



# Encouraging rural economic growth through farmer institutions and transparency for income optimization

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## ABSTRACT

This research aims to evaluate the role of farmer institutions in optimizing profits and increasing socio-economic development in rural areas, with a focus on Sumber Candik Hamlet, Jember Regency as one of the coffee producers. This research is based on the importance of access to information, capital, infrastructure and markets to encourage agricultural innovation and sustainability of the coffee plantation sector. The methodology used is an ethnographic approach, where researchers spent seven months observing, interacting and interviewing coffee practitioners in Sumber Candik Hamlet. Research findings show that the information imbalance between farmers and traders, as described in asymmetric information theory by Akerlof (1970), causes farmers to often sell their crops at low prices. Meanwhile, producers in the Jember area sell processed coffee at much higher prices. These results underscore the importance of strengthening farmer institutions and increasing access to information to create more efficient and fair markets and optimize farmer profits. Apart from that, this research also emphasizes the need for policies that encourage more equal relations between economic actors and increase transparency in policy making to reduce the dominance of large capital owners. Strategic steps such as improving infrastructure and better access to information are expected to support more sustainable growth in the agricultural sector and improve the overall welfare of farmers.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Coffee is a plantation commodity that has high economic value and is an important source of foreign exchange for many countries. As the second largest traded commodity after petroleum and the second most popular drink after water, coffee shows very significant global relevance (Atabani et al., 2019)(Gebreeyessus, 2022). In the last five years, research has highlighted aspects of sustainability, technological innovation and changes in consumption patterns which continue to be the main focus. Sustainability in coffee production is in the spotlight with various efforts to develop environmentally friendly agricultural systems and the application of new technologies to reduce environmental impacts. Recent research shows the potential of coffee as an alternative energy source in biorefineries, underscoring its multifunctional role in the context of sustainability (Atabani et al., 2022; Bager & Lambin, 2020). In Africa, coffee is also known as a conservation crop that plays an important role in environmental conservation, demonstrating its contribution to local ecosystems (Wood et al., 2019).

Apart from the sustainability aspect, technological innovation in the coffee industry continues to develop. The implementation of new processing techniques and advanced farming methods aims to improve production efficiency and final product quality. These changes not only increase productivity but also help meet increasingly stringent sustainability standards.

Changes in coffee consumption patterns reflect market dynamics and socioeconomic changes. In the downstream sector, perceptions of coffee have undergone significant changes, now becoming a symbol of upper-middle class consumption reflecting changes in consumer preferences and lifestyles (Ferreira & Ferreira, 2018). Modern consumers are increasingly paying attention to sustainability and ethical aspects in coffee production, which influences their purchasing decisions.

The development of the downstream coffee industry has brought significant changes in lifestyle, perception and consumption patterns among coffee lovers. Consumers now have higher expectations for the quality and uniqueness of coffee products, which encourages producers to increase innovation and differentiation of their products (Hewlett & Wadsworth, 2012; Son et al., 2021). At the producer level, marketing communication strategies are also undergoing transformation, especially at the coffee shop level which directly interacts with end consumers. Coffee shop owners are now focusing more on storytelling and customer experience to create loyalty and added value (Kim & Lee, 2019).

However, the rapid development of the coffee business has also given rise to new challenges, especially related to the increase in coffee waste from the use of disposable cups. This environmental problem is a serious concern, considering its negative impact on the ecosystem. Efforts to address this problem include the development of environmentally friendly cup alternatives and campaigns to reduce the use of single-use products (Poortinga & Whitaker, 2018).

In the upstream industry, coffee receives great attention from various parties because coffee farmers often do not receive income commensurate with the rapid growth of the coffee industry. Apart from that, coffee is also a source of income for no less than one and a half million coffee farmers in Indonesia (Kartini, 2018). Indonesia is known as one of the main coffee producers in the world. Coffee is one of the leading commodities that has strategic value in local and international markets, considered capable of increasing state income and becoming a source of livelihood for some of its people. However, not all countries with high levels of coffee consumption are able to produce and cultivate it, because coffee plants can only grow in tropical regions, where these conditions affect the texture and taste of coffee. Therefore, Indonesia is one of the lucky countries because it can produce coffee independently (Luneto, 2018).

