

## FARMERS' RESPONSE TO THE REDUCTION OF SUBSIDIZED FERTILIZER PRICES IN FARMER GROUPS IN SUMBAWA SUBDISTRICT, SUMBAWA REGENCY

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### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received Month 11, 2025

Revised Month 12, 2025

Approved Month 12, 2025

### ABSTRACT

The agricultural sector continues to play a strategic role in ensuring national food security until 2025, partly through policies that reduce the price of subsidized fertilizers. This study aims to analyze farmers' responses to the policy of reducing subsidized fertilizer prices in farmer groups in Sumbawa Subdistrict, Sumbawa Regency. A qualitative descriptive method was employed. The respondents consisted of 20 maize farmers who are members of farmer groups and registered in the e-RDKK, selected purposively and proportionally. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed descriptively. The results indicate that farmers responded positively to the reduction of subsidized fertilizer prices. Cognitively, farmers understand the objectives and benefits of the policy in reducing production costs. Affectively, farmers show feelings of happiness, satisfaction, and support. Behaviorally, the policy encourages farmers to increase fertilizer use according to recommendations and enhances motivation in farming activities. The integration of these three responses demonstrates that the policy contributes to cost efficiency, motivation, and the sustainability of farming activities. Therefore, the policy should be maintained, supported by a reliable distribution system and continuous extension services.

**Keywords:** Farmers' Response, Subsidized fertilizer, price policy, e-RDKK, maize

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**How to cite:** Example: Pratiwi, A. K., Radiyatunnisah & Kharismafullah. (2025). Farmers' Response To The Reduction Of Subsidized Fertilizer Prices In Farmer Groups In Sumbawa Subdistrict, Sumbawa Regency. *Journal of Livestock Science and Innovation Global*, 1(2), 56–59. <https://doi.org/10.55681/jlsig.v1i2.100>

### INTRODUCTION (12 pt Times New Roman)

The agricultural sector will continue to hold a strategic role in national development until 2025, particularly in maintaining food security, rural economic stability, and poverty reduction. Amid global challenges such as climate change, fluctuations in agricultural input prices, and market uncertainties, farmers face increasing production costs. Fertilizer constitutes one of the largest components of production costs, influencing productivity and crop yields.

Subsidized fertilizers serve as a government policy instrument to ensure the availability of production inputs at affordable prices for smallholder farmers. Until 2025, fertilizer subsidy

policies remain a key focus of the Indonesian government to sustain the agricultural sector and support national food security programs. The reduction of subsidized fertilizer prices was announced in October 2025 by the Minister of Agriculture during the national ceremony at the Ministry of Agriculture in Jakarta. This price reduction is part of the government's efforts to lower production costs and enhance farmers' purchasing power, especially amid rising prices of other agricultural inputs.

The target recipients of subsidized fertilizers are farmers engaged in food crops, horticulture, and/or plantation sub-sectors, with land ownership of up to 2 hectares per planting season. Three types of fertilizers subject to price reduction are Urea, NPK, and Organic fertilizers (Ministry of Agriculture Regulation No. 15, 2025). Distribution of subsidized fertilizers must be based on the Definitive Group Requirement Plan (RDKK), which now uses the electronic RDKK (e-RDKK). The e-RDKK aims to provide accurate fertilizer requirements data, prevent duplication, serve as a basis for subsidy allocation, and facilitate monitoring and evaluation. This ensures transparent and equitable fertilizer distribution at the farmer level.

However, the effectiveness of the subsidized fertilizer price reduction policy cannot be measured solely by distribution and budget allocation; it also depends on how farmers, as beneficiaries, respond to the policy. Farmers' responses are key indicators of policy success, reflecting their understanding, acceptance, and behavioral changes in farming practices.

Farmers' responses to agricultural policies encompass three main dimensions: cognitive (knowledge and understanding), affective (attitudes and feelings), and behavioral (actions) (Sari & Nugroho, 2024). These dimensions are interconnected and determine the extent to which policies drive positive changes in farming practices. Therefore, qualitative descriptive analysis of farmers' responses is crucial to explore their experiences and perceptions in depth.

Entering 2025, studies on farmers' responses to subsidized fertilizer policies are increasingly relevant, considering national agricultural policy adjustments emphasizing efficiency, targeting accuracy, and sustainability. Qualitative research at the local level, particularly in rural areas such as Sumbawa Subdistrict, remains limited.

Sumbawa Subdistrict is an agrarian area where most residents depend on agriculture, particularly food crops such as rice, maize, and soybeans, and utilize subsidized fertilizers in their farming activities. The predominance of smallholder farmers makes the subsidized fertilizer price reduction policy highly impactful on the sustainability of their farming enterprises. Therefore, this study is important to provide empirical evidence of farmers' responses to the policy.

