotal role in enhancing the welfare of salt farmers in Cirebon Regency, particularly in Waru Duwur Village.

In order to address these challenges, it is imperative to conduct a thorough analysis of local government policies pertaining to the empowerment of salt farmers. The present study seeks to examine the government's role in providing access to capital, technology, and training for salt farmers in Waruduwur Village, Mundu District. The People's Salt Cooperative Program is a subject of interest in the context of its potential contributions to the enhancement of farmers' welfare while concurrently promoting the optimization of salt production in Indonesia. The objective of this study is to analyze local government policies in empowering salt farmers, particularly in Waruduwur Village, to enhance the quality and capacity of salt production, as well as to improve farmers' welfare. Consequently, the findings are expected to contribute to the development of more effective policies supporting Indonesia's salt sector.

The present study will employ a qualitative approach, utilizing a case study of Waruduwur Village in Mundu District, Cirebon Regency. The selection of this method was driven by the objective of attaining a more profound comprehension of the underlying dynamics manifesting at the local level, encompassing both the governmental policies and the responses exhibited by salt farmers in relation to these policies. The data will be collected through interviews with salt farmers, local government officials, and other relevant parties. The findings of this study are expected to provide strategic recommendations that will be useful in the development of policies that will better empower salt farmers and support increased national salt production.

This study offers insights into the state of the salt industry in Cirebon Regency. It also endeavors to propose solutions to the challenges confronting salt farmers. The objective is twofold: first, to enhance the well-being of salt farmers, and second, to fortify the competitiveness of local salt in the national market.

METHOD

The present research employs a qualitative approach with a case study design, aiming to provide an in-depth understanding of the challenges and potential strategies for empowering salt farmers in Waruduwur Village, Mundu District, Cirebon Regency. The selection of this village as the research location was driven by its status as a prominent salt-producing area in West Java, contributing significantly to the regional salt industry.

The data for this study was collected through in-depth interviews with various key informants, including salt farmers, local government officials, and other relevant parties such as technology providers, financial institutions, and academics. The interviews were designed to elicit information regarding implemented policies, obstacles faced by salt farmers, and empowerment opportunities in this sector. In addition, field observations were conducted to

gain a firsthand understanding of the salt production process, technology use, and operational challenges.

Secondary data were collected through an analysis of official government reports, recent statistical data, and a review of relevant literature related to salt production and policy in Indonesia. This analysis draws on several regulations, including Law No. 7 of 2016 concerning the Protection and Empowerment of Fishermen, Fish Farmers, and Salt Farmers. This law emphasizes the government's obligation to protect and empower salt farmers by providing them with access to capital, technology, and training. Moreover, this study alludes to the Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Regulation Number 2 of 2015 concerning the Empowerment of Salt Farmers and Small-Scale Fishermen. The objective of this regulation is to enhance the productivity and competitiveness of salt farmers at both the local and national levels.

The analysis was conducted using a thematic analysis approach, which is a methodological framework that facilitates the identification of patterns, themes, and relationships between various factors influencing salt farmer empowerment. The objective of this research is to identify policies that could improve the welfare of salt farmers and increase the competitiveness of local salt in domestic and international markets. The research approach will entail the analysis of the structural barriers that salt farmers face and the formulation of strategic recommendations for addressing these challenges.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (KKP) has determined that the quality of Indonesian salt production does not meet export standards. It is unfortunate that Indonesian salt production is solely utilized for consumption, as this limits the potential for additional applications in various industries. The underlying reason for this phenomenon is that the quality of Indonesian salt has not yet reached the level required for industrial use, which is defined as a purity of 97-98% NaCl. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), approximately 2.7 tons of imported salt were received by Indonesia in 2022. This high import figure continues to fluctuate on an annual basis. A thorough analysis is imperative to ascertain the underlying factors contributing to the substandard quality of Indonesian salt, which is incapable of meeting the industrial demand, compelling the government to resort to importing salt. Click or tap here to enter text.

It is important to note that each region is characterized by its own distinct geographical conditions. These characteristics influence the management of salt ponds, including rainfall, solar energy, and soil type. These three geographical factors must be given full consideration during the production process of salt ponds. It is important to note that each region is characterized by its own distinct geographical conditions. These characteristics influence the management of salt ponds, including rainfall, solar energy, and soil type. These three geographical factors must be given full consideration during the salt pond production process.