In addition, even though the coffee industry has experienced significant growth, often the welfare of coffee farmers does not increase proportionally. Many coffee farmers still face challenges in terms of low selling prices and limited access to global markets. Efforts to increase coffee farmers' incomes need to focus on developing sustainable farming practices and increasing access to fairer markets. The application of modern agricultural technology and diversification of coffee products can also be an effective strategy to increase the competitiveness and welfare of coffee farmers. Therefore, further research is needed to identify strategies that can improve the welfare of coffee farmers in Indonesia. Increasing the involvement of the government and the private sector in supporting sustainable coffee development programs will be critical in ensuring that the benefits from the growth of the coffee industry can be felt by all actors in the value chain, especially farmers.

Coffee is a global commodity that makes Indonesia, especially Java, known internationally. The term "a cup of java" has become a synonym for a cup of coffee, reflecting Java's reputation as a producer of high-quality coffee since the Dutch colonial era. Currently, Indonesia not only acts as a major producer but also as an important consumer in the global coffee industry. According to the International Coffee Organization (International Coffee Organization (ICO), 2017). Indonesia ranks fourth in coffee production after Brazil, Vietnam and Colombia, and is in seventh position as the largest consumer of coffee.

In Indonesia, the habit of drinking coffee has become an integral part of everyday life. Initially, this habit was more dominant among older people, but has now spread to the younger generation and

teenagers, reflecting demographic changes in coffee consumption patterns (KPRI, 2017). This development shows that coffee not only functions as a drink but also as a symbol of culture and social identity that continues to develop. In the production context, Indonesia faces significant challenges related to sustainability and productivity. The use of innovative agricultural technology and sustainable management practices is key to ensuring that the coffee industry can continue to grow and provide significant economic benefits to local coffee farmers. Increasing access to international markets and strengthening supply chains are also important aspects in the development strategy for the Indonesian coffee industry.

Jember, a city in East Java, has excellent plantation potential, one of which is coffee plantation potential. This is reflected in the existence of the Coffee and Cocoa Research Center (PUSLITKOKA), the only research institution that specializes in coffee in Indonesia. In 2020, Jember was in second place in terms of coffee production among districts/cities in East Java, with total production reaching 11,863 tons (BPS, 2021). This data shows that Jember has an important role in the national coffee industry, supported by adequate research infrastructure and optimal plantation potential.

One of the areas in Jember, namely Jelbuk District, is a coffee production area with quite high productivity (above 100 tons per year). The following is data on average production and total coffee production according to sub-districts in Jember Regency in 2020 (BPS, 2021).

However, from initial observations, on average coffee farmers in the seven sub-districts still sell their coffee harvest to middlemen or collectors in wet or even green conditions. From initial observations and interviews with the East Java Indonesian Coffee Farmers Association, represented by Mr. Bambang Sriyono, information was obtained that almost 100% of coffee farmers on the outskirts of forests or Perhutani coffee plantations sell coffee that does not meet the specifications set by wholesalers or exporters, namely the principle of MBS (Red, Clean and Fresh). This is caused by several main factors, including a lack of information (information asymmetry), being trapped in initial debts to middlemen, and coffee farmer institutions that are not functioning optimally.

Lack of information regarding the production and processing processes as well as a lack of understanding of the market means that coffee farmers are unable or even do not have modern management strategies in developing their commodities. Implementing strategies to improve coffee quality is very important to compete in the market while maximizing sales profits. In the theoretical framework, strategy is a long-term plan oriented on a large scale to interact with the competitive environment to achieve predetermined goals (Pearce & Robinson, 2016).

To support an effective production strategy, quality improvement is necessary to be able to compete sustainably. In the production process, fulfilling the quality specifications expected by consumers requires special attention to continuous improvement. Fulfillment of good quality cannot be separated from continuous efforts to make improvements (Wibowo, 2007). This condition is similar to the situation faced by coffee farmers in Sumber Candik Hamlet, Panduman Village, Jelbuk District, which is one of the largest coffee producers in Jember with a production capacity exceeding 100 tons per year (see Table 1).

