



Impact of COVID-19 on Agriculture (Farmers Perspective)

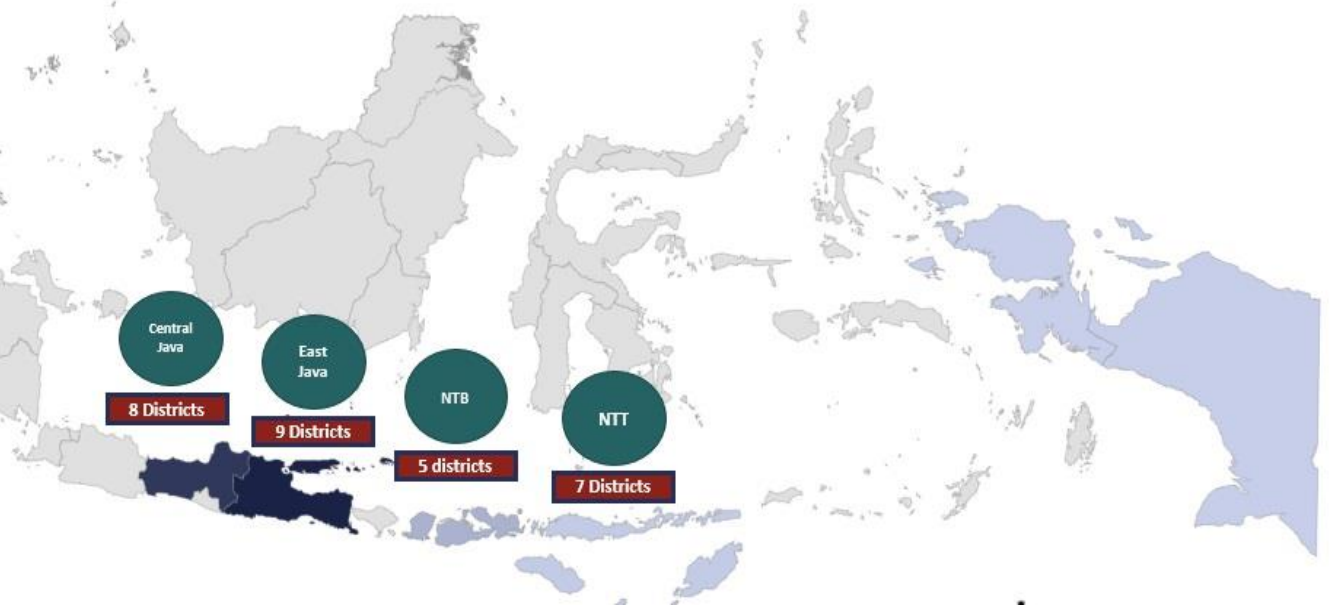
A qualitative study on farmer's behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic in four PRISMA target provinces

29 April 2020

About The Survey

The first COVID-19 case occurred in Indonesia on 2 March, 2020 in Jakarta. By mid March, the Government of Indonesia (Gol) had followed this up with intensive dissemination of information on reducing the spread of the virus.

PRISMA conducted three of qualitative phone surveys, i.e. crop farmers, livestock farmers, and kiosks in mid April 2020 during the transition from harvesting to the new planting season. The surveys aim to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on agriculture after a month of intensive dissemination of information from the Gol.



The crop farmers survey involved 85 farmers in four PRISMA target provinces (Central Java, East Java, NTB and NTT). This may not fully represent farmers in Indonesia but can provide valuable insights for PRISMA's partners to improve their strategies during the pandemic.



Topics



General

Farmers understanding about COVID-19



Farming activity

Changes in farmers activity during COVID-19



Agriculture input

Challenges and initiatives regarding agricultural inputs during COVID-19



Reception of information

Ways for farmers to receive information



Product sales

Performance of commodity sales during COVID-19



Financing

Farmers' access to financing during COVID-19



Internet usage

Farmers' internet behaviour



General

Farmers understanding of COVID-19

Farmers Awareness of COVID-19

95% farmers know about COVID-19

Farmers' have gained information on COVID-19 from neighbours, TV and radio. Local government initiatives in several districts in NTT are using announcements from vehicles to disseminate information on COVID-19 .

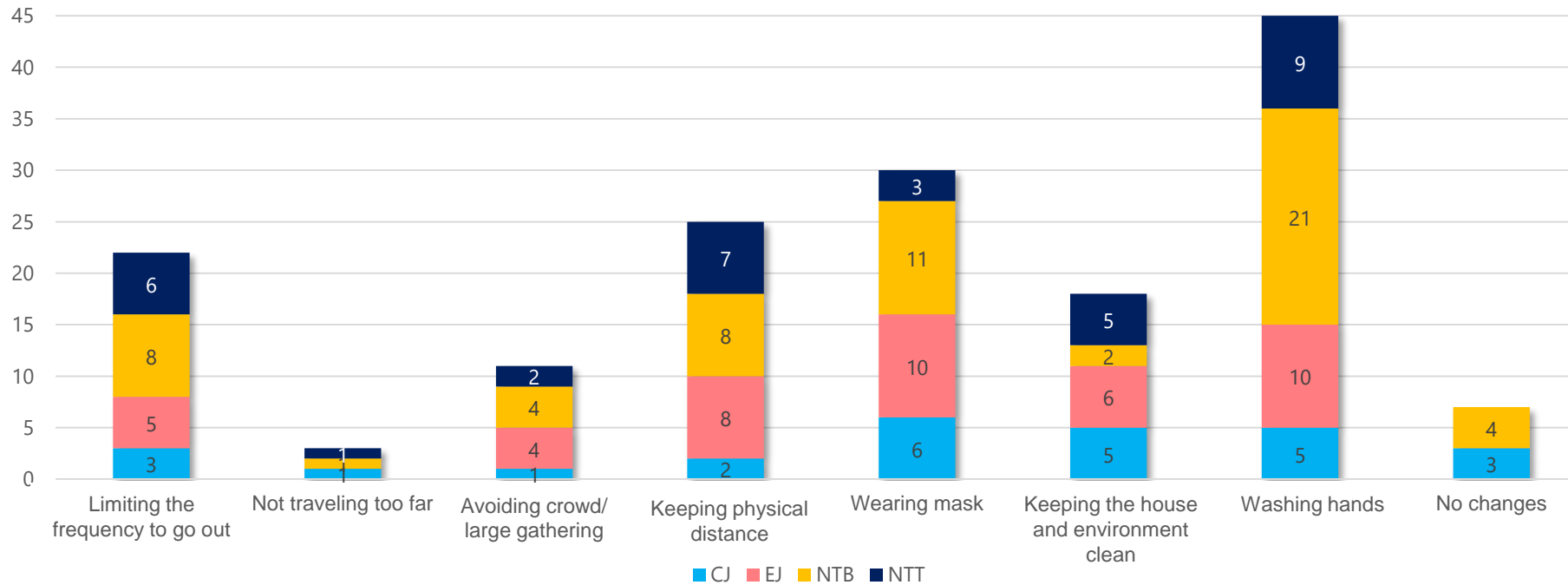
Farmers understand that COVID-19 is a **respiratory disease** with symptoms similar to **flu**, including **a cough**, and that it **spreads quickly**—and may even **cause death** in severe cases.

Only 6% of farmers in CJ and 10% in NTB who live in remote areas said that they do not know about COVID-19.