In the context of Cirebon Regency, particularly in Waruduwur Village, Mundu District, significant challenges have been identified that affect the quality and quantity of salt produced. A primary factor contributing to the suboptimal level of productivity is the persistent reliance on conventional and inefficient production technologies. Although Cirebon Regency possesses substantial potential for salt production, with approximately 22,587 hectares of land spread across districts such as Losari, Suranenggala, Kapetakan, Gebang, Pangenan, Gunungjati, and Mundu , The sector continues to exhibit signs of underdevelopment. The majority of salt farmers in the region continue to rely on conventional methods.

Legal Policies that Support the Capitalization and Empowerment of Salt Farmers: Law No. 7 of 2016 concerning the Protection and Empowerment of Fishermen, Fish Farmers, and Salt Farmers

Legal Policies Supporting Capitalization and Empowerment of Salt Farmers: Law No. 7 of 2016 concerning the Protection and Empowerment of Fishermen, Fish Farmers, and Salt Farmers. This legislation is meticulously crafted to ensure the protection of salt farmers and to facilitate their access to resources, technology, and capital that can enhance their welfare and productivity.

The primary objective of Law No. 7 of 2016 is to ensure the economic well-being of salt farmers by safeguarding their interests and facilitating the attainment of fair and sustainable returns from their operations. Salt farmers play a pivotal role in the marine and fisheries sector, providing substantial economic benefits, particularly to coastal regions. In this context, salt farmers are expected to receive protection for their rights as business actors, both economically and socially.

This legislation is designed to promote the economic empowerment of salt farmers by ensuring that they have adequate access to the resources, technology, and capital necessary to enhance their productivity. The government plays a facilitating role by establishing policies and programs that promote the development of the salt sector in Indonesia. Therefore, it is anticipated that Law No. 7 of 2016 will promote the establishment of a more effective system with regard to capital, training, and technological access. This will enhance the competitiveness of salt farmers.

Moreover, environmental sustainability constitutes a pivotal element of this legislative initiative. This sustainability aspect is crucial to ensure that salt production by salt farmers does not damage coastal ecosystems and the surrounding environment. For instance, a prevalent deleterious effect of salt production is the deterioration of the quality of the water and soil utilized in the process. Consequently, Law No. 7 of 2016 incorporates provisions that pertain to the utilization of environmentally friendly technologies and sustainable natural resource management practices. The implementation of these provisions is expected to motivate farmers to modify their existing production practices.

According to Law No. 7 of 2016, the government has implemented various policies with the objective of providing social and economic protection to salt farmers. This protection encompasses the farmers' rights to receive a fair and decent income from their production. In this regard, the government has expressed a commitment to reducing income inequality among salt farmers and addressing issues related to the often unstable and low price of salt.

One of the provisions encompassed by the legislation in question pertains to a social security mechanism for salt farmers, a segment of the population that is particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of natural disasters and climate change. In this regard, the government is expected to allocate financial resources or provide other forms of assistance to salt farmers, thereby helping them to cope with losses resulting from adverse weather or other natural disasters that could impact their salt production.

In addition to social and economic protection, Law No. 7 of 2016 underscores the significance of empowering salt farmers through access to capital and technology. Access to capital is crucial for enabling salt farmers to expand their businesses, improve pond infrastructure, and transition to more efficient and environmentally friendly technologies. One program designed to provide financial assistance to salt farmers is the People's Business Credit (KUR), which is allocated to the agricultural and marine sectors, including salt farmers. The program in question offers loans with reduced interest rates and more rigorous requirements compared to commercial loans, thereby rendering them more affordable for salt farmers seeking to augment their production capacity.

Despite the existence of the Smallholder Business Credit (KUR) and other financing programs, many salt farmers continue to face challenges in accessing these resources, particularly in remote areas such as Waruduwur Village in Cirebon Regency. The crux of the issue appears to be rooted in a deficiency in comprehension regarding the processes involved in submitting credit applications, compounded by a paucity of information available to farmers concerning the array of programs at their disposal. Therefore, the provision of capital to salt farmers must be accompanied by more intensive outreach and training.