Based on the considerations above, the community in Sumber Candik Hamlet, Panduman Village, Jelbuk District, has not been able to optimize and utilize existing potential. Therefore, an effective strategy is needed to identify promising coffee production and marketing activities for business sustainability and increasing sales profits. It is hoped that this strategy will have positive implications for the welfare and income of the village community.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

The research method in this study uses an ethnographic approach. Ethnography is a method for understanding the individual experiences and unique way of life of a particular community by studying their events, language, rituals, institutions, behavior, tools, and interactions. Different from other approaches, ethnography emphasizes deepening and translating experiences. (Tyler, 1986) states that ethnography is not as fast as methods that use surveys and interviews because it requires a long time to deepen a particular community. Researchers must learn to interact with community members,

observe, build relationships, and participate in community life. The ethnographic approach does not aim to test propositions, produce predictions, or generalize findings. Ethnography is also not limited to studying the language of a particular text, but rather presents a convincing story based on the language of the society or organization being observed. This approach describes real cultural practices and organizes them into texts that are interesting and impactful for readers.

In this research, researchers spent seven months observing, joining and interacting with coffee practitioners in Sumber Candik Hamlet. Researchers observed all activities involving farmers, traders, agricultural extension workers, village governments, Perhutani, and all related parties, both directly and indirectly, during the 2023 coffee season. Coffee production activities and trading systems were analyzed thoroughly. Apart from that, researchers also interviewed the head of the East Java Coffee Association and coffee experts from the Jember Coffee and Cocoa Research Center (PUSLIT KOKA) to gain more in-depth insight.

According to Kaplan, (2011), ethnographic researchers take various steps to understand the meaning of the objects studied, including spending months or even long periods of time at the research location. Researchers talked to employees, managers, and union representatives, hung out in the cafeteria, and attended meetings to understand the preferences and daily life of the organization. Meanwhile, Czarniawska (2007) emphasized that data was obtained through structured and unstructured interviews, recording all events, recording conversations in both formal and informal meetings, as well as attending various meetings within the organization. It is this type of fieldwork that produces in-depth descriptions and is rich in detail.

The research location in this research is Sumber Candik Hamlet, Panduman Village, Jelbuk District, Jember Regency. The reason the researcher chose Sumber Candik Hamlet, Panduman Village, Jelbuk District in this research is because it is one of the largest coffee producing districts in the Jember region.

In this research, the research subjects are: 1) Head of Jelbuk District, 2) Head of Sumber Candik Hamlet, 3) Chairman of the Indonesian Coffee Farmers Association DPW East Java, 4) Jember Coffee and Cocoa Research Center, 5) Sumber Candik Hamlet coffee farmer group, 6) Coffee traders who trade in local villages, 7) Sumber Candik Hamlet coffee farmers .

Determining research subjects uses a purposive technique, namely a technique for determining informants with certain considerations. In this case, the researcher chooses the data source that is considered to know the most about the object to be studied. The author also uses the snowball technique, which is a technique where existing research subjects recruit subjects who are recommended and are believed to provide additional information or answers to the object under study (scrolling).

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This research focuses on the activities of coffee farmers in Sumber Candik Hamlet, which is geographically located in the western part directly adjacent to forestry land. Sumbercandik Hamlet is located on the southern slopes of Mount Argopuro Jember, at an altitude of 500 to 1000 meters above sea level (masl). The houses and village roads are built on a ridge that extends from north to south. Steep ravines flank the main back of the hamlet, people call it Tanian Lanjeng. The majority of the people of Sumber Candik Hamlet work as farmers with coffee as the main commodity. Apart from coffee, there are corn, bananas, durian, chilies, sweet potatoes, rice, and occasionally trying to grow tobacco.

#### Distribution or Buying and Selling Model of Coffee

Buying and selling is a form of transaction of exchanging goods of value, where one party sells the goods and the other party buys them based on an agreement. Research conducted in Sumber Candik Hamlet, Panduman Village, Jelbuk District, Jember Regency, observed buying and selling transactions of coffee produced by local residents' gardens. The residents of Sumber Candik Hamlet began growing coffee during the reign of the late KH. Abdurrahman Wahid, who stated that gardens

belonged to the people. Apart from that, the success of several residents in coffee farming has encouraged other residents to follow in their footsteps. Initially, the residents of Sumber Candik Hamlet simultaneously cleared forest land to grow coffee. Almost all residents are involved in this process, so that they have land to plant coffee. However, this land does not belong to them absolutely, but still belongs to Perhutani. Residents only have use rights, not ownership rights to the land. Residents' daily activities are now mostly spent in the garden to care for and look after their coffee plants. As the harvest season approaches, residents must protect their gardens from monkeys eating coffee and prevent theft of their crops by irresponsible parties.