Photo credit: FMC Indonesia

Changes in Farmers Household due to COVID-19



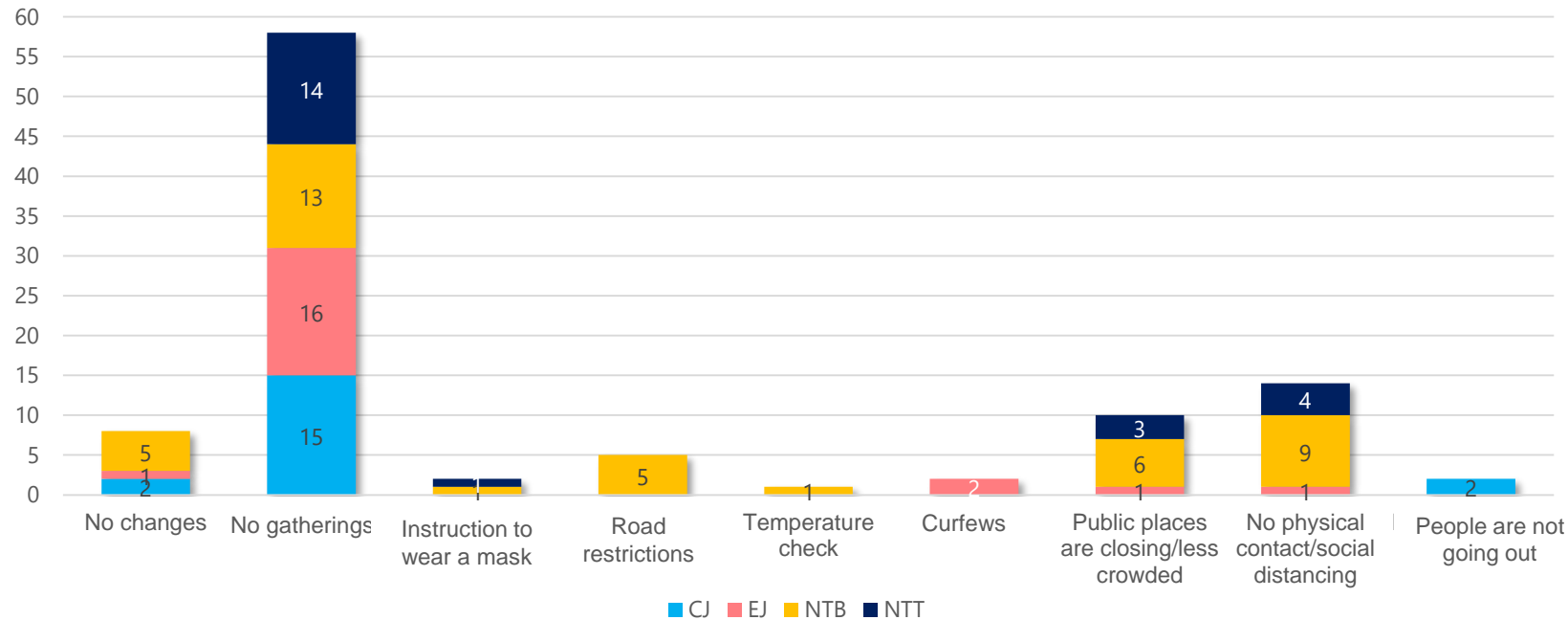
“ At first we didn't go out, but then we started doing our normal activities again while adhering to the government's advice on COVID-19.

Monika, from Manggarai, NTT

Most farmers (92%) are complying with government recommendations on washing hands, wearing a mask and physical distancing.

- Only 8% of respondents said that they have not altered any of their activities.
- Some respondents said that it is difficult for them to stay at home for a long period of time, so they have started to return to their daily activities.

Changes in Farmers Circumstances



“ *Traditional markets have started to close. We don't shake hands at the mosque, and our local places where we hang out are closed.*

Sutiyo from Grobogan, Central Java

The biggest change in farmers' neighbourhoods: **no gatherings**

- Public places and mosques have started to close. If people still go to the mosque they are trying to apply physical distancing.
- No gatherings for farmers group meetings. Some farmers have initiated WhatsApp groups instead.

Initiatives from Local Governments

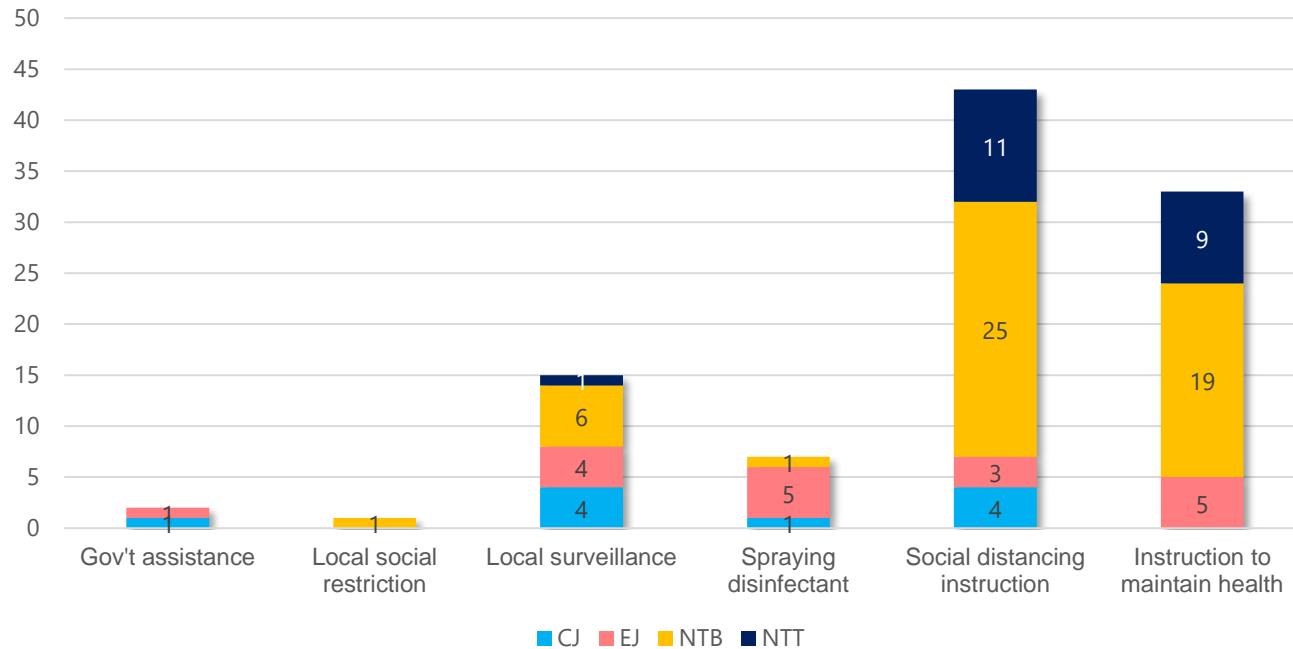


Photo credit: Corteva Agriscience

A Surveillance and Monitoring System was implemented by adding "Guard Posts"

- All levels of government have initiated action in the villages: neighbourhood and citizens' associations (RT/RW), healthcare offices, village supervisory non-commissioned officers (Babinsa) and public order enforcers (Satpol PP)
- Instruction from local governments has been very clear and they are already implementing some components of the large scale social restrictions.

“ RT/RW have started to record the movements of people especially those from outside of the area.
Lalu F from Central Lombok, NTB

“ Some farmers have received a discount on their electricity bills.
Pujiono from Blora, Central Java



Farming Activities

Changes in activities during the COVID-19 pandemic

Changes in Planting Seasons

Planting times have changed even though only 7% of changes were caused by COVID-19 due to:

- Difficulties in getting labour, especially from other areas
- Less people gathering so harvesting has taken longer and this has affected the subsequent planting season
- Vegetables are not being sold due to limited off takers, so farmers did not finish harvesting their crops.