Additionally, this legislation promotes the adoption of contemporary technologies in salt production. The utilization of geomembranes is regarded as a promising strategy for enhancing production efficiency. This technology enables salt farmers to mitigate losses incurred due to rainwater contamination and expedite the salt drying process. The government is expected to provide technical assistance and facilitation in procuring this technology, particularly for small salt farmers who face high investment costs.

A salient feature of Law No. 7 of 2016 is its emphasis on environmental sustainability. The production of salt frequently depends on the utilization of limited natural resources, including seawater and coastal land. Consequently, it is imperative to guarantee that salt production activities do not cause harm to coastal ecosystems and diminish environmental quality. In this regard, the government is expected to educate salt farmers about the importance of environmentally friendly production practices. One such practice is the use of geomembrane technology, which has been shown to reduce negative impacts on the environment. In addition, it is imperative to implement systematic monitoring and oversight of salt pond management to guarantee that salt farmers adhere to the prevailing regulations concerning environmental sustainability.

Despite the explicit objective of Law No. 7 of 2016 to enhance the empowerment of salt farmers, the implementation of this policy remains encumbered by numerous challenges. A significant challenge pertains to the absence of coordination between the central and regional governments with regard to counseling, training, and the allocation of targeted assistance. At the regional level, many salt farmers are still unaware of policies or programs that could support their businesses, such as access to financing or new technologies. However, the Regional Government, through the Food Security and Fisheries Service (DKPP) of Cirebon Regency, established a Salt Cooperative. This initiative was undertaken to support increased production and to enhance the welfare of salt farmers in Cirebon Regency. To enter text, click or tap here.

Nonetheless, the presence of the Salt Cooperative has not yet resolved the challenges faced by salt farmers concerning their limited awareness of the administrative procedures necessary to secure assistance or facilities from the Regional Government through the People's Salt Cooperative. This is primarily due to an absence of information regarding the role of the salt cooperative and the potential benefits accruing to salt farmers from joining the People's Salt Cooperative. Consequently, a significant proportion of salt farmers, particularly in Waru Duwur Village, have not affiliated themselves with the people's salt cooperative. This demonstrates the significance of the local government's oversight of the People's Salt Cooperative, particularly with regard to its adherence to its mandate of providing counsel and aiding farmers in navigating these administrative procedures.

The Role of Salt Cooperatives in Implementing Challenges Regarding Legal Policies that Support Capitalization and Empowerment of Salt Farmers

Despite the implementation of various legal policies by the government to support the empowerment of salt farmers in Indonesia, including in Cirebon Regency, the implementation of these policies still faces many challenges that hinder their effectiveness. The proposed policies are designed to safeguard the interests of salt farmers, facilitate access

to financial resources, and incorporate advanced technologies to enhance production efficiency. However, in practice, numerous obstacles are encountered. These obstacles include coordination difficulties between the Regional Government, Salt Cooperatives, and salt farmers. There are also related problems in accessing financing and a lack of knowledge regarding modern technologies that could improve the quality and quantity of salt production.

A significant challenge in implementing policies designed to empower salt farmers is the inadequate coordination between local governments and the farmers themselves. Despite the implementation of initiatives such as the Salt Cooperative and the provision of technical assistance by the Regional Government, a significant proportion of salt farmers remain uninformed about these programs and their availability. In more remote areas, such as Waruduwur Village in Mundu District, salt farmers frequently lack information about these policies. Despite the existence of available information, the distribution of assistance and access to financing programs is frequently disparate, resulting in farmers who require such support frequently failing to receive it.

The coordination problem under consideration is attributable to an absence of effective communication between the local government, the Salt Cooperative, and the salt farmers. In the absence of a comprehensive extension system, salt farmers find themselves in a state of uncertainty regarding potential programs that could enhance their well-being. Existing programs could benefit from enhanced targeting through closer collaboration and improved coordination among the involved parties in the empowerment of salt farmers.

Despite the advent of innovative technologies, such as geomembranes, which are poised to enhance salt production efficiency, a significant proportion of salt farmers continue to lack a comprehensive grasp of these methodologies. The absence of effective technical outreach has been identified as a significant impediment to their adoption. Salt farmers have become accustomed to years of production and are reluctant to adopt new methods that they perceive as difficult or unproven.

