

Strategies for Strengthening the Sharia-Based Agricultural Sector in Achieving Food Security in Sambas Regency

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Abstract

Food security is a national and global strategic issue that requires synergy between various sectors, including the agricultural sector. Sambas Regency has great potential as a strategic agricultural region on the Indonesia-Malaysia border. This study aims to analyze the agricultural potential in Sambas, identify structural barriers, evaluate the contribution of sharia values, and formulate strategies to strengthen the agricultural sector based on sharia. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using a literature review method and secondary data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) and related agencies. The findings reveal that despite having the highest rice production in West Kalimantan, Sambas faces challenges such as land conversion, lack of technology, and limited access to sharia financing. Sharia values such as justice, blessings, and sustainability have proven relevant in strengthening the agricultural system. Recommended strategies include strengthening sharia-based farmer institutions, increasing access to halal markets, and adopting modern agricultural technology. In conclusion, the sharia approach can be an innovative solution in realizing sustainable food security in border areas.

Keywords: *Sharia Agriculture, Food Security, Sambas Regency*



INTRODUCTION

Food security is a strategic issue that not only impacts economic aspects but also directly influences the social and political stability of a country. Food security is

not merely about the availability of food, but also encompasses accessibility, distribution, and long-term supply stability. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations defines food security as a state in which all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and maintain a healthy and active life (FAO, 2020). Amid global challenges such as climate change, geopolitical conflicts, and economic crises, food security has become a top priority for many countries, including Indonesia.

As an agrarian country, Indonesia has great potential in the agricultural sector to achieve food security. However, the reality on the ground shows that this sector faces various structural challenges such as land conversion, low productivity, and minimal adoption of modern technology. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the area of agricultural land in Indonesia decreased by 0.3 million hectares between 2019 and 2023 due to land conversion to non-agricultural sectors (BPS, 2023). This indicates that the sustainability of the agricultural sector as a pillar of food security faces serious threats that must be addressed immediately.

Sambas Regency, located on the border between West Kalimantan and Malaysia, plays a strategic role in supporting food security at both the provincial and national levels. The region is rich in natural resources, particularly in agriculture, with the highest rice production in West Kalimantan, amounting to 177,411 tons in 2024 (BPS Kalbar, 2024). However, this potential has not been fully realized due to weak governance, limited technology, and the lack of integration of local and religious values in the management of the agricultural sector.

In addition to general challenges in the agricultural sector, the people of Sambas Regency also face problems in accessing financing and a fair and sustainable market system. Conventional approaches in the agricultural economic system often do not favor small farmers, causing them to be vulnerable to debt and commodity price uncertainty. Therefore, an alternative approach based on Islamic principles is needed, one that upholds the values of justice, prosperity, and sustainability in agricultural practices, encompassing production, distribution, and consumption (Hasyim & Wahyuni, 2021).

Sharia-based agriculture offers a holistic approach that focuses not only on the final production outcome but also on processes that align with Islamic principles. Values such as justice ('adl), blessings (barakah), avoidance of usury, and cooperation through profit-sharing systems (mudharabah/musyarakah) make Islamic agriculture relevant for implementation in areas with strong religious cultures, such as Sambas Regency (Lestari & Arifin, 2021). This model is expected to strengthen a fairer agricultural system that is more resilient to external pressures.

Furthermore, border areas such as Sambas have great potential to develop exports of halal agricultural products to Malaysia, particularly through the Aruk Cross-Border Post (PLBN). However, this potential has not been optimized due to limitations in infrastructure, product quality, and the absence of a strong halal-thayyib certification system. In this context, the development of a sharia-based agricultural sector could also drive integration into the international halal market, which is estimated to reach USD 2.3 trillion globally by 2024 (Thomson Reuters, 2021).

Food security cannot be achieved through technical approaches alone, but must also involve social and spiritual values. Integration between government policies and the Islamic economic system is key to building an inclusive and sustainable agricultural system. This approach is in line with the direction of national development, which promotes the principles of sustainable development (Sustainable Development Goals /SDGs), especially goal number 2: " Zero Hunger".

The urgency of this research is also driven by the increasing threat of climate change- , which has a direct impact on the agricultural sector. Sambas Regency, as a coastal and low-lying area, is at risk of flooding and ecosystem damage that can disrupt planting cycles and crop yields. Therefore, the application of Sharia principles emphasizing balance and environmental preservation (tawazun and himayah al-bi'ah) is crucial to address ecological challenges in agricultural management (Ramadhani et al., 2022).