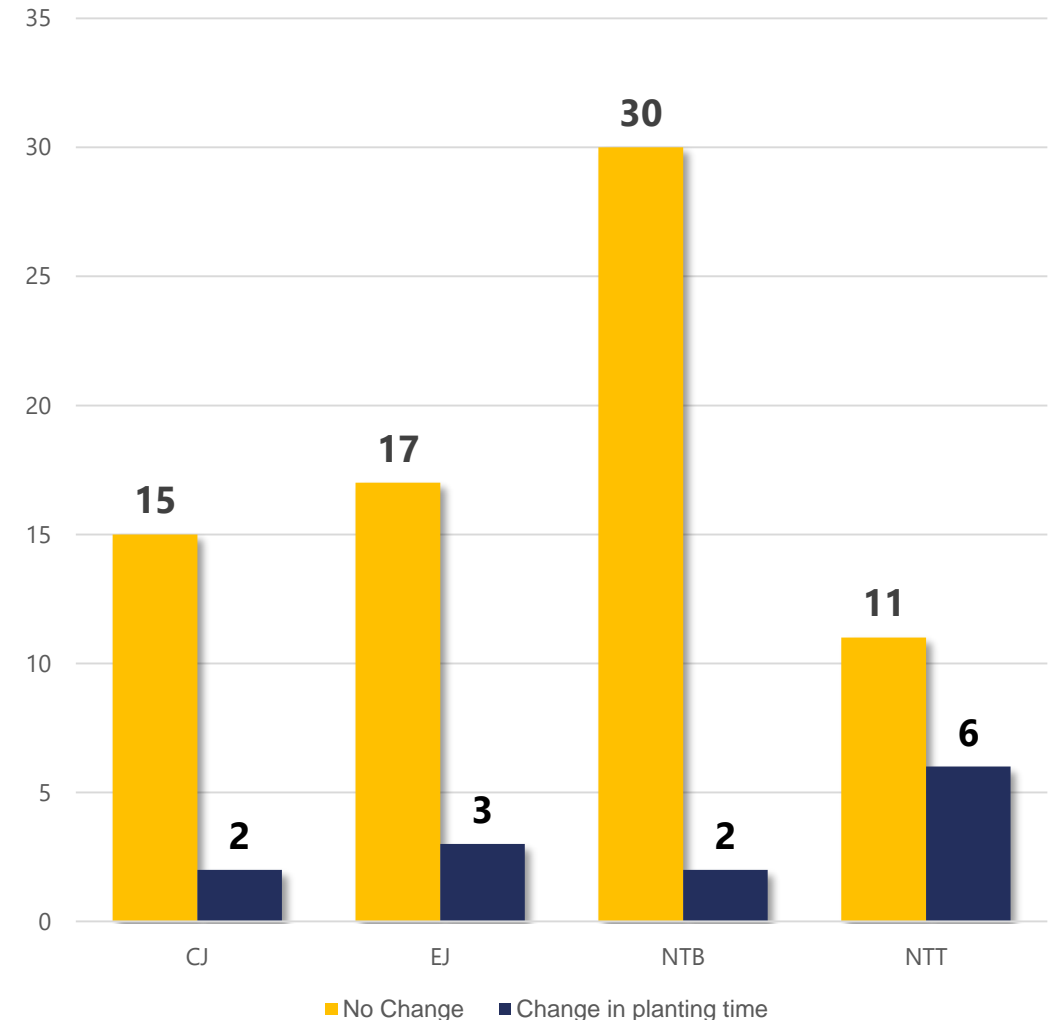
Other non COVID-19 reasons were weather and water availability

“ Usually we plant again in April and harvest in June, but the vegetables are still in the field because they didn't get sold.

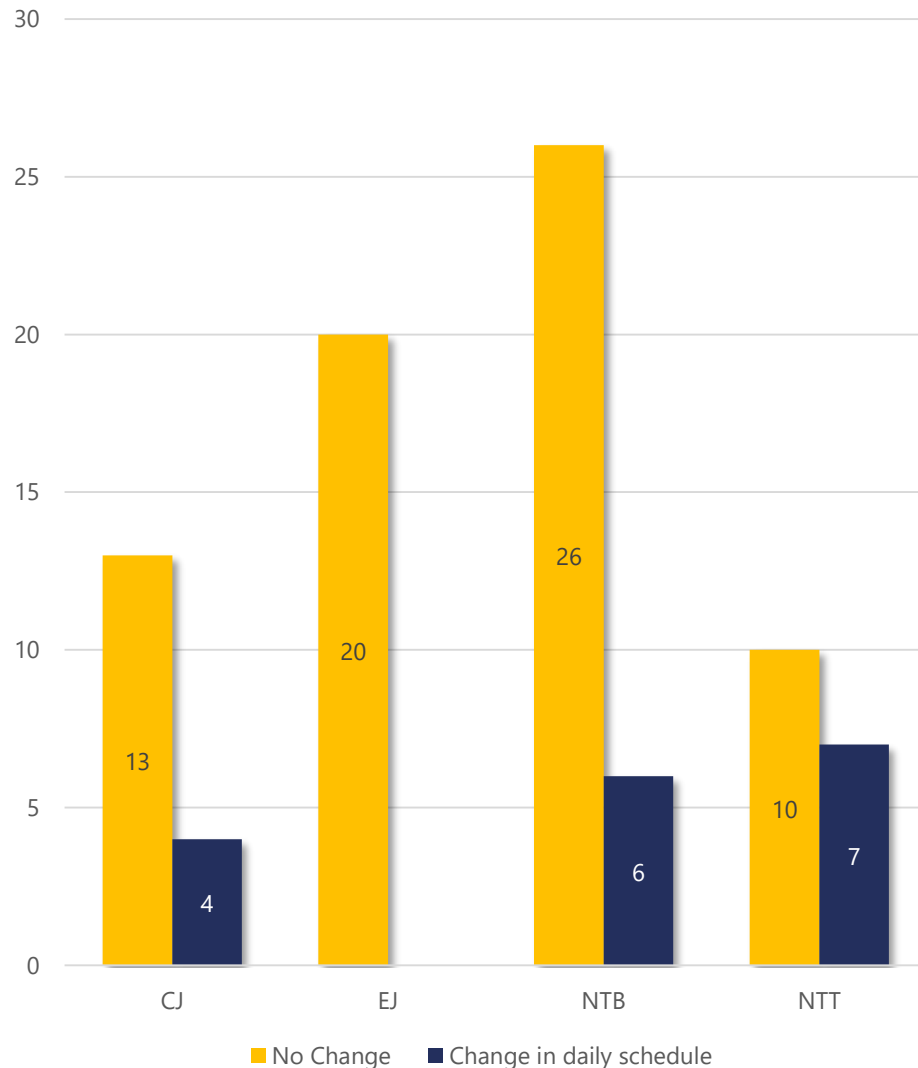
TTU, NTT

“ Now is harvesting time, but because of social distancing we need more time due to labour shortages.

TTS, NTT



Changes in Farming Activities



- 20% of respondents have changed their daily farming schedule.
- Some farmers are reducing their farming time due to leaving the house less, therefore time for buying inputs and selling crops is also reduced.
- Some of the changes have been due to reductions in labour services and reduced numbers of people gathering, therefore more time is required for work.

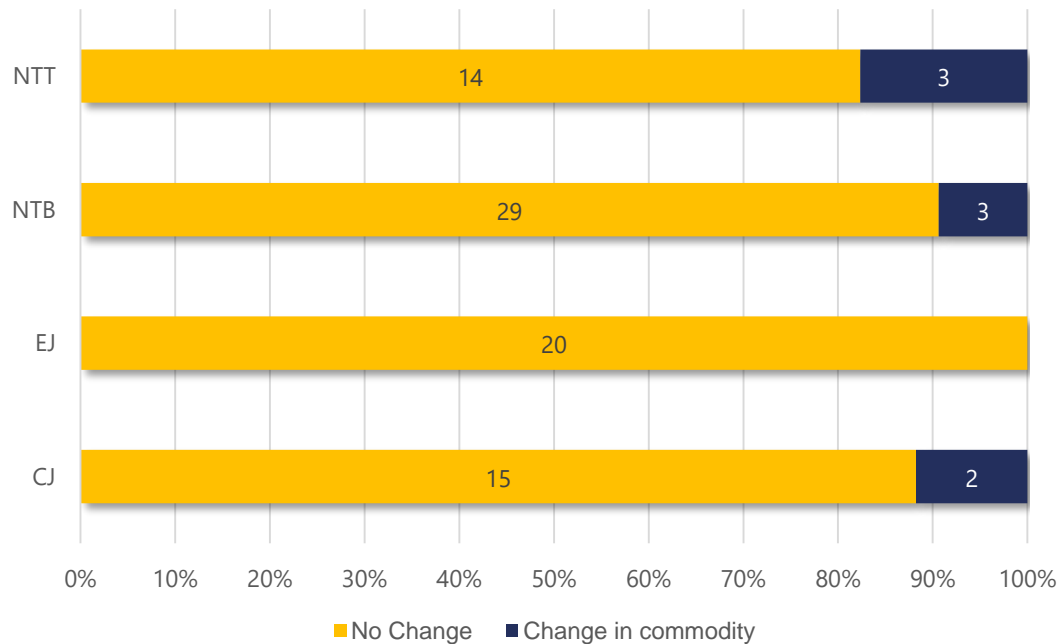
” We have been afraid to leave the house so we postponed planting and going out to buy seeds. We can only sell vegetables for half a day at the market, which means we bring a lot of leftover vegetables back home.