The absence of adequate government outreach and the limitation of access to proper technical training represent significant obstacles that impede salt farmers' capacity to acquire knowledge regarding the implementation of novel technologies, including geomembranes and other eco-friendly methodologies. Moreover, the financial burden associated with attending training or workshops on these novel technologies often proves to be a significant obstacle for salt farmers, a considerable proportion of whom are confronted with limited financial resources.

Financing continues to represent a substantial challenge for salt farmers in Indonesia, particularly in remote regions. The Salt Cooperative Program has the potential to contribute to the enhancement of farmers' well-being. Specifically, salt cooperatives have the capacity to provide assistance related to production equipment and capital support. The existence of these cooperatives has the potential to improve access to capital for salt farmers by leveraging bank credit schemes. One such initiative is the People's Business Credit (KUR), which aims to provide loans with reduced interest rates and less stringent requirements for salt farmers. However, in practice, numerous salt farmers encounter challenges in accessing this program. One of the primary factors contributing to this challenge is the intricate and often opaque administrative process, which hinders salt farmers' ability to navigate the requisite procedures for securing credit. A significant number of salt farmers are not well-versed in the administrative procedures necessary to apply for loans. These individuals frequently encounter impediments such as incomplete documentation or challenges in meeting credit requirements. Moreover, a significant proportion of salt farmers lack collateral or assets that could be used as security, despite the existence of unsecured loans offered by KUR for micro and small businesses. This hinders their ability to obtain the financing necessary to modernize their technology or develop their businesses.

Presently, Waruduwur boasts a single Salt Cooperative, comprising 10 salt farmers, despite the fact that the total number of salt farmers in Waru Duwur Village is approximately 200. The absence of interest among salt farmers in Waru Duwur Village in joining the Salt Cooperative can be attributed to a lack of awareness regarding the potential benefits of doing so. Salt farmers have expressed concerns regarding the length and opacity of the application process, which poses a significant challenge given their limited time and resources. Salt farmers often exhibit reluctance in pursuing loan applications due to the unpredictability of the approval process and the complexity of adhering to the stipulated criteria. Another problem that exacerbates the limited access to financing is the substandard financial literacy among salt farmers. A significant number of salt farmers lack the necessary financial management expertise to effectively oversee their business finances. Individuals who lack a comprehensive understanding of financial management frequently encounter difficulties in effectively planning their finances and managing the loans they receive.

The absence of financial management expertise among salt farmers impedes their capacity to effectively utilize financing options available from institutions such as the People's Business Credit (KUR), among others. In the absence of adequate financial literacy, salt farmers may encounter difficulties in managing funds for operational needs, equipment purchases, and the implementation of new technology. This, in turn, may have a negative impact on the efficiency and sustainability of their businesses.

In addition to the challenges posed by administrative and technical aspects, the implementation of this policy is also influenced by social and cultural factors. A considerable number of salt farmers have historically depended on conventional techniques for salt production. They demonstrate a preference for the methods they have mastered and exhibit skepticism towards change or new technologies. A number of farmers have expressed concerns regarding the affordability and necessity of modern technology, citing uncertainty regarding its efficacy within their specific local contexts.

The reluctance of salt farmers to adopt new methods can be attributed to their adherence to established customs and a propensity to adhere to prevailing practices. This aversion to change, despite the potential benefits it could bring, is a salient feature of the salt farming community. Consequently, in addition to enhancing technical coordination and training, the government must also educate salt farmers about the significance of innovation and adaptation in addressing the progressively intricate challenges associated with salt production. It is incumbent upon the government to facilitate a paradigm shift among salt farmers by offering substantiated evidence of the successful implementation of novel technologies and providing concrete examples that will enhance their confidence in these technologies.

A notable challenge pertains to the efficacy of policies, which are not consistently aligned with the intended objectives. Despite the implementation of policies such as the Salt Cooperative Program, the Smallholder Business Credit (KUR), and capital assistance in the agricultural and maritime sectors, their execution frequently neglects to take into account the unique characteristics of specific regions and the distinct requirements of salt farmers in these areas. A substantial proportion of policies are characterized by a high degree of genericity, resulting in a lack of alignment with the distinct characteristics of salt businesses within specific regions. For instance, numerous salt farmers in rural areas require modest amounts of capital for their businesses; however, extant policies prioritize assistance for larger businesses. Consequently, the efficacy of these policies in reaching micro- or small-scale salt farmers is diminished.