The coffee harvesting process in Sumber Candik Hamlet is carried out by residents who own the land involving their family members, including children. The aim of inviting children is not to make them work from an early age, but rather to teach and show them the hard work that parents do to earn income for the family. Apart from that, some residents also hire daily workers to help with the harvest process. Payment systems for these workers vary; some are paid based on the amount of coffee they harvest, and there are also those who are paid until midday with a wage of IDR 50,000.

After collecting the coffee harvest, residents take the coffee to a collection point which is usually located on the side of the road for easy transportation. The coffee is then sold to coffee collectors in the hamlet, both local residents and those from outside the village who work together with local collectors. Some farmers also use the slash system, where they sell their coffee before the harvest arrives, usually because they need money early. The coffee sold consists of two types, namely Arabica coffee and Robusta coffee. In 2023, the price of Arabica coffee will range from IDR 750,000 to IDR 1,000,000 per quintal, while robusta coffee will be priced between IDR 550,000 and IDR 650,000 per quintal. Farmers generally sell coffee in logs because the process of processing it into clean coffee beans requires machines, lots of clean water, and land for drying, which they don't have. Although there are some who process coffee for personal consumption, the processed products are only sold if they need money.

This coffee distribution pattern means selling only to relatives who are known as traders. It has been going on for many years because of the very strong familial ties as the local community of Sumber Candik Hamlet. Local society refers to the part of society that resides in an area (in a geographical sense) with certain boundaries where the main factor that is the basis is greater interaction between its members, compared to residents outside its territorial boundaries (Soemardjan, 1962). Local society is an area of social life characterized by a certain degree of social relations. The basis of local society is locality and the feelings of the local community (Maclver, 1944).

Sumber Candik coffee farmers feel there is no need to sell their coffee outside the region. They feel that only a small amount of coffee is produced, the land managed from Perhutani's use rights is relatively small, only 1 hectare per farmer and some of it has even been sold to other parties. According to Deere & Janvry, this condition that does not favor farmers identifies at least seven mechanisms that cause farmers to fall into disrepair, namely: (i) rent in labor service, which shows the difficulty of farmers in gaining access to land ownership so that they provide themselves to work as laborers. farmer; (ii) rent in kind, for example share cropping which in practice shows the sovereignty of the landlord in deciding on profit sharing; (iii) rent in cash, where farmers must rent in cash to get access to cultivate land; (iv) appropriation of surplus value via the wage, where there is a surplus taken from production by providing standard wages; (v) appropriation via prices, where farmers suffer losses due to falling output prices on the market or soaring input prices or both at the same time; (vi) appropriation via usury, where farmers' income is taken away due to loan interest rates that are greater than national and international market prices; and (vii) peasant taxation, where the State usually imposes taxes indirectly on agricultural products (Ellis, 1988).

#### Implications for Coffee Farmers' Income

The process of buying and selling coffee in Sumber Candik Hamlet has significantly had a positive impact on farmers' income. Farmers become more productive and are able to support their families from the results of coffee farming. Even though the coffee harvest only occurs once a year,

namely from June to August, the income from coffee sales is enough to support various aspects of their lives. Income from buying and selling coffee allows farmers to save to meet immediate needs, such as health care or other unexpected needs. In addition, many farmers are able to send their children to university level, which significantly improves the quality of human resources in the hamlet. The ability to better meet daily needs is also reflected in improved quality of life, including improved housing conditions and access to basic needs. However, this success cannot be separated from the challenges faced by coffee farmers. Fluctuations in coffee prices, pest attacks, and climate change are some of the factors that can affect crop yields and, in turn, farmer incomes. Therefore, the sustainability and stability of coffee farmers' income requires effective risk management strategies and support from various parties, including the government and related institutions.

All of these results or impacts are felt by almost all residents of Sumber Candik Hamlet, both farmers, collectors and daily workers. Farmers who own land experience direct benefits from selling their coffee harvest. Coffee collectors also make profits by buying coffee from farmers and reselling it to shops outside the Sumber Candik area. Meanwhile, daily workers find work during the harvest season by helping harvest coffee belonging to residents who own land. They are paid according to the agreement that was made previously. In addition, daily workers can also collect fallen coffee beans to sell or consume themselves, supplementing their income.