TTS, NTT

” It's hard to find workers because many of them prefer to follow the government instruction to stay at home, so cleaning up the fields takes longer than usual as its only me and my parents doing it.

Manggarai, NTT

Changes in Commodities



Most farmers will not change their commodities but 9% of respondents said that they will change or add a commodity due to:

- changes in demand during the COVID-19 pandemic
- wanting a fast rotation of cash
- prices

” *I am planning to try growing vanilla because of its high price in the market.*

Manggarai, NTT

” *I will add eggplant crops because they are easy and fast . I will also use eggplant for my own daily needs.*

Sumbawa, NTB

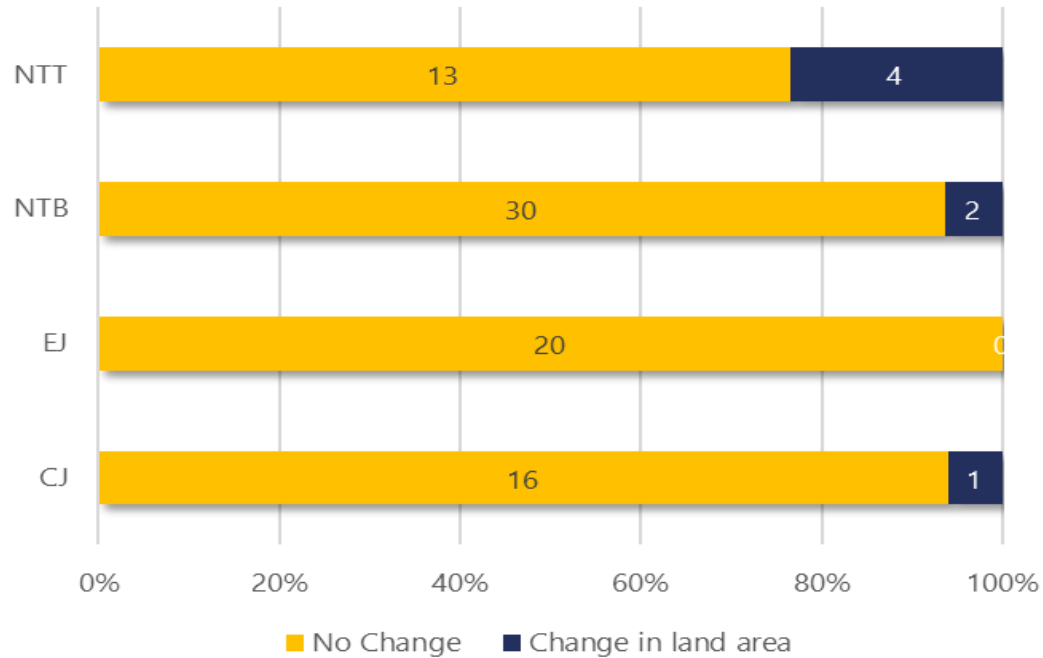
” *I am planning to try papaya because people say the flowers and the fruit are good to cure and prevent COVID-19.*

TTS, NTT

” *Due to the high demand in the market, I'm currently planting a total of 10.000 porang (Amorphophallus muerlleri) plants.*

TTU, NTT

Changes in Land Size



Only a few respondents (8%) said that they will reduce the area of their cultivation, reducing 25%-50% of their land size.

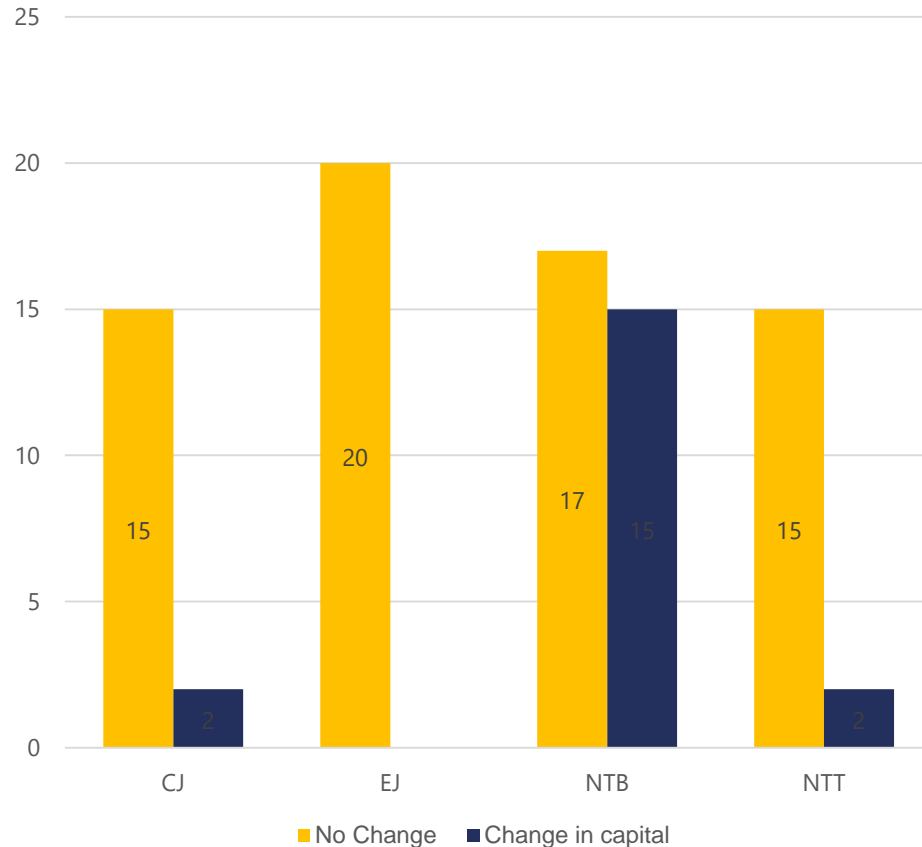
“ Due to the uncertainty because of COVID-19, I am planning to reduce my cultivation area from 1 hectare down to 40 'are' (one 'are' is an area of 100 m²).

“ No changes in land size but I will use 1 hectare for maize and 40 'are' for vegetables.



Photo credit: PKT

Changes in Capital



More farmers will need financial support due to increased input prices

22% of respondents stated that they have needed to increase their capital, due to higher prices of some inputs and labour costs. The changes in increased capital range from 10% - 75%.

“ The cost of fertiliser has increased by IDR. 1.500/kg and pesticide by IDR. 5,000 – 8,000 per packet.

Purworejo, Central Java

“ Rice seed has increased from IDR. 15.000/kg to IDR. 25.000/ kg.

Lombok Tengah, NTB

“ Labour costs have increased from IDR. 60,000 per day to IDR. 100,000 per day.