The discrepancy between the nature of the assistance provided and the needs of salt farmers in the field constitutes a primary challenge. A subset of farmers lacking the necessary equipment or lacking access to adequate technical training does not receive the requisite

assistance. Moreover, the assistance that is received by these farmers has not had a significant impact on their productivity.

CONCLUSION

The strategic initiative to empower salt farmers in Cirebon Regency signifies a pivotal step in enhancing salt productivity and quality across Indonesia. In an effort to address these challenges, the government has enacted a series of policies and programs, including Law No. 7 of 2016, which focuses on the protection and empowerment of fishermen, fish farmers, and salt farmers. Additionally, the government has implemented regulations that provide financial support and encourage the adoption of modern technologies, such as geomembranes, to enhance the efficiency and sustainability of these sectors. While these policies are quite comprehensive, the main challenge lies in their implementation. The existence of cooperatives Salt has also not fully addressed the challenges faced by salt farmers in improving their welfare. A significant number of salt farmers encounter challenges in accessing available assistance and technology, primarily due to a lack of coordination between local governments, salt cooperatives, and farmers themselves. A multitude of issues must be addressed, including the complex nature of administration and the inadequate financial literacy levels exhibited by salt farmers.

Capital constraints have been identified as a significant impediment, hindering the adoption of novel technologies that have the potential to enhance production efficiency. Despite the availability of the People's Business Credit (KUR) program as a low-interest financing solution, salt farmers frequently encounter challenges due to the complexity of the procedures and their limited awareness of how to access this financing. Moreover, the absence of technical training in contemporary technologies, such as geomembranes, impedes the implementation of technologies with the potential to enhance the quality and quantity of salt production.

Policy Suggestion And Recommendations

1. The following paper will examine the ways in which improved coordination and collaboration between local governments, salt cooperatives, and salt farmers has been achieved. Improved coordination between local governments, salt cooperatives, and salt farmers is imperative to ensure that farmers have access to information regarding existing assistance programs. Local governments must collaborate with salt cooperatives to establish a more effective and regular extension system, ensuring that pertinent information reaches salt farmers in a comprehensible manner. This initiative is crucial for enhancing the well-being of salt farmers.
2. Simplification of Financing Administration Procedures: It is imperative to streamline the financing application procedures, such as the Smallholder Business Credit (KUR), to enhance their accessibility for salt farmers, particularly those residing in remote regions. The implementation of structured financial literacy programs is imperative to assist farmers in acquiring knowledge regarding access to financing and the effective management of their finances.
3. The development of infrastructure to support the salt sector is a subject of significant interest. The existence of adequate infrastructure is imperative for the enhancement of salt farmers' productivity. The implementation of development initiatives, such as the establishment of efficient distribution channels, secure storage facilities, and modern processing units, in conjunction with incentives for the adoption of environmentally friendly technologies, is poised to play a pivotal role in significantly enhancing farmers' productivity. It is incumbent upon the government to ensure that such infrastructure is accessible to farmers across Cirebon Regency, particularly those in remote areas.

4. The following recommendations are hereby proposed for the Regional Government: This research can serve as a reference for the government regarding the effectiveness of the policy on empowering and protecting salt farmers, whether it has been implemented well or whether new ideas are needed. This is particularly evident in the case of the Cirebon Regency Government, which has not yet promulgated a regional regulation to ensure the protection and empowerment of salt farmers. This is noteworthy given that the Cirebon Regency is a prominent center of salt production in Indonesia.

The implementation of improved policies and the adept management of prevailing challenges have the potential to catalyze the advancement of the salt sector in Cirebon Regency, thereby conferring enhanced benefits to salt farmers. This development would not only augment the well-being of salt farmers but also contribute to the escalation in the competitiveness of Indonesian salt products in the global market. Moreover, it would serve as a catalyst for the realization of the Food Self-Sufficiency program, a strategic initiative aimed at curtailing the nation's reliance on imports.

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