It is hoped that this coffee buying and selling transaction can encourage economic growth in the Sumber Candik Hamlet community. The residents' hope is that the coffee harvest will increase in quality and quantity, and that coffee prices will continue to rise from year to year. In this way, the income and welfare of the entire community can continue to develop and increase.

#### Strengthening Agricultural Institutions

Village development has become a crucial issue in Indonesia since independence. There are two big issues that are in the spotlight. First, the majority of Indonesia's population still lives in rural areas, although the proportion continues to decline every year. Currently, it is estimated that around 60% of the population still lives in villages. Second, the welfare of rural residents is far behind compared to city residents. The majority of village residents work in the agricultural sector or the informal sector with low incomes (Malik, 2015). Currently, around 63% of the total poor population lives in villages. Apart from that, there are other reasons that support the importance of village development, such as the existence of most of the economic resources in rural areas. However, the two main arguments above highlight the importance of rural development from an economic, social and political perspective. Increasing welfare in villages is an important step to achieve a more inclusive and sustainable national development balance.

An important question that needs to be asked is why a series of approaches that are relatively comprehensive and implemented over a long period of time have not been successful in advancing the village and improving the welfare of its residents, especially those who work in the agricultural sector? Yustika (2016) proposed three main hypotheses to explain this phenomenon. First, rural development is managed by too many institutions, making synchronization and coordination difficult. In fact, competition often occurs between institutions to gain economic and political benefits. In the context of coffee development in Sumber Candik Hamlet, the results of interviews with various informants show that there is confusion about who is responsible for developing coffee farmers. Is it the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Plantation, Perhutani, the local government (villages and sub-districts), or financial institutions such as Bank Indonesia that often provide assistance through economic strengthening programs? When coffee farmers want to develop into coffee processors, by selling processed coffee (ground) to increase added value rather than selling it in log form, the question arises about who will help coffee farmer institutions in dealing with licensing complexities. This lack of certainty adds to the complexity of the problems faced by farmers in improving their welfare through innovation and increasing product value.

Second, rural development was carried out without including comprehensive structural reforms in the village area itself, both in terms of fiscal, economic resources (land), and village government administration. Based on interviews, it is known that Perhutani has given land management rights on the edge of the forest to be used as coffee plantations with an area of between one and two hectares. However, in practice, this land is freely traded by farmers to other parties. As a result, many coffee fields were eventually controlled by capital owners who even came from outside the Sumber Candik area.

Third, rural development is carried out in isolation, so that it is not integrated with overall development (sectoral, regional, etc.). This causes village development to be separated from the broader development context, hampering the achievement of more holistic and sustainable development goals.

According to Anantanyu, (2011), Aprianto, (2020) and Effendy, (2020), farmer institutions in rural areas play an important role in accelerating the socio-economic development of farmers. These institutions increase accessibility to agricultural information, capital, infrastructure and markets, and encourage the adoption of agricultural innovations. Apart from that, the existence of farmer institutions makes it easier for the government and other stakeholders to facilitate and provide empowerment to farmers. In the institutional economics approach, one of the main strategies that can be implemented to advance the agricultural sector is indirect policies, which include improving inadequate agricultural infrastructure. For example, transportation access to Sumber Candik Hamlet is still difficult and not yet covered by PLN electricity services. Through a combination of strengthening farmer institutions and infrastructure improvement policies, it is hoped that the agricultural sector can develop more optimally, improve farmer welfare, and encourage overall rural economic growth.

Understanding inadequate infrastructure does not only include physical aspects, but also includes imbalances between economic actors, both due to differences in negotiating abilities and disproportionate ownership of productive assets. Thus, several policy agendas that can be implemented are: (a) issuing regulations that guarantee a more equal relationship between economic actors, such as in the case of the relationship between sharecroppers and land owners (Perhutani) in a profit sharing system, as well as between coffee farmers and traders. and coffee exporters; (b) increasing transparency in the policy-making process to reduce opportunities for large capital owners to manipulate policies formulated by the government. Through these steps, it is hoped that the growth of the agricultural sector can be more predictable and the welfare of economic actors in the upstream sector, including farmers and communities around forests, can be more guaranteed.

