

INDONESIA'S ECONOMIC INTEREST IN RICE TRADE COOPERATION WITH THAILAND 2019-2022

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ABSTRACT

This research explores Indonesia's economic interests in rice trade cooperation with Thailand from 2019 until 2022. The primary objective of this research is analyze and identify the economic benefits that Indonesia can gain through importing rice from Thailand. The research employs a qualitative methodology with descriptive type, utilizing data collection techniques that include literature reviews and analysis of relevant secondary data. Hans J. Morgenthau's theory provides theoretical framework this research. Findings indicate rice trade cooperation with Thailand offers several economic advantages for Indonesia. It helps diversify the rice supply, thereby reducing dependency a single exporting country and mitigating the risks associated with unstable supply. This cooperation ensures a diverse and secure alternative source of rice for Indonesia. Additionally, it contributes to stabilizing domestic rice prices and strengthens bilateral trade relations between Indonesia and Thailand. The results show this trade cooperation beneficial for maintaining the availability of rice at stable prices in domestic market. It also highlights the importance of balancing domestic rice imports with local production ensure food security and economic stability. The conclusion of this research underscores significance of such trade partnerships in enhancing bilateral relations and securing a stable rice supply, which is crucial for Indonesia's agrarian economy.

INTRODUCTION

Food security is when food is physically and economically available to meet the nutritional needs of the entire population, enabling them to live healthy and productive lives every day. Since the proclamation of independence of the Republic of Indonesia, there has been public appreciation for the importance of strengthening food security for nation development. This is a blessing from 1945 Indonesia constitution which mandates the

implementation of social security, where food security is one of the main pillars. More than 90% of the entire population in Indonesia; Rice production employs 21 million farmers. And, in addition to the overall share of rice, around 30 percent of the total expenditure of very low-income households is spent on buying rice (Siregar, 2018).

Rice is a very important food for the people of Indonesia because rice is a staple food and a source of calories for most of the

Indonesian people. In its journey, the New Order era was a sufficient time to plan and implement development in Indonesia through PELITA. Up to PELITA III, development was planned and implemented well with agriculture as the main foundation. Indonesia is the world's largest rice importer, and was once a rice exporter.

After the dominance of the agricultural sector, PELITA Indonesia shifted its development to the industrial sector since the fourth year, with the main source of funding coming from foreign investment, most of which was in the form of government and private loans. Because Indonesia was a very stable country with very real economic progress at that time, this investment or loan flowed quickly into Indonesia. The industrial sector ranked first, followed by the agricultural sector.

In the end, Indonesia returned to being a rice importing country, even importing other food sources as it is now. Since then, the country almost do not have food independence, because agriculture has been neglected and most of it has to be imported, for example rice which is the staple food of the Indonesian people.

The independence of the state in controlling food in the form of staple foods such as rice through imports can indirectly bring misery to Indonesian farmers, of which around 120 million people work as farmers. The impact of rice imports has a direct impact on farmers, because the price of imported rice much cheaper than the price of local rice, meaning that local rice is less competitive than imported rice.

Indonesia is an agrarian country where a majority of its population relies on agriculture or farming Rice, a native plant of Asian countries including Indonesia, is a significant agricultural product. Additionally, many Indonesians believe that rice is a gift from the Almighty Creator, serving as a source of life and well-being for humanity.

The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) reported that Indonesia imported 407,7414

tons of rice in 2021, an increase from the 356,2862 tons imported in 2020.

Indonesian society is the second largest rice consumer in the world after Vietnam. The annual consumption reaches 335 million tons and continues to increase. In terms of rice consumption per capita, Vietnam consumes 200 kg per year, Indonesia 130 kg per year, Malaysia 80 kg, and Thailand 70 kg.

