

In 2018 sugarcane plantations covered about 26.2 million hectares of the earth surface. Brazil contributed 38.27 percent or about 10 million hectare of the world's sugarcane plantations. Brazil is the top country by sugarcane area harvested in the world. Next to Brazil sugarcane plantation in 2018 was India, China, Thailand and Pakistan with the sugarcane plantations areas were 4.73 million hectares, 1.41 million hectares, 1.37 million hectares, 1.10 million hectares, respectively. Those 5 countries contributed about 18.61 million hectares or about 71 percent of the world sugarcane plantation. Indonesia was in the 11th rank of the world sugarcane countries measured by the land size were 416,671 hectares or only about 1.59 percent out of the world's sugarcane areas.¹

By using a long term data perspective of world sugarcane, Indonesia's experience can be used as a source of lesson learned. In the era of earlier than the year of 1975 the sugarcane yield in Indonesia was the highest case of the sugarcane productivity in the world. It was around 130 ton per hectare up to almost 160 ton per hectares. The maximum attainable yield is about 155 ton per hectare (Figure 1). The recent average sugarcane productivity of Indonesia is around 60 to 70 ton per hectare.²

The declining productivity has caused the declining income from sugarcane farming and sugarcane based industry; and consequently causes the next problem to come namely farmers or planters were exit from sugarcane business; and sugar mills were closed down. Sugarcane production of PTPN VII (Bungamayang Sugar Factory) in the last three years showed that productivity of sugarcane have declined from 72.9ton/hectare in 2017 to 59.1ton/hectare in 2018 and finally reached the lowest one in 2019 namely only reached 49.8ton per hectare.³ There will be no opportunity to continue sugarcane business without improvement in productivity. On the other hand, there will also be opportunity to reduce cost if productivity is increased. The big question, as usually applied in all industries, is how we can develop an innovation to create a new mode of production.

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