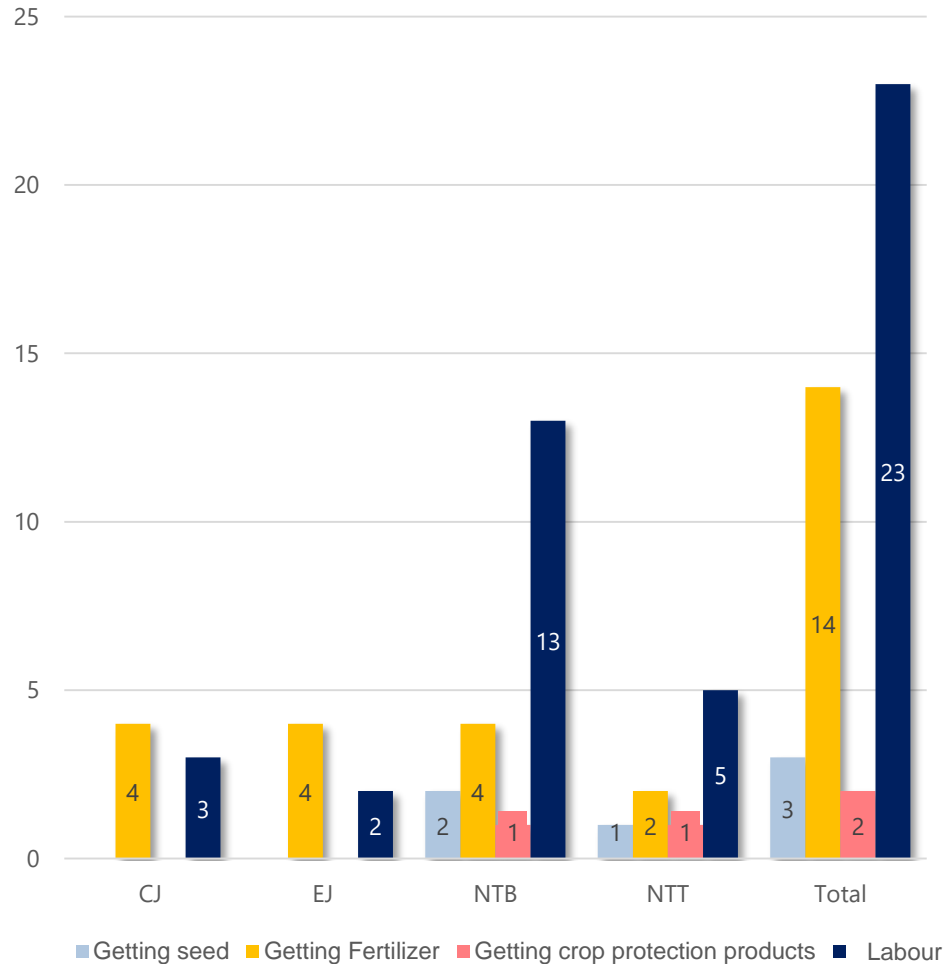
Lombok Timur, NTB



Agricultural Inputs

Challenges and initiatives concerning agricultural inputs during COVID-19

Challenges in Agri Inputs



Major challenge: labour

Farmers in several locations have decided to only use local labour to reduce the risk of COVID-19 and some farmers have chosen to reduce the number of labourers to cut costs.

“ Due to COVID-19, I decided to do the cultivating myself to reduce costs and comply with government regulations on physical distancing.

Manggarai, NTT

“ There are some challenges in acquiring labourers because of the restrictions on entering other areas/villages and labourers are afraid to go to other villages.

Lombok Tengah, NTB

- 10% of farmers have changed from using manual labour to machinery, where the machines are shared with other farmers.
- Several farmers are using agri inputs from previous planting seasons and were unaware of the impacts of COVID-19.
- Some agri input brands are now not available in the market.

No changes in irrigation services or challenges related to irrigation due to weather or limited irrigation infrastructure.

Changes in Agri Inputs 2/2

Second main challenge: fertiliser

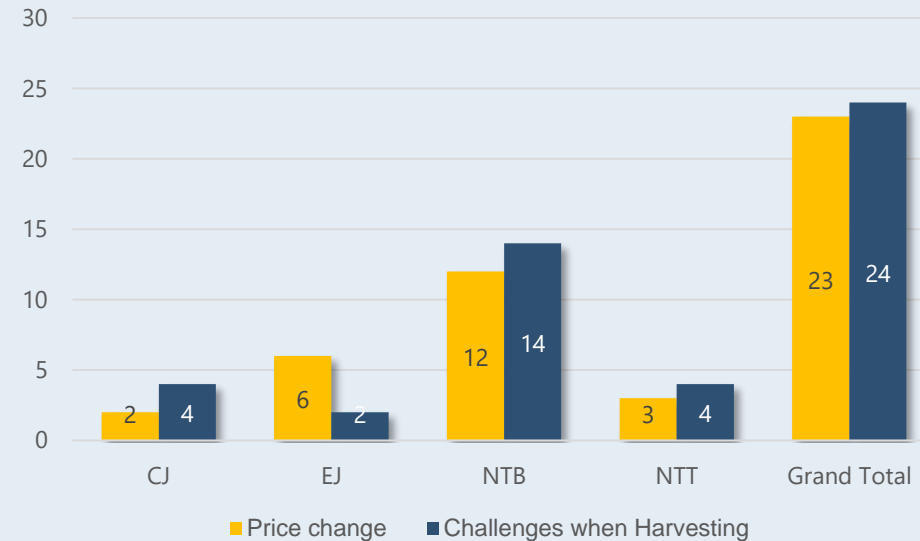
- Challenges in getting subsidised fertiliser such as Ponska and SP36.
- Several farmers have decided to use retained seed and compost fertiliser that is easy to obtain.

”

I heard that the stock of subsidised fertiliser is being cut and there are challenges in distributing it to farmers due to COVID-19.

Grobogan, Bojonegoro

Changes related to inputs



- 27% of farmers said that seed, fertiliser (especially subsidised fertiliser) and pesticide prices have increased between 10% - 30%.
- During the harvest period in March and April, 28% of farmers encountered challenges in finding labour due to the limited number of labourers.
- Several commodity prices have dropped and these commodities are difficult to sell (chillies, melon and water melon)

Updates from Farmers on the Kiosks



Kiosk operations are still normal but 11% of respondents said that some stock is limited especially subsidised fertiliser.



17% of respondents said that they go to kiosks less to reduce the risk of COVID-19 and because of limited access to transportation.



Kiosks are not providing delivery services but some farmers/groups of farmers are providing “shared order and delivery” services.



Some kiosks have put up banners about COVID-19 and provide hand washing facilities in their shops.



Kiosks are not providing specific information about COVID-19 but they are sharing rumours regarding the pandemic.



Kiosks are still providing information on agriculture especially on price changes due to the pandemic.



Only one kiosk has changed its payment scheme from cash to credit.



Prior to COVID-19, I purchased inputs from the field staff using cash, but now I can get them from the kiosk using a credit scheme