Given the increasing demand for rice, the government is required to provide rice supply to meet market demand. Indonesia imports rice from several countries that produce rice, including Thailand, Vietnam, Taiwan, China, Pakistan, India, and the United States, according to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS). Commodities such as rice, as raw materials, can play an important role in economic growth and international trade expansion. Data from UN Comtrade shows that Southeast Asia experienced a 14,08 percent increase in rice imports from 2005 to 2012. Additionally, the Southeast Asia region leads in rice consumption as a staple food (Hermawan, 2013).

According to David Ricardo, who proposed the theory known as comparative advantage, this means that in relation to Thailand's rice imports to Indonesia, Thailand has an advantage over Indonesia in terms of producing rice. There are several factors that contribute to rice imports, including social, political, and economic factors. Rice is a highly strategic commodity, so a country's comparative advantage is crucial for international trade. Imported rice is cheaper due to this comparative advantage, which is why Indonesia chooses to import rice rather than relying solely on domestic production. Therefore, the Indonesian government imports rice to meet domestic storage needs.

The author will explain about Indonesia's Economic Interests in Rice Trade Cooperation with Thailand in 2019-2022. This is interesting to discuss because one of the basic needs of agricultural

products is rice. In Indonesia, rice is the most important food to be developed for the national economy because rice is the most important staple food of the country, which covers more than half of the country's population. In this research, the time period to be used is 2022. Where in 2022 rice prices in Indonesia crept up in the third quarter of 2022. Although the spike was not drastic, the price increase has been recorded since August 2022, then continued in September 2022 after the government increased the price of subsidized fuel oil (BBM).

The academic benefit of this research is to make a theoretical contribution regarding the concepts of National Economic Interest, International Cooperation, International Trade, and Food Security from trade cooperation with Thailand. The practical benefit of this research is to provide Knowledge and Insight on the Interests of Rice Trade Cooperation with Thailand in 2019 – 2022.

In this research there are 2 (two) concepts, namely conceptual and operational definitions of the concept. In the conceptual definition there are several concepts such as National Interest, International Cooperation, Food Security, and International Trade. In National Interest is a vital need for the country which includes the survival of the nation and state as well as the economic welfare of the community. While international cooperation is a form of relationship carried out by a country with another country which aims to meet the needs and interests of the country. Then in food security refers to the conditions and efforts to prevent food from possible biological, chemical, and other contamination that can interfere with, harm, and endanger human health, and international trade understands a country that trades with other countries by mutual agreement.

In this research, the operational concept used to answer the research question is the theory of national interest. The term national interest is the term most

often used in discussions of foreign policy. This concept is used as a basis for explaining the behavior of a country in international politics.

The national interests of a country generally include various things such as national integrity, protection of the country's national dignity and development of power. The national interests of a country arise as a result of limited national resources or national power, so that the country or nation concerned feels the need to strive to fulfill national interests outside its borders.

In this case, the national interests that are relatively the same in all countries or nations are security and welfare (prosperity). These national interests also become the basis for the formation or determination of national interests for each country with the goals to be achieved in relation (Rudy, 2002).

The main objective of this case is to analyze and identify the economic benefits that can be obtained by Indonesia through rice import trade cooperation with Thailand and using qualitative methods by collecting relevant data.

To support the study in this research, researchers traced various literatures and previous studies that were still related to the problems studied. In addition, in scientific research, the main principle that must be upheld is to avoid plagiarism or copying the entire written work of others.

Therefore, in order to fulfill the code of ethics in scientific research, exploration of relevant previous research is very important. This aims to strengthen the research, determine the position of the research, and provide a theoretical basis that supports the research framework.

Through the exploration of previous research, researchers found several studies that have relevance to this research. Although there is a connection in the discussion, this research still has significant differences compared to previous studies.

