FORMULATING THE REAL VALUE OF FOODS: the Role of Science and Technology toward Food Sovereignty

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The new Food Law of Indonesia (Law 18/2012) is the overarching law that regulates all aspect associated with food and food products. Specifically, Law 18/2012 stated that the food supplies should always be sufficient, safe, high quality, diverse, affordable, and may not conflict with religion, beliefs and culture. Furthermore, the Government of Indonesia (GOI) was mandated by Law 18/2012 to established food system not only to fulfill basic human necessities, but also to provide fair, equal, and sustainable benefits based on the concepts of toward food sovereignty. According to Law 18/2012, food sovereignty (Kadaulatan pangan[1]) has been defined as “the right of the state and nation to independently establish food policy to ensure the right to food for the people and to grant the right for the society to determine the appropriate food systems according to local resources”. Law 18/2012 simply stated that it is only logical that food and food system in Indonesia should be established based on the unique and abundant natural resources, toward food sovereignty.
The paradigm of food sovereignty should become a concern of all food stakeholders (food scientists/technologists, food industry practitioners, consumers and government policy makers) in formulating, developing, manufacturing, trading, buying, storing, consuming, and regulating of foods. With respect to food sovereignty, the value of foods should be formulated beyond its traditional value as an essential input for the survival of human beings. The value of food is not limited in providing calories and nutrients to maintain a healthy and active life of the people. The value of food should also be critically examined in its relation to its effect on (i) well-being and welfare, (ii) natural resources and environmental sustainability, (iii) nation and cultural identity, and (iv) national competitiveness and security.

Science and technology offer tremendous opportunities for formulating better value of foods, not only with respect to safety, nutrition and quality of foods, but also for well-being and welfare of current and future generations, natural resources and environmental sustainability, and nation and cultural food identity, and national competitiveness and security. Science and technology, however, is also associated with risks of negative consequences. This paper will illustrate how science and technology should be developed, applied and guided toward the desired outcomes of food sovereignty mandated by law 18/2012.

[1] Kadaulatan pangan adalah hak negara dan bangsa yang secara mandiri menentukan kebijakan pangan yang menjamin hak atas pangan bagi rakyat dan yang memberikan hak bagi masyarakat untuk menentukan sistem pangan yang sesuai dengan potensi sumber daya lokal (Law 18/2012).