Pamekasan, East Java

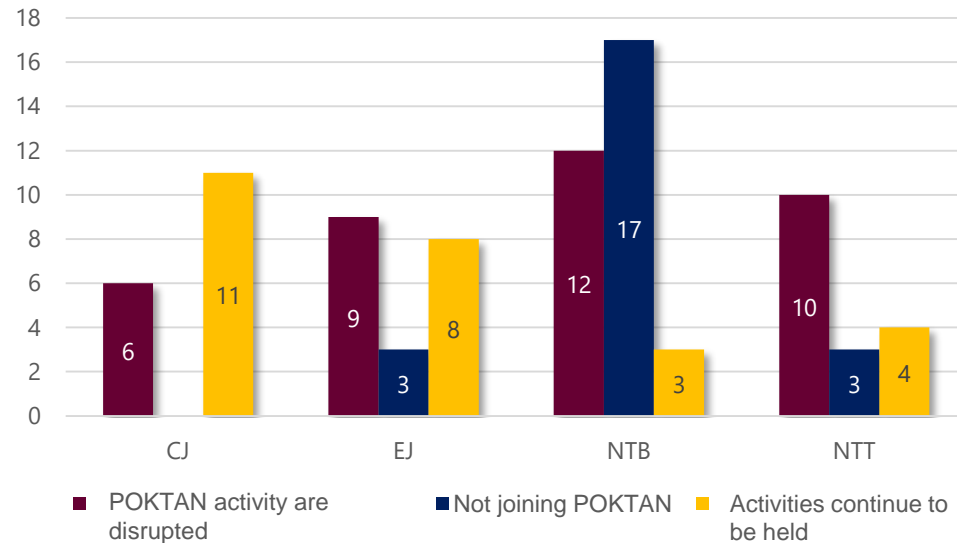


Receiving Information

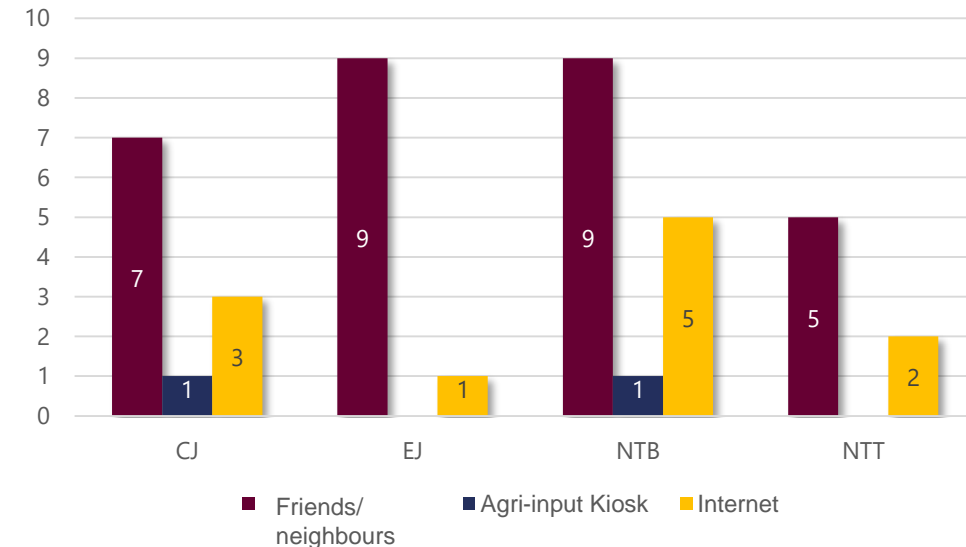
Ways for farmers to receive information

Receiving Information

Farmers Groups (POKTAN) Activities



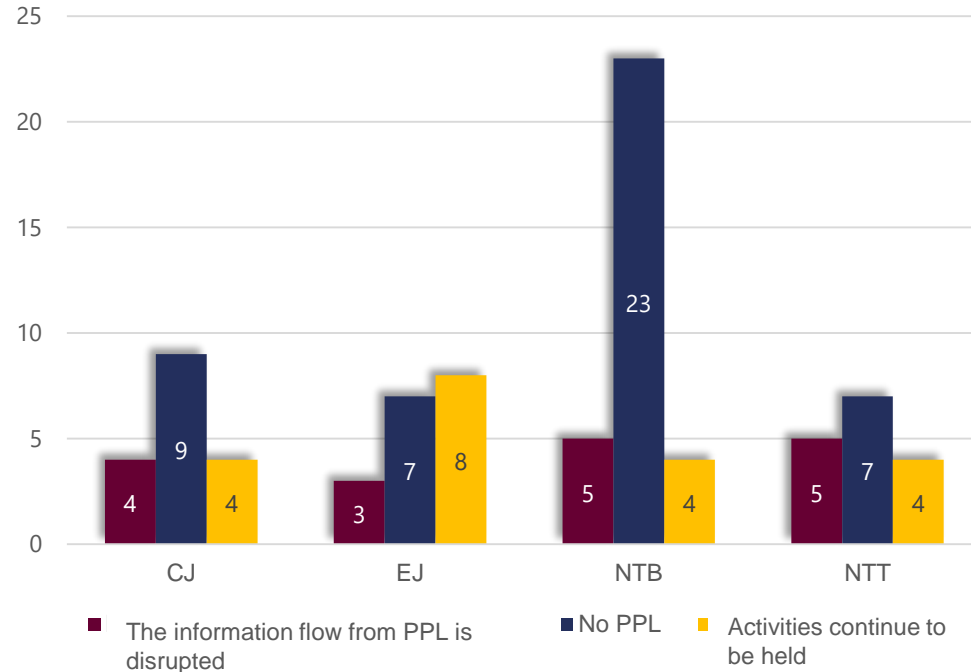
Other Sources of Info



- 43% of the respondents confirmed that farmers group activities are not running to reduce the risk of COVID-19.
- 5% of farmers who use the WhatsApp group are not experiencing any negative impacts from the pandemic but the frequency of most farmers meetings has reduced significantly.
- The main sources of information during COVID-19 are friends/neighbours.

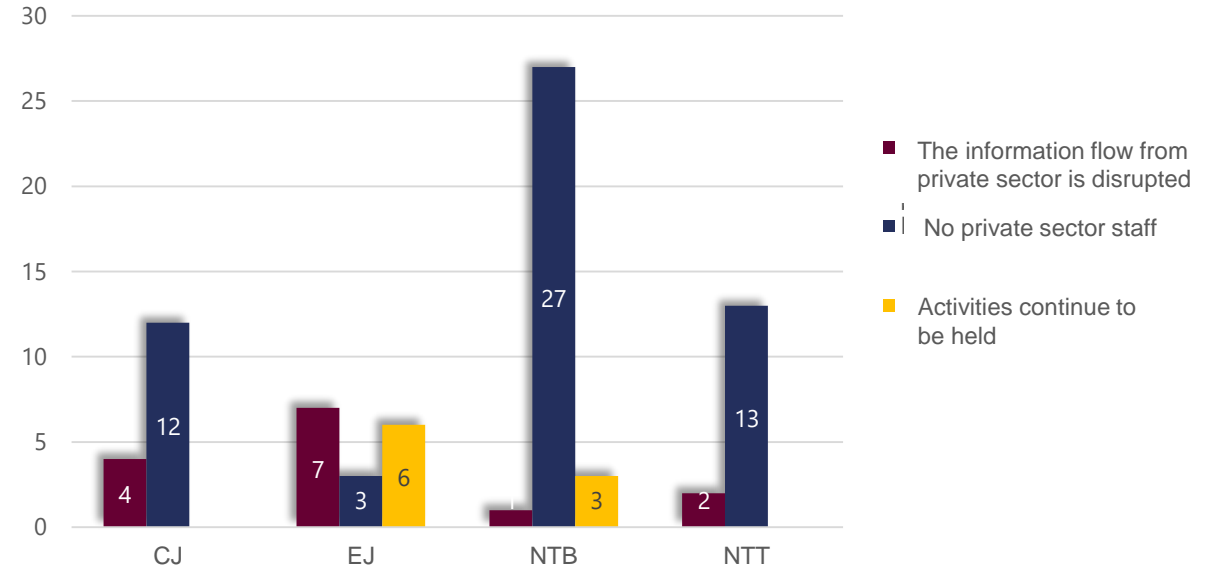
Changes in Receiving Information

Extension Service (PPL) Activities



53% of farmers said they have not received updates from the extension service even prior to the pandemic

Field Staff Activities



16% of respondents stated that there were disruptions in getting information from private extension services, and field staff are no longer visiting their village

“ It's disrupted. There's no longer extension services from Panah Merah, DGW, or Kapal Terbang.