This study is important because it will contribute scientifically to the formulation of strategies for strengthening the agricultural sector in border areas using a contextual and applicable sharia approach. With a comprehensive analysis of the potential, challenges, and policy strategies, the results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for local governments, business actors, and farming communities in building a self-sufficient and competitive food system. On the other hand, this research also expands the academic literature in the fields of agricultural economics and contemporary Islamic studies.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of providing an in-depth description of the phenomenon related to the strengthening of the sharia-based agricultural sector in achieving food security in Sambas Regency. The qualitative method was chosen because it is suitable for exploring complex and contextual social realities, particularly in understanding agricultural practices, religious values, and the socio-economic dynamics of farmers in border areas. Data sources for this study consist of secondary data obtained through literature reviews, reports from relevant institutions such as the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the

Ministry of Agriculture, the National Food Agency, as well as relevant academic and policy documents. Qualitative analysis techniques were employed through data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions based on thematic patterns identified in the data.

In addition, this study also uses a literature review approach to previous relevant studies to enrich theoretical and empirical understanding of sharia agriculture and food security. The analysis is conducted interpretively by examining the suitability of the local potential for sharia agriculture in Sambas Regency with the principles of sharia economics that can be applied in the agricultural sector. The researcher also identified structural barriers and strategic opportunities through triangulation of data sources to enhance the validity of the findings. The results of this analysis were then used as a basis for formulating applicable and contextual strategies and policy recommendations for the development of a competitive and sustainable agricultural sector based on Islamic values.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Strengthening the agricultural sector has been widely discussed in academic literature, particularly in the context of food security and sustainable development. According to the FAO (2020), food security is closely related to productivity, access, and stability of the food system. In the context of Sharia, Al-Ghazali states that the objectives of Sharia are to protect basic human needs, including food. A study by Hasyim and Wahyuni (2021) shows that sharia financing can increase the productivity of smallholder farmers. Another study by Ramadhani *et al.* (2022) emphasizes the importance of integrating religious values and local agricultural practices.

Table 1. Previous Studies of Achieving Food Security

No	Author	Year	Location	Research Topic	Results
1	Hasyim & Wahyuni	2021	Aceh	Sharia Financing for Small Farmers	Sharia financing increases farmers' productivity and confidence
2	Ramadhani <i>et al.</i>	2022	East Java	Sustainability Values in Sharia-Based Agriculture	Values of justice and sustainability greatly support the efficiency of farming businesses
3	Subekti	2	West Kalimantan	Contribution of the Agricultural	Sambas contributes the highest rice

				Sector to Food Security	production in West Kalimantan
4	Zuhri & Anwar	2023	Malaysia	Export Potential of Halal Products at the Border	Border areas serve as gateways for the export of halal agricultural products
5	Mulyani et al.	2019	NTB	Adoption of modern agricultural technology	Adoption of technology is still low among farmers
6	Lestari & Arifin	2021	South Sulawesi	Sharia and Agrarian Economy	Sharia values provide an ethical framework for sustainable agriculture

DISCUSSION

1. Potential and Contribution of the Agricultural Sector in Sambas District

Based on the results of studies and analysis of secondary data, several key findings were identified that reinforce the importance of developing a sharia-based agricultural sector in Sambas District. First, data from the West Kalimantan Central Statistics Agency (BPS) (2024) shows that Sambas Regency is the highest rice-producing area in the province, with 177,411 tons of paddy and 109,917 tons of rice. This figure indicates Sambas's strategic position as a food basket for the province with the potential to be expanded to the national level.

Second, the results of the identification show that around 65% of the population of Sambas Regency work in the agricultural sector, but the majority of them still use traditional methods and have not adopted modern agricultural technology. Third, the potential of the sharia economy has not been optimized. Based on secondary interview data and observations of local policies, only about 20% of farming groups are connected to Islamic financial institutions such as BMTs or Islamic cooperatives, indicating low penetration of the Islamic financing system.

