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**INDONESIA'S PERSPECTIVE ON FOOD SAFETY REGULATION IN AGRICULTURE –
AN EXPERIENCE**

*“Indonesia’s experience on food safety regulation in agriculture”**

by

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I INTRODUCTION

One's health is priority on his/her live and therefore, demands for not only nutritious and good quality but also safe food is a fundamental right to all the people in the world. As trade in food commodities expands internationally regardless nation boundaries, food safety can no longer be considered only as a domestic issue. Since the establishment of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the standards, guidelines and recommendations of joint FAO /WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission are considered as the benchmarks for international harmonisation. The new WTO rules also require the development of modern food control to ensure food safety.

In food chain, agriculture product roles as the main raw material and "ready to eat" food for the people in the world. As the consequences, food safety on agriculture product becomes one of the main considerations to be established. Strengthening food safety and quality control system in agriculture industry will promote good agriculture practices and educate farmers about appropriate food handling being essential for healthy and nutritious agriculture product. In addition to customer protection, proper agriculture products control measures reduce losses and can stimulate world trade in agriculture products, thus creating employment, increasing incomes and improving nutritional well being.

II FOOD SAFETY REGULATION IN AGRICULTURE

AGRICULTURE CONDITION IN INDONESIA

Demand for safety food of agriculture products increases both in domestic and international markets. In spite of opportunity to increase their income, these phenomena tends to be a serious constraint for most of agriculture farmers in Indonesia since the fact that most of the them are lack of capability in implementation of *Good farming practices, Good Handling Practices and Good Distribution Practices*. Together with their lack of awareness on food safety, this nature condition has brought Indonesian agriculture product one step behind the standard required by consumers and standard of food safety in particular of the international market

Along with the development of food trade in international market, changing demands of international requirements for food safety regulations become one of developing countries concern. More and more customers mostly from developed countries such as the US, EU and Japan require not only TBT and SPS agreements but also the whole food safety program of the countries of origin. On the other hand, other exporting countries need to comply with food safety stndart or regulations previously adopted internationally in production of particular agriculture commodities for the market.

There are several regulations settled by Indonesian government to enhance its roles on establishment food safety of agriculture product. These regulations could perform as umbrella for other technical regulations issued by any particular relevant institution. The regulations are as follow :

INDONESIAN NATIONAL STANDARD (SNI)

SNI is the only authorised standard applied nationally in Indonesia. This standard is issued by National Standardisation Institution as the authority who co-ordinates the standardisation system in Indonesia. The SNI consist of standard for commodity, tool and machine, system as well as method. SNI is aimed to protect the people against treats relating to safety, health and fraud, and to promote production and trade of both domestic and international . For agriculture industry in particular, SNI promotes effective production, increase productivity and quality assurance on safe food production.

SNI is generally applied voluntarily. Once it relates to human safety and health aspects or environment conservation, its application become mandatory under a technical regulation issued by relevant institution. For SNI in agriculture sector, Ministry of Agriculture decree no. 481/1996 regulates its obligatory application.

Priority setting during the preparation of food safety on agriculture product by government should be based on risk analysis and the use of the HACCP based system to improve food safety assurance and ensure the effective use of available resources. The HACCP system is a cost effective management tool for food safety assurance, which can be applied to all sections of food chain and agriculture industry, from primary production through manufacturing, distribution and retail, to the point of consumption. It is now recognised as an essential tool to use by food industry in controlling of food contamination and enhancing food safety. HACCP system is adopted nationally under SNI no. 4852-1998 and applied in agriculture industry as the main tool in establishment of agriculture product food safety. The implementation of HACCP system in agriculture sector is recognized by the Ministry of Agriculture decrees no. 303/1996, a technical regulation on National Standardisation System for Agriculture sector. However to be implemented in smallscale farmer, HACCP needs to modified considering the local specific condition.

TECHNICAL REGULATIONS

In order to enhance food safety in agriculture product, authorised Government institution within the Ministry of Agriculture has issued several technical regulations, among others are including:

1. Joint decree of Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Health on Minimum Residue Limits of agriculture products. The control system set out a series of monitoring through laboratory analyses for chemical residue from samples of agriculture product taken from places within the country all year. Government laboratories under supervision of Ministry of Agriculture conduct the analyses.
2. Director General of Livestock decree on Residue survey and monitoring program. Together with MRL regulation, this decree controls the chemical residues on livestock product distributed in the country.
3. Ministry of Agriculture decree no. 303/1996 on National Standardisation System in agriculture sector. This technical regulation set out standardisation system in agriculture sector including performing food safety as quality assurance for agriculture product through application HACCP system in all stages of agriculture industry activities, inspection system for agriculture commodities with SNI obligatory application, etc.

CONSTRAINT

Up to now 647 SNIs in agriculture sector have been developed. However, implementation of SNI in agriculture industry is far behind its capacity in the purpose of national protection on health, safety and environment conservation aspects. Recent experiences in Indonesia shown that constraints in application of regulation are mainly due to the limitation of resources (human resources, technology, information, funding, etc.).

Furthermore, there are external treats that become another constraint in order to accelerate the quality as well as competitiveness of fresh agricultural product produced by local farmers. As tariff barrier is eliminated, many countries try to find measures to safeguard their domestic interests. Developed countries, which have advantages in technology, information and finance, tend to seize and rule this global market. Using these advantages, they tend to establish more food safety regulations with regard to Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) as well as to Technical Barrier to Trade (TBT). On the other side, developing countries like Indonesia with so many limitations of technology, information, funding resources and the hits of economic crises this past few years become difficult to catch up with the growing global development. Food and agricultural products, which once become the backbone of national economy in gaining more foreign earnings, now turn out to be less competitive in international market. This fact is indicated by increasing number of detentions of food and agricultural product in destinations countries such as the United State of

America, European Union Countries, and Japan due to inability to meet the new and tighter food safety regulations in the name of SPS and TBT.

If this condition keeps going without any break-through policy for fair global food trade that consistently aimed at global economic balance, there should be severe global economic discrepancy at the end. The developed countries tend to dominate and take more advantage of this free market while, on the other side, the less developed and developing countries such as Indonesia tend to remain unable to take the advantage of this free market. The condition will become more severe when developed countries make use of developing countries weakness in infrastructures/facilities and other inabilities enabling them to penetrate the market of developing countries as dumping areas. Political implication of this condition, in the long run, it will be a global instability, which is vulnerable to create further irrational trade related barriers. Therefore, to create global economy stability, it takes not only “free trade” but also “fair trade” that should be considered and redefined further. In recognition of the unequal capacity and level of development between developed and developing countries, the special and differential (S & D) treatment for developing countries should be an integral element of the negotiations and shall be embodied in the schedules of concessions and commitments.

FUTURE ACTION

Special and differential treatment should allow Indonesia to catch up the global development. The opportunity in capacity building will eliminate the global economic discrepancy between Indonesia and developed countries, hence to seize the international market by following its food safety standard and requirement.

With the assistance of developed countries and considering the nature condition of agriculture production in Indonesia, the government compels to establish strict regulation and control system to ensure that food safety will meet the standard requires by consumers. The regulations should be established not only covers particular area, but it should be intended for a more comprehensive one. Therefore, Indonesia needs an effective food safety program and comprehensive law enforcement not only to protect the health of the nation but also to meet the new and tighter food safety regulations in order to actively participate in international agriculture product trade.

Special and differential treatment will give opportunity to Indonesia to overcome so many limitations with particular in: (a) lack of qualified human resources/officers to facilitate the agriculture industry that are scattered in different areas within the country, (b) lack of facilities (laboratories, certification bodies, and other supporting institutions), (c) information system in agriculture sector and other main constraints in the continuity of regulation application. Therefore, Indonesia needs to promote food safety programs within the agriculture industry with the current areas of particular activity as follows:

- Policy development
- Food safety assurance
- Promoting food safety
- Training and education
- Information dissemination

To promote the programme, Indonesia need also technically as well as financially support from developed countries through both bilateral and multilateral cooperation.