Farmer groups are a form of empowerment carried out by the government which aims to ensure coordination between farmers can run well. Besides that, according to (Fischer & Qaim, 2011) farmers' organizations, cooperatives and other forms of collective action are one way to reduce transaction costs.

### Reducing Information Asymmetry

Asymmetric information theory first appeared in 1960. Economists at that time stated that the high costs of obtaining and applying information in business activities meant that some markets could not survive and had difficulty competing. One of the leading experts in this field is (Akerlof, 1970). He focused his studies on the problem of adverse selection. In his famous essay on the lemon theory and quality uncertainty, Akerlof argued that in certain markets, difficulties in running a business efficiently are caused by the existence of an adverse selection problem.

In the context of agricultural commodity markets, Akerlof's (1970) lemon theory explains that an imbalance of information between farmers and traders causes farmers' inability to maximize their profits. Farmers who do not have access to adequate information regarding product specifications and market needs often sell their crops at lower prices. Meanwhile, better-informed traders can take advantage of this situation to gain greater profits. As a result, market inefficiencies occur which not only harm farmers, but can also disrupt the sustainability of the agricultural commodity market as a whole. The application of asymmetric information theory highlights the importance of transparency

and access to information in increasing market efficiency and the economic welfare of market participants, especially farmers in this context. By reducing information imbalances, it is hoped that agricultural commodity markets can function more effectively and fairly, thereby increasing the welfare of farmers and the sustainability of the agricultural sector.

Interview results show that coffee farmers in Sumber Candik sell their harvest in logs at prices ranging from IDR 550,000 to IDR 750,000 per quintal, or around IDR 7,500 per kilogram. Meanwhile, local coffee producers around the Jember area, such as Banyuwangi and Bondowoso, sell coffee from the slopes of Ijen in ready-to-brew packaging at much higher prices. Robusta coffee is sold for IDR 25,000 to IDR 35,000 per 25 grams, while Arabica coffee is priced more expensively, namely between IDR 60,000 to IDR 90,000 per 25 grams. This condition can be analyzed through asymmetric information theory, which is an integral part of "information economics". This theory, as first observed in financing or credit markets, analyzes the dynamics of transactions involving information imbalances between market participants. According to (Stiglitz & Weiss, 1981), some financial agreements contain elements that cause fundamental problems such as adverse selection and moral hazard. Freedman & Jin, (2017), further stated that incomplete information in the credit market gives rise to four main problems: adverse selection, moral hazard, lack of understanding of insurance, and lack of understanding of the law. In the context of the coffee market, this information imbalance causes two main issues: (1) certain parties benefit because farmers do not know information about increasing the value or price of coffee through proper processing and packaging, and (2) coffee farmers do not have complete information regarding the characteristics of traded goods, including market information and market demand prices. As a result, this imbalance harms farmers in terms of potential income and creates inefficiencies in the coffee value chain.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This research confirms that farmer institutions in rural areas play a crucial role in accelerating farmers' socio-economic development. This institution is able to increase access to agricultural information, capital, infrastructure and markets, as well as encourage the adoption of agricultural innovation. In the context of institutional economics, the main strategy that can be implemented to advance the agricultural sector is indirect policies, such as improving inadequate infrastructure, for example access to transportation and electricity in Sumber Candik Hamlet.

Asymmetric information theory, described by Akerlof (1970) in the context of agricultural markets, shows that an imbalance of information between farmers and traders results in market inefficiency. Farmers often sell their crops at low prices due to lack of access to information regarding product specifications and market needs, while traders who have better information can make bigger profits. This phenomenon highlights the importance of transparency and better access to information to improve farmer welfare and the sustainability of the agricultural sector. Observations in Sumber Candik Hamlet revealed that coffee farmers still sell coffee in logs at low prices, while coffee producers in the area around Jember sell processed coffee at much higher prices. This indicates a significant information imbalance. By reducing information imbalances through strengthening institutions and increasing access to information, it is hoped that agricultural commodity markets can function more efficiently and fairly, so that farmers' welfare and the sustainability of the agricultural sector can increase.

This research recommends implementing policies that ensure more equal relations between economic actors and increase transparency in policy making to reduce manipulation by large capital owners. Strengthening farmer institutions, improving infrastructure, and increasing access to information are essential strategic steps to achieve more sustainable growth in the agricultural sector and improve overall farmer welfare.

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