



However, after a series of tough discussions, the village head refused to register the farmer association. He argued that there are too many farmer associations in Curug Manis Village, and as a result there is no need to form a new one. Maswad and his colleagues were unhappy with this result. They argued that their new farmer association was composed of actual farmers who did not belong to any other associations.



Despite this setback, Maswad and his partners did not give up. They visited the Agriculture Service of Serang City to request information about farmer associations. They learned that they already met the requirements for official registration. The UPTD then registered the association, making them official. As a result, they finally succeeded in receiving subsidized fertilizers, reducing the costs they incur in cultivating their rice fields.

# Access to Information Leads to Subsidised-Fertiliser





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**F**armers from Curug Manis Village (Serang District, Banten Province) have long had to deal with injustice. Among other problems, they were not benefiting from a government program to provide subsidised fertiliser to poor farmers. According to the requirements of the programme, they should have been eligible. They knew the requirements from bulletin boards in the subdistrict office and from television advertisements. The problem was that the fertiliser was being distributed unfairly. It was being distributed to farmer associations that should not have been eligible to receive it. These associations are known as “fake farmer associations”. These “fake farmer associations” can afford to buy non-subsidised fertilisers. They are established secretly and only include the village head and the head of the neighbourhood unit. Often, the head of the neighbourhood unit is appointed by the village head to be the head of the farmer association. Farmers are often excluded from this process.

Farmer associations which were not receiving subsidised fertilisers, including some that were in a community centre assisted by Pattiro Serang, visited UPTD, the local level technical implementation unit for agriculture in Curug Subdistrict. They requested information about the subsidised



fertiliser program. According to the rules, subsidised fertilisers should only be given to official farmer associations. “Official” means that the farmer association must be registered in the village list and registered with the Agriculture Service. As a result of this information, the associations realised they needed to become officially registered in order to obtain subsidised fertiliser.

In the course of several subsequent meetings, they decided to form a new farmer association. Maswad and Sarbini, two key figures in the Curug Community Center, were elected as Chief and Vice Chief, respectively, of the new farmer association. Thirty-two farmers who work on 15 hectares of land became the first members of the association.

Having completed the administrative requirements, the new farmer association headed by Maswad visited the Curug Manis Village Office to register itself.