Some previous studies have the following titles:

1. *"Analisis Perkembangan Produksi Beras Dan Impor Beras Di Indonesia* (Analysis of the Development of Rice Production and Rice Imports in Indonesia)". Written by Sri Endang Rahayu, and Hastina Febriaty in 2019. This study discusses the analysis of the development of rice production and rice imports in Indonesia.
2. *"Dampak Kebijakan Perberasan pada Pasar Beras dan Kesejahteraan Produsen dan Konsumen Beras di Indonesia* (The Impact of Rice Policy on Rice Market and The Welfare of Rice Producers and Consumers in Indonesia)". Written by Edy Siswanto, Bonar Marulitua Sinaga, and Harianto in 2018. This study discusses the analysis of changes in rice policy can affect the condition of the Indonesian rice market and increases in government purchase prices, agricultural credit, and fertilizer subsidies can improve the welfare of producers and consumers.
3. *"Kebijakan Impor Beras Asal Thailand Oleh Indonesia di Era Presiden Joko Widodo Periode 2014-2018* (Indonesia's Rice Import Policy from Thailand in the Era of President Joko Widodo 2014-2018)". Written by Muhammad Agung Hidayatullah in 2019. This thesis explains the rice import policy during the Joko Widodo leadership era during the 2014-2018 period with Thailand. The rice import was carried out to meet domestic rice needs, which from the results of the study showed that rice prices were creeping up due to the lack of domestic rice supplies which forced the government to implement a rice import policy from Thailand. This affected domestic

rice prices due to the increasing supply of rice in Indonesia.

METHOD

This research method used by researchers is qualitative research. Qualitative research is a research method that aims to understand and explain phenomena in complex contexts.

Qualitative research is research that uses descriptive data collection, is not measured numerically, and is oriented towards words, images, or data that is already available. Data in qualitative research can be obtained through interviews, participant observation, document analysis, or direct observation. By using existing data that has been published and the data is data related to the researcher's title.

The form of research used by the author is descriptive. Descriptive research is research that aims to explain (describe) a phenomenon which is then used to describe or characterize the function of a particular idea, symptom or phenomenon.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As one of the countries with the largest population in the world, Indonesia faces major challenges in meeting the food needs of its population. One of the main food commodities that is very important is rice. Indonesia and Thailand are two countries in Southeast Asia that have many similarities in terms of economic and cultural conditions. The two countries have established strong bilateral relations especially in the rice trade. Indonesia and Thailand are two countries that have considerable rice production in Southeast Asia. Therefore, Indonesia often imports rice from Thailand as a food supply for its population (Putra, 2019).

Indonesia and Thailand have collaborated in agriculture for many years. There is a lot of potential for agricultural growth between the two countries due to their similar geography, climate and soil types. The Indonesian Ministry of

Agriculture and the Thai Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry are planning cooperation by signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to increase cooperation in the agricultural sector. The aim is to increase agricultural yields, improve food quality and safety, increase rice production, improve animal husbandry, and expand bilateral trade in agricultural goods and agree to share information and expertise in this area.

This section examines the economic interest Indonesia in the rice trade cooperation between Indonesia and Thailand during the period 2019-2022. As

Thailand is one of the world's rice producers, this partnership allows Indonesia to meet its rice consumption needs through imports from Thailand. This is done to maintain affordable rice prices for the average Indonesian population, minimize the possibility of rice scarcity, and ensure domestic food supply stability. Additionally, this partnership has positive effects on economic growth, creating new jobs in the agricultural and logistics sectors, and promoting regional integration in Southeast Asia through increased relations and trade between the two countries.

Table 1. Rice Import Policy and Rice Import Amount in the Minister of Trade Era of the Onward Indonesia Cabinet 2019-2022.