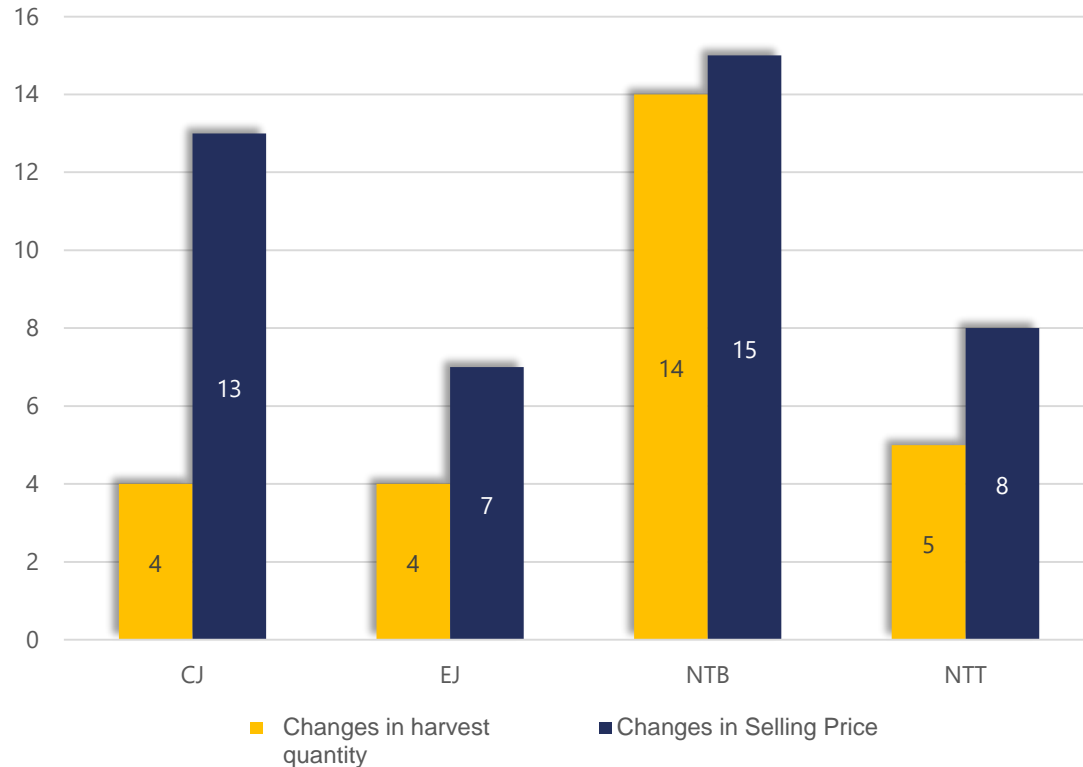
Purworejo, Central Java



Product Sales

Performance of commodity sales during the COVID-19 pandemic

Changes in Prices



Most farmers are experiencing a drop in output prices

- 31% of farmers have experienced reduction in harvest quantities due to water and pests.
- 50% of farmers have experienced decreases in commodity prices (rice, maize, chillies, and vegetables) except for shallot farmers.
- Some farmers feel that the demand for some vegetables like tomatoes and chillies and especially shallots will increase .

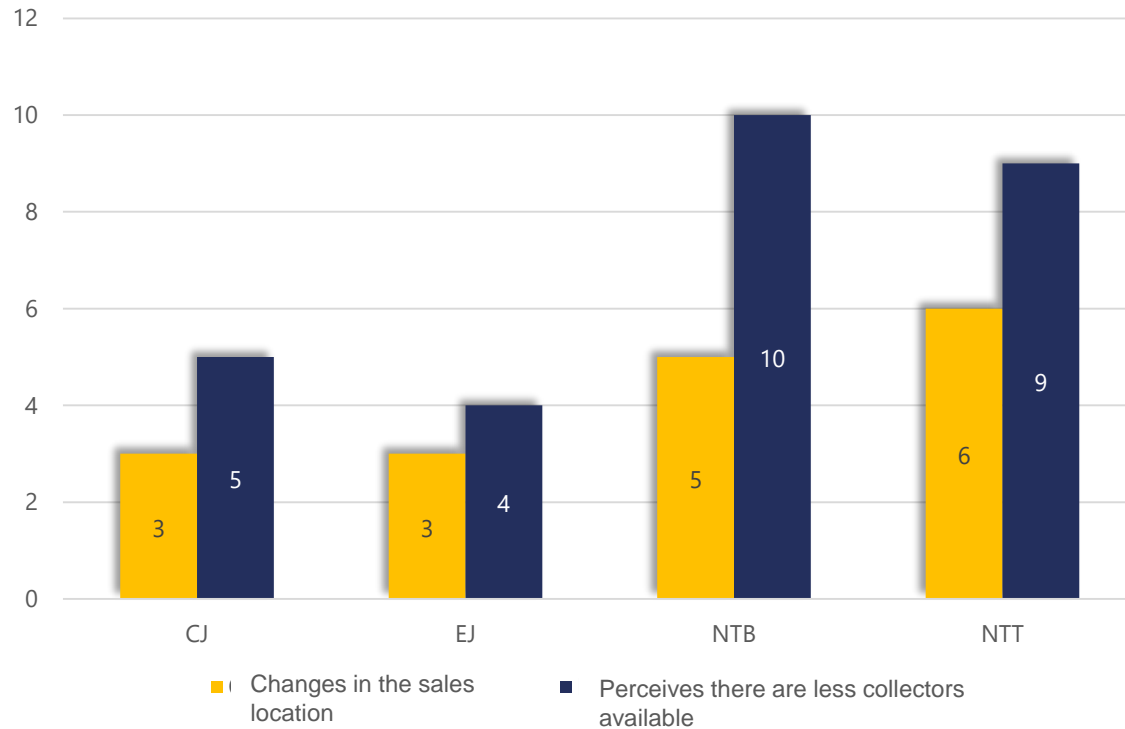
” With COVID-19, the price of chillies has dropped by IDR 5,000 – IDR 10,000 per kg.

Temanggung,
Central Java

” In Lombok Timur, the price of rice has dropped from IDR. 400 per quintal to IDR. 350 per quintal due to the limited numbers of off takers.

Lombok Timur, NTB

Changes in Collectors



“ During the last few weeks, collectors haven't dared to come to the villages compared to last year when so many of them were coming in and out of the villages looking for products.

TTU, NTT

Off takers are limited and are encountering difficulties in selling commodities.

- 20% of farmers have switched to other off takers and 33% consider the current numbers of off takers to be limited.
- Farmers who sell their products directly to markets are facing difficulties due to the closure of markets.
- Off takers from other villages have limited their activities.



Photo credit: Dinas Pertanian NTT



Financing

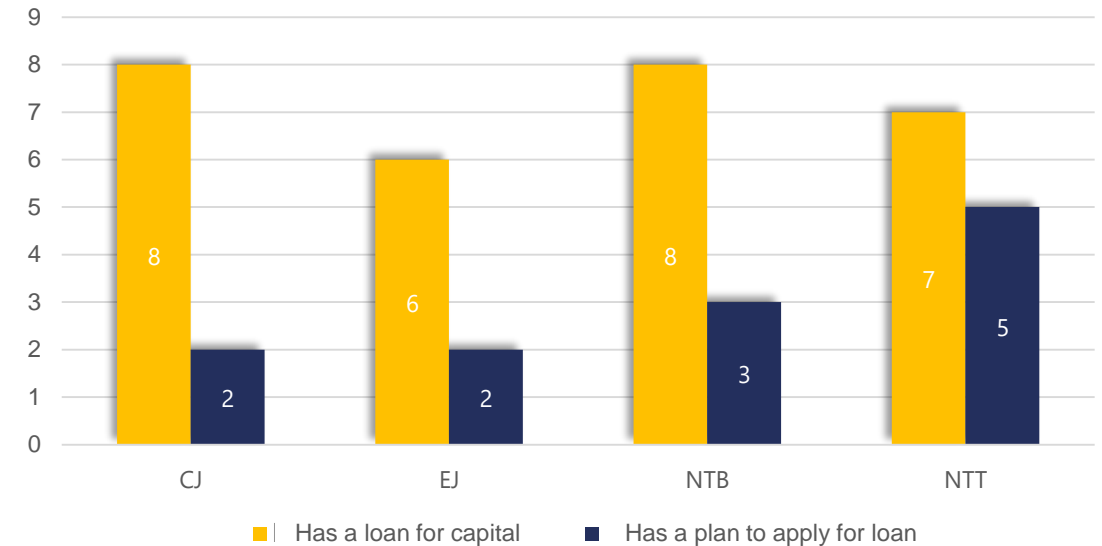
Farmers access to financing during the COVID-19 pandemic

Changes in Financing Behaviour

34% of farmers have loans from banks or cooperatives

- 14% of respondents said that they plan to apply for a loan (two of them for consumption loans)
- Farmers who do not plan to apply for a loan said that it is too risky to apply for a new loan with this uncertainty due to the pandemic.
- Other farmers are facing challenges with loan applications as banks/cooperatives/pawn shops have stopped loan disbursements due to the pandemic.