Fourth, there is great potential for exporting halal products to Malaysia through the Aruk border crossing, but the lack of a systematic halal-thayyib certification system is a major obstacle. This finding reveals a strategic gap that

can be filled by strengthening the sharia agricultural system. The main findings are summarized in the following table:

Table 2. Summary of Key Findings on Halal Product Exports via Aruk Border to Malaysia

No	Findings	Data/Information
1	Rice production (2024)	177,411 tons (highest in West Kalimantan)
2	Number of agricultural workers	Approximately 65% of the total population of Sambas Regency
3	Adoption of modern agricultural technology	<30% of farmers use modern tools and methods
4	Access to Islamic financing	Approximately 20% of farmer groups are connected to Islamic microfinance institutions (BMT) or Islamic cooperatives
5	Export potential to Malaysia	Not yet optimal due to the absence of a halal-thayyib certification system

2. Structural and technical issues

Despite its great potential, the agricultural sector in Sambas Regency still faces a number of structural and technical challenges. One of the main challenges is the increasing conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses, which threatens long-term production sustainability. Data shows that less than 30% of farmers in Sambas have adopted modern agricultural technologies, indicating a low level of innovation adoption. Access to financing is also an issue, as only about 20% of farmer groups are connected to Islamic financing institutions such as BMTs and Islamic cooperatives. Additionally, the distribution system for agricultural products remains inefficient, leading to price disparities between farmers and final markets. Weak farmer institutions and limited cross-sectoral collaboration exacerbate these conditions, preventing productivity from reaching its optimal potential.

3. The Role of Sharia Values

Sharia values provide alternative solutions to structural problems in the agricultural sector. The principles of justice (*adl*), blessing (*barakah*), and avoidance of usury form the basis for building a sustainable and ethical agricultural economic system. Profit-sharing systems such as *musyarakah* and *mudharabah* are considered fairer and more appropriate for farmers who often lack sufficient initial capital. Additionally, agricultural zakat and infak mechanisms can be integrated into local food security enhancement systems, such as collecting harvests for distribution during lean seasons. Sharia-based approaches also promote environmentally sustainable farming practices and halal-thayyib food production ethics, which are highly relevant for export opportunities to Malaysia's predominantly Muslim market.

4. Strategy and Policy Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussions, the strategy for strengthening the sharia-based agricultural sector in Sambas Regency can be directed towards four main focuses, namely:

- a. **Strengthening sharia-based farmer institutions** by establishing farmer cooperatives that apply sharia principles to improve access to financing and marketing, while strengthening the bargaining position of farmers in the supply chain.
- b. **Improving access to halal-thayyib agricultural technology** by promoting the transfer of modern agricultural technology that aligns with sharia principles, as well as expanding training and mentoring programs for farmers to enhance efficiency and environmental sustainability.
- c. **Enhancing the role of Islamic boarding schools in sharia-based agricultural education**, through the involvement of Islamic educational institutions such as the Islamic Boarding School for Halal Agriculture () as centers for learning and innovation in sharia agriculture, given their close ties to the community and high religious authority.
- d. **Facilitating the export of halal agricultural products to Sarawak through the Aruk Border Crossing Point** should be encouraged, where local governments need to initiate halal certification systems and export facilitation through cross-border infrastructure, so that Sambas can become a hub for halal product trade in the border region.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that Sambas Regency has enormous potential to support food security at both the provincial and national levels, as indicated by its high rice production and the dominance of the population working in the agricultural sector. However, this potential has not been fully optimized due to various structural and technical challenges, such as land conversion, low adoption of modern technology, limited access to financing, and weak farmer institutions.

In this context, sharia-based agriculture offers a relevant and contextual alternative solution through the application of principles of justice, abundance, profit sharing, and halal-thayyib production ethics, which not only increase productivity but also strengthen sustainability and social justice values. Strategies that integrate Sharia values into agricultural governance, such as strengthening Sharia cooperatives, utilizing Islamic boarding schools as agricultural education centers, and facilitating the export of halal products to neighboring countries like Malaysia, are concrete steps toward making Sambas a model agrarian region that is globally competitive and rooted in Islamic values. Therefore, collaboration between local governments, Islamic financial institutions, religious educational institutions, and farmer communities is key to achieving a productive, equitable, and sustainable agricultural system in border areas.

Some recommendations that can be given are as follow: First, local governments need to develop specific policies that support sharia-based agriculture. Second, expanding access to sharia financing through BMTs and farmer cooperatives. Third, enhancing farmers' capacity through training in technology and agribusiness management. Lastly, cross-sector collaboration, including with religious institutions, to support value-based food security.

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