No	Aspects	Policy	Amount
1	Agus Suparmanto	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthen supervision of the quality of imported rice. 2. Looking for diverse sources of rice imports. 3. Encourage the development of the rice export market. 	356.300 MT
2	Muhammad Lutfi	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encourage imports from various rice producing countries. 2. Providing incentives, such as fertilizer subsidies and technology development to rice farmers. 3. Carrying out inspections and tests on the quality of imported rice. 4. Establish rice import quotas. 	534.300 MT
3	Zulkifli Hasan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce the volume of rice imports. 2. Increase subsidies for rice farmers. 3. Allocate research and development funds for rice farming technology. 4. Increase cooperation with rice producing countries. 5. Strengthen supervision and action against illegal rice imports. 	175.200 MT

The matrix table 1 above is a rice import policy proposed by the Minister of Trade of the Cabinet 'Indonesia Maju' era under the President Joko Widodo. This matrix includes several policies aimed at ensuring the quality of rice imports, reducing import dependence, encouraging local rice production, planning long-term rice imports, protecting local farmers, ensuring rice availability, and increasing the country's food independence.

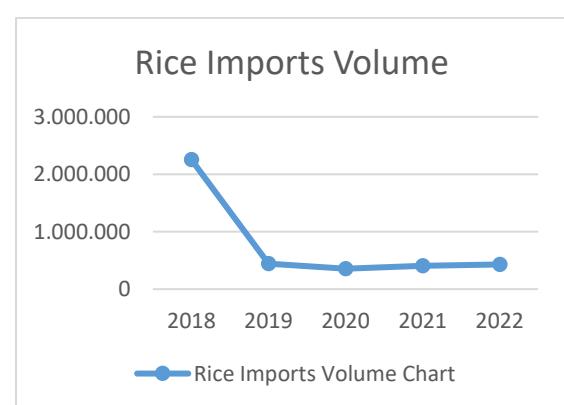


Chart 1.1 Volume of Indonesia's Rice Imports 2018-2022 (Source: statistik-bps)

Indonesia's rice imports have tended to decline in the last 4 (four) years,

judging from the chart above. For example, in 2018, the volume of rice imports throughout the year reached 2,25 million metric tons from several rice producing countries. In 2019, the total volume of Indonesian rice imports decreased significantly by 1,8 million metric tons with the import volume at that time amounting to 444,508 metric tons. In 2021, there was an increase in volume, with the total volume of rice imports amounting to 407,741 metric tons compared to 2020 which only imported 356,286 metric tons (Fadhillah, 2022).

Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that Indonesia imported 429,207 metric tons of rice throughout the 2022 period, an increase of 5% when compared to the number of imports the previous year. Rice imports in 2022 are dominated by broken rice, other than of kind for animal feed with a volume of 284,5 thousand metric tons. Furthermore, Indonesia imported glutinous rice aka glutinous rice as much as 26,2300 metric tons (BPS, 2022). In addition, other aromatic rice accounted for 7,100 metric tons, semi-milled or fully milled rice accounted for 6,550 metric tons. In addition, basmati rice or known as basmati rice as much as 1,76 thousand metric tons, hom mali rice as much as 0,30 thousand metric tons, and other types of rice as much as 0,01 thousand metric tons (Annur, 2022).

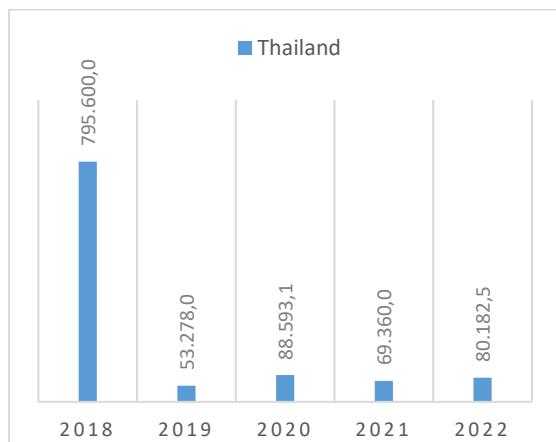


Chart 1.2 Volume of Indonesia's Rice Imports from Thailand 2018-2022 (Source:statistik-bps)