Loans as a Source of Financing

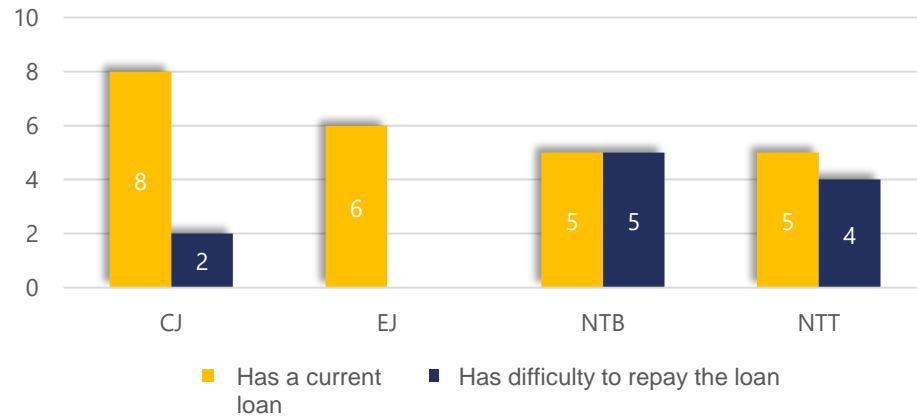


” I was planning to apply for a loan but based on information from the bank, loans have been stopped until further notice due to COVID-19.

TTU, NTT

Changes in Financing Behaviour 2/2

Loans During the COVID-19 pandemic

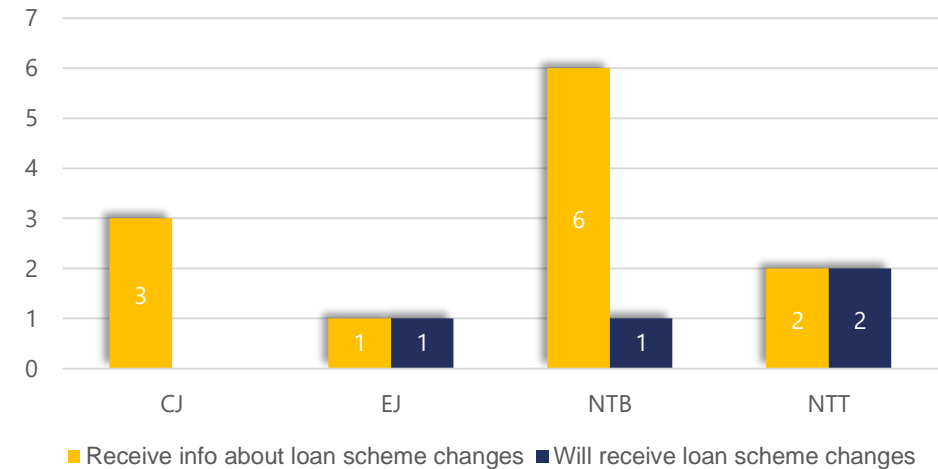


28% of respondents said that they have loans to pay off in the next 6 months and 46% of them said that they will have difficulty to pay them off.

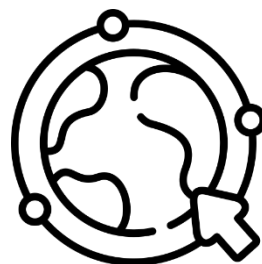
” *We are in a difficult situation at the moment. We rely on our yields and its not certain that we will make a profit.*

Manggarai, NTT

Changes to Loan Schemes



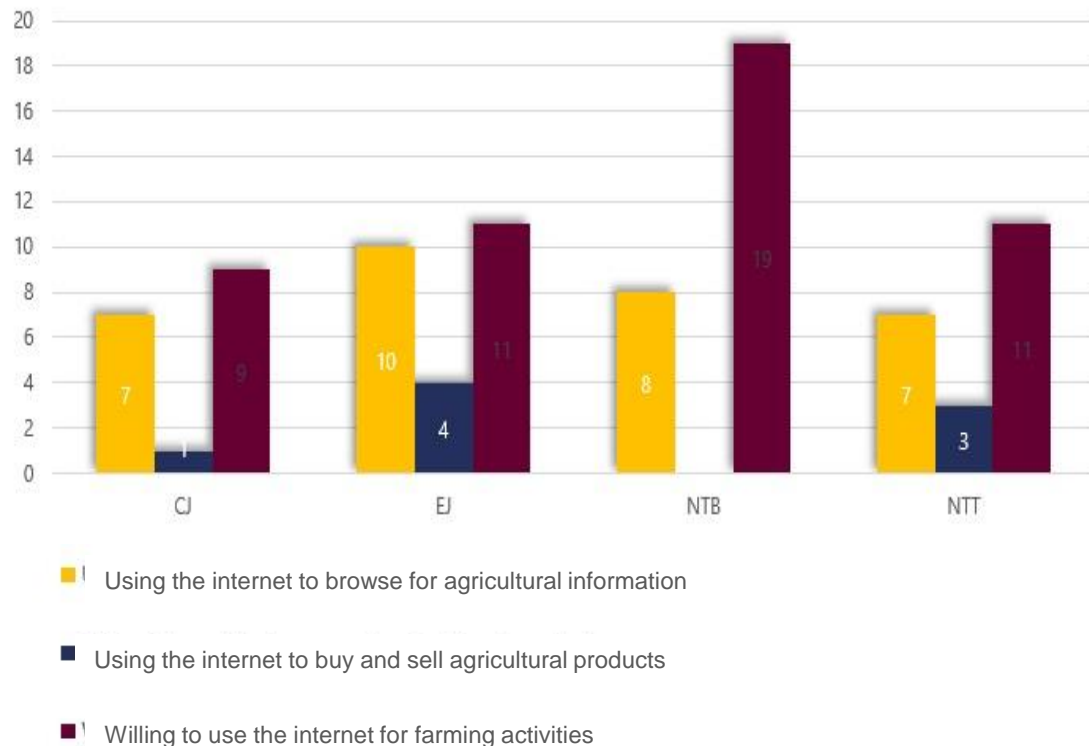
- 50% of those who have loans said that they heard about changes to loan schemes from TV and other farmers/neighbours due to the pandemic.
- Only 17% of those who heard this information believe they will get a new scheme from the government.
- One respondent said that it was easy to change a loan scheme from a cooperative compared to a pawn shop.



Internet Usage

Farmers' internet behaviour

Update on Internet Usage



58% plan to learn about and use the internet.

- 37% of farmers are actively using the internet to get agricultural information mostly from Google and YouTube.
- Some farmers said that they are used to exchanging information with other farmers using their WhatsApp group.
- Farmers are not using specific agricultural applications or websites to obtain information.
- 9% of farmers said that they are using the internet to buy agri inputs (rainbow pesticide) and to sell their agri outputs to off takers.

“ I don't know how to use the internet.

Wonogiri, Central Java

“ I want to use the internet so I can know the selling prices during the harvest season.

Demak, Central Java

Summary



- Farmers are aware of COVID-19 and are complying with government recommendations to prevent the infection.
- There are five main challenges for farmers due to COVID-19:
 - Labour is limited and expensive,
 - Subsidised fertiliser is limited,
 - Access to information is limited,
 - Difficulties selling commodities due to limited off takers,
 - Decreased commodity prices.
- Some farmers have started to adjust their plans regarding commodities, planting schedules and applying for loans due to COVID-19.
- More farmers are aware of the benefits of internet usage and plan to use the internet in the future.

Thank You!

Devi, Henny, Imam, Renata, Ica, Yuni, Danang

The views, findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed in this publication are not the views of the Government of Australia and the Government of Indonesia.