

The Urgency of Food Deregulation in Achieving National Food Security in Indonesia: Legal Reform, Coordinating Governance, and the 2025-2026 Deregulation Agenda

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Abstract

This study analyzes the urgency of food deregulation in Indonesia's pursuit of national food security by examining legal norms, institutional coordination, and recent regulatory reform in 2025-2026. The central problem is that Indonesia's food governance has long been affected by overlapping regulations, fragmented authority, lengthy bureaucracy, high logistics costs, and inconsistent import policy. The revised analysis adds the role of the Coordinating Ministry for Food Affairs as an institutional hub for synchronization, coordination, and policy control in the food sector. It also examines concrete deregulation measures, especially subsidized fertilizer governance through Presidential Regulation No. 6 of 2025 as amended by Presidential Regulation No. 113 of 2025, wider regulatory simplification within the Ministry of Agriculture, import policy reform, and the digitalization of agricultural government assistance. The findings show that deregulation may improve distribution speed, reduce administrative costs, strengthen legal certainty, accelerate self-sufficiency programs, and increase transparency. However, deregulation must remain balanced with state supervision, farmer protection, consumer safety, competition law, environmental sustainability, and food sovereignty principles.

Keywords

Agricultural Law; Food Deregulation; Food Security; Import Policy; Subsidized Fertilizer.



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INTRODUCTION

Food is a basic human need and a constitutional concern because it is directly related to welfare, economic stability, social order, and national resilience. In Indonesia, food policy has a strategic character: it is not limited to agricultural production but also includes land protection, distribution, price stabilization, import policy, farmer welfare, consumer protection, and the development of food reserves.

Indonesia has enacted several important laws on food governance, including Law No. 18 of 2012 concerning Food, Law No. 19 of 2013 concerning the Protection

and Empowerment of Farmers, and Law No. 41 of 2009 concerning the Protection of Sustainable Food Crop Land. These statutes show that food security, food sovereignty, and farmer protection are not merely economic programs but legal obligations of the state.

A significant development after 2024 is the establishment of the Coordinating Ministry for Food Affairs. Presidential Regulation No. 147 of 2024 places this ministry as an institution responsible for synchronization, coordination, and control of ministerial affairs in the field of food. This institutional reform is important because food deregulation cannot be effective if each ministry continues to operate in a fragmented manner.

Concrete deregulation has also taken place in the subsidized fertilizer sector. Presidential Regulation No. 6 of 2025 concerning Subsidized Fertilizer Governance was amended by Presidential Regulation No. 113 of 2025. Government legal databases describe the amendment as being intended to increase certainty in the procurement and distribution of subsidized fertilizer and to support agricultural intensification for national food security.

Beyond fertilizer, the government has pursued broader agricultural deregulation. In 2026, the Ministry of Agriculture publicly reported that 547 regulations had been simplified, including the revocation of 291 regulations, as part of a measurable strategy for food self-sufficiency.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative method with a normative juridical approach. The normative juridical approach is used to examine statutory provisions, presidential regulations, ministerial regulations, institutional mandates, policy documents, and legal scholarship relating to food deregulation and national food security in Indonesia.

Primary legal materials include the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Law No. 18 of 2012 concerning Food, Law No. 19 of 2013 concerning the Protection and Empowerment of Farmers, Law No. 41 of 2009 concerning Sustainable Food Crop Land Protection, Law No. 5 of 1999 concerning the Prohibition of Monopolistic Practices and Unfair Business Competition, Law No. 8 of 1999 concerning Consumer Protection, Presidential Regulation No. 147 of 2024 concerning the Coordinating Ministry for Food Affairs, Presidential Regulation No. 6 of 2025 concerning Subsidized Fertilizer Governance, Presidential Regulation No. 113 of 2025, relevant Ministry of Agriculture regulations, and import policy instruments issued by the Ministry of Trade.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Condition of Food Regulation in Indonesia

Indonesia's food regulatory framework has a strong statutory foundation, but implementation has frequently been hampered by overlapping rules and institutional fragmentation. Food governance involves the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Trade, National Food Agency, Coordinating Ministry for Food Affairs, Ministry of State-Owned Enterprises, local governments, and other agencies. Each institution has legitimate authority, but the absence of harmonized operational rules can delay policy execution.

The main regulatory obstacles can be grouped into production regulations, distribution regulations, import regulations, and assistance or subsidy programs. These categories are legally necessary, but when they are not integrated they create administrative burdens. From the perspective of administrative law, excessive fragmentation may undermine legal certainty, efficiency, accountability, and good governance.

The Role of the Coordinating Ministry for Food Affairs

The Coordinating Ministry for Food Affairs is central to the current deregulation agenda. Presidential Regulation No. 147 of 2024 states that the ministry carries out synchronization, coordination, and control of ministerial affairs in the field of food. This mandate is important because food policy involves multiple sectors, including agriculture, trade, fisheries, forestry, environment, nutrition, logistics, and food reserves.

The ministry's official task and function description emphasizes that its coordination role is intended to support initiatives and control policy implementation based on national development agendas and presidential assignments. In practical terms, this makes the Coordinating Ministry a policy integrator: it can help prevent sectoral ego, align food policy priorities, accelerate dispute resolution among ministries, and monitor whether deregulation produces results on the ground.

Therefore, the Coordinating Ministry for Food Affairs should be understood as a bridge between legal reform and administrative execution. Its role is not to replace sectoral ministries, but to harmonize their policies, monitor bottlenecks, and ensure that deregulation remains aligned with national food security objectives.

Deregulation of Subsidized Fertilizer Governance

The most concrete example of recent food-related deregulation is subsidized fertilizer governance. Fertilizer is a strategic production input because it directly affects agricultural productivity, farmer production costs, and the state's food self-

sufficiency target. Before reform, fertilizer policy was widely criticized for involving a long bureaucratic chain, delayed distribution, complicated verification, and fragmented regulatory authority.

The government responded through Presidential Regulation No. 6 of 2025 concerning Subsidized Fertilizer Governance, later amended by Presidential Regulation No. 113 of 2025. The official legal database explains that Presidential Regulation No. 113 of 2025 amends provisions in Presidential Regulation No. 6 of 2025 to increase certainty in the procurement and distribution of subsidized fertilizer and support agricultural intensification in the framework of national food security.

Based on public government communication, this fertilizer deregulation