As shown in the chart 1.2 in the span of the last 5 (five) years. Indonesia has imported 1,087,013 metric tons of rice from Thailand calculated as a whole. The volume of Indonesian rice imports from Thailand reached the highest level in 2018 at 795,600 metric tons. Rice imports throughout 2018 amounted to 2.25 million metric tons from several rice producing countries compared to 2017 which only reached 305 thousand metric tons with the volume of rice imports dominated by Thailand of 108,944 metric tons. Throughout 2019, Indonesia has imported 53,278metric tons of rice from Thailand. In 2020, Thailand again became a supplier of rice amounting to 88,593 metric tons at that time. In 2021, Indonesia imported 69,360 metric tons of rice from Thailand, a decrease in the volume of Thai rice imports from the previous year. Then in 2022, 80,182 thousand metric tons of Thai rice were imported to meet domestic needs (BPS, 2022).

The rice import peaked in 2018 at 2,25 million metric tons due to the fluctuation of national rice harvest land from the beginning of the year to March 2018. March is the month of the big harvest in Indonesia, as a result the supply of rice is abundant. In March 2018 rice supplies experienced a post-harvest surplus and were also balanced with the increasing population of Indonesia. However, in 2018 from October to December there is expected to be a spike in the decline between rice production data and rice consumption. If viewed as a whole, Indonesia is still predicted to have a rice surplus throughout 2018, amounting to 286 million metric tons. However, this surplus is considered insufficient to meet domestic rice needs in the future. It is known that the rice surplus in 2018 was not able to control prices when its supply was limited. The decision to import rice also occurred because Bulog had to distribute social assistance (bansos) in the form of prosperous rice (rastra) to the public. This happened due to the

upcoming general election (pemilu) (Ardharsyah, 2019).

Domestic rice production in Indonesia has not been able to meet domestic needs optimally. Therefore, Indonesia often has to import rice from other countries. Thailand is known as one of the largest and best rice producers in the world. This country has a climate and soil that are very suitable for rice cultivation. In addition, Thai farmers have extensive experience and knowledge in efficient and export-oriented rice cultivation. Consistently, Thai rice production provides good quality and sufficient quantity to meet domestic and export needs. Buying rice from Thailand can ensure stable and quality supply for Indonesia at a cheaper price (Kusumah, 2019).

In some ways, the importance of the rice trade between Indonesia and Thailand is obvious. First, rice is an important commodity for the Indonesian population, whose needs cannot always be met by domestic production. In this case, Indonesia needs rice imports, including from Thailand. Second, rice trade between Indonesia and Thailand reduces the market price of rice in Indonesia. If rice is accessible from Thailand, the price of rice in the Indonesian market tends to decrease. This is of course beneficial for those who often have difficulty buying rice. Third, from the point of view of international trade. Both countries are members of ASEAN. Therefore, rice trade between the two countries is governed by the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement. In this regard, the rice trade meets the needs of both countries, thus generating economic development for ASEAN as a whole. As mentioned before "ASEAN succeed to infiltrate their interest through the charter of ASEAN, as mentioned in section four, five, and six of declaration. At that time Indonesia was at the phase of development, so education is a key for national development. At the beginning of foundation of ASEAN, no one is appointed as a chair, but Thailand is

hosting the meetings" (Ramadhony & Firmansyah, 2022).

The impact of supply disruptions caused by bad weather, transportation difficulties, or local infrastructure problems can be mitigated by buying or importing rice from geographically adjacent countries, such as Thailand. A reliable supply of rice from Thailand can contribute to the maintenance of Indonesia's food security. In terms of rice prices, Thailand has a price advantage over its competitors. Thailand is able to provide competitive prices due to the huge size of its industry and the effectiveness of its supply chain. The price of rice in the Indonesian domestic market can be controlled by buying rice from Thailand, which also has the added advantage of economic benefits for consumers in Indonesia.