Based on the above, this study aims to analyze farmers' responses to the reduction of subsidized fertilizer prices in farmer groups in Sumbawa Subdistrict using a qualitative descriptive approach.

## METHODS

This study employs a descriptive method (Nazir, 2007). The unit of analysis comprises farmers who are members of farmer groups and registered in the Definitive Group Requirement Plan (RDKK). The research was conducted in Sumbawa Subdistrict, Sumbawa Regency. Sumbawa Subdistrict consists of 8 villages, with 7 having agricultural land. Two villages were selected as the research sample: Uma Sima and Pekat.

Sample villages were chosen purposively, based on characteristics closely related to the population (Saebani, 2008). The two selected villages cultivate a single commodity, maize, during the third planting season (MT3). Respondents were selected using proportional sampling, totaling 20 respondents from each subpopulation/farmer group in each village, considering the size of each subpopulation (Saebani, 2008). Data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive methods.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Respondent Characteristics

All respondents (20 farmers) are in the productive age range, indicating physical and mental capacity for farming activities. Farmers in this age range are generally more adaptable and receptive to agricultural innovations, contributing to higher technology adoption (Zega, 2025).

Regarding education, most respondents (13 farmers) completed senior high school, 4 had lower secondary education, and 3 had higher education. Higher education levels correlate with greater adoption of innovations and the ability to implement new agricultural technologies (Rahayu & Herawati, 2021).

Thirteen respondents have over 20 years of farming experience, while 7 have less than 10 years. Experienced farmers tend to make faster, more confident decisions and adapt better to changes in input prices and agricultural policies, including subsidized fertilizer price reductions (Lilis *et al.*, 2025).

Land ownership among respondents shows that 12 farmers (60%) have land over 2 hectares, while 8 (40%) have 1–2 hectares. Thirteen respondents (65%) farm on their own land, whereas 7 (35%) use leased land. Farmers with owned land are more flexible in adopting technologies, whereas those on leased land are more cautious due to risk considerations. Larger land areas increase production and income, influencing maize productivity (Sitohang *et al.*, 2025).

### Farmers' Response to Subsidized Fertilizer Price Reduction

The study shows that farmers responded positively to the reduction in subsidized fertilizer prices. They understand the purpose of the policy, which is to reduce production costs and enhance productivity. The e-RDKK system further improves distribution accuracy and prevents misuse compared to the previous manual RDKK.

Farmers' responses can be categorized into three types: cognitive (understanding), affective (attitude), and conative/behavioral (actions).

#### Cognitive Response

Cognitively, farmers have a good understanding of the policy. They recognize that the price reduction alleviates production costs, allowing better planning of fertilizer requirements. For example, a respondent (R3) stated:

*"Lamin turin harga pupuk, mogang mo tu prasa,. Syukur mo pemerintah bau tulung kami petani"*

It

Means:

*"If fertilizer prices decrease, our production costs are lighter. The government really helps farmers."*

#### Affective Response

Affectively, farmers express satisfaction, happiness, and relief, particularly due to reduced economic pressure during the early planting stage. Respondent R17 said:

*"Kemerl kami leng turen harga pupuk, nom tu khawatir lamen dapata tanam"* It Means: *"We are happy because fertilizer is now more affordable, and we are less worried during planting."*

Positive affective responses strengthen farmer group participation and trust in government agricultural policies.

#### Behavioral Response

Behavioral responses are reflected in actual changes in farming practices, such as increased fertilizer use according to recommendations and expanded planting areas. Respondent R4 commented:

*“nyaman mo to, apa turin harga pupuk. Mega mogang turasa” It Means: “We feel relieved with the lower fertilizer prices, making farming easier.”*

This indicates that the policy motivates farmers to increase productivity, improve efficiency, and sustain their farming activities (Sari & Nugroho, 2024).

### **Integration of Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral Responses**

The three response dimensions are dynamically interrelated. Cognitive understanding fosters positive emotions (affective), which translate into practical actions (behavioral). For example, respondent R2 said:

*“Syukur mo dapat harga baru pupuk... roa gama ndi ntu panen balong harga ampo” It Means: “Grateful for the new fertilizer prices; hopefully, the harvest price will be good.”*

This illustrates that subsidized fertilizer price reductions positively affect farmers’ psychological stability and farming performance, contributing to economic, social, and technical benefits.

### **CONCLUSION**

Farmers’ responses to subsidized fertilizer price reductions in Sumbawa Subdistrict are positive. Farmers welcome the policy with satisfaction, relief, and productive behavior. The policy enhances fertilizer access, lowers production costs, and encourages more productive farming practices.

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