

ABSTRACT

Chaidir. *The Role of Agricultural Extension Workers and Development Strategies of Farmer Groups in Sungai Raya Subdistrict, East Aceh Regency, Aceh Province.* Supervised by Setia Budi and Adhina. The research focused on beginner-level farmer groups registered with the East Aceh Food Security and Agricultural Extension Office, operating within the service area of the Sungai Raya Agricultural Extension Center (BPP). The objectives of this research were to: (1) describe the profile of farmer groups in Sungai Raya Subdistrict; (2) analyze farmers' perceptions of the role of agricultural extension agents in developing farmer groups; and (3) formulate strategies for the development of farmer groups in Sungai Raya Subdistrict. The study employed a descriptive quantitative approach, using a Likert scale, SWOT analysis, and the Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM). The sample consisted of 48 members from beginner-level farmer groups. The results showed that: (1) there are 81 farmer groups in Sungai Raya Subdistrict with a total of 1,836 members spread across 13 villages. Each village has different institutional characteristics. Buket Drien Village serves as the center of rice farming activities, with the largest number of groups and the widest cultivated area. The main commodity in the subdistrict is rice, with a total paddy field area of 644 hectares, of which 76.71% is rainfed, making the sector vulnerable to climate change. The emergence of new farmer groups indicates a regeneration process, although further institutional and technical assistance is still required. (2) Farmers' perceptions of extension agents' roles as motivators and facilitators fall into the "highly significant" category, while their roles as innovators and educators are in the "significant" category. However, their role as dynamics builders (dinamisator) is perceived as "less significant." (3) Based on the QSPM analysis, the top priority strategies for farmer group development are: improving financial management and accountability to reduce dependence on external assistance, and utilizing technical support from extension agents to adopt the latest agricultural technologies.

Keywords: Development Strategy, Farmer Groups, Extension Agents Role, SWOT Analysis, QSPM.