Indonesia and Thailand are two ASEAN countries that have positive relations. Both countries have a long history of trade and have developed substantial economic cooperation over time. Rice trade between Indonesia and Thailand is important to achieve the economic and political goals of both countries. Indonesia and Thailand are important members of ASEAN and are among the world's rice producers. Therefore, rice trade between Indonesia and Thailand is very important to maintain economic stability in both countries, improve people's welfare, and strengthen political relations in the ASEAN region (Muhlis, 2021).

In addition to increasing bilateral economic and trade cooperation, Indonesia's rice trade policy with Thailand also aims to expand bilateral economic and trade cooperation. In addition, the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AFTA) strengthens trade relations between Indonesia and Thailand, which is very beneficial for both countries. Indonesia's rice trade policy with Thailand has a broader goal, namely to promote the ASEAN region as the center of world rice trade. Cooperation between Indonesia and Thailand in rice trade aims to boost economic development and

prosperity in Southeast Asia. In a broader context, trade, investment and tourism bind the two countries. In the era of globalization and increasingly fierce competition, Indonesia's rice trade policy with Thailand continues to evolve so that both countries can remain competitive and relevant in a dynamic global market (Arianto Patunru, 2019).

Politics Indonesia in rice trade with Thailand also has an impact on national food security. Indonesia is a country that relies heavily on rice production to meet national food needs. With good rice trade cooperation with other countries such as Thailand, Indonesia can ensure sufficient rice supply to meet national food needs and reduce dependence on rice imports from other countries.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of rice trade cooperation between Indonesia and Thailand in 2019-2022 is to improve bilateral trade relations between the two countries, as well as ensure the availability of domestic rice at stable prices in Indonesia. Both countries are the largest rice producers in Southeast Asia and both are also among the rice exporters in the world, so trade cooperation between the two has great potential to increase economic growth among others.

Indonesia's dependence on rice imports from Thailand in this research period shows the need for sufficient rice supply in the country for special purposes, such as cafes, restaurants, hotels, and the needs of foreign nationals living in Indonesia. Although Indonesia has potential in rice production, domestic needs are still not fully met, so rice imports are a solution to meet domestic rice storage needs.

In addition, Indonesia bought rice from Thailand in the period from 2019 to 2022 due to several factors that influence it. First, Thailand has abundant rice production, making it one of the largest rice producing countries. Second, the price of Thai rice is relatively more competitive and

cheap compared to domestic production or other countries. Third, by importing rice from Thailand, Indonesia can ensure the availability and stability of domestic rice supply, so as to meet the consumption needs of the Indonesian people.

Matters affecting Indonesia's economic interests in rice trade cooperation with Thailand include domestic needs, rice prices, trade policies, and bilateral cooperation between the two countries. This interacts and affects the dynamics in the rice trade between Indonesia and Thailand. The existence of rice trade cooperation between Indonesia and Thailand provides benefits not only in economic terms, but also in bilateral relations between the two countries. This cooperation can be the foundation for strengthening the economy and trade between Indonesia and Thailand in the future. Indonesia, as one of the world's most populous countries and a major agricultural producer, has a significant share in the rice trade. Rice is a staple food in Indonesia, and ensuring a stable and sufficient supply of rice is essential for food security and economic stability.

With a growing population and a growing middle class, the demand for rice continues to rise. However, Indonesia faces challenges in meeting its domestic needs only through local production. As an experienced player in the global rice market, Thailand holds an important position as a major rice exporter. The country boasts advanced agricultural practices and technologies that allow it to produce surplus rice for export. This is in line with Indonesia's interest in securing a stable supply of rice to meet domestic needs.

Cooperation between Indonesia and Thailand in rice trade has several important objectives. First, it allows Indonesia to access stable and reliable rice sources, reducing the risk of supply shortages and price fluctuations. Second, strengthen bilateral relations between the two neighboring countries, promote economic

cooperation and regional stability. By engaging in rice trade with Thailand, Indonesia is taking steps to boost regional food security. In times of global uncertainty, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, ensuring food security has become even more important. Rice trade cooperation acts as a safety net, allowing the two countries to support each other during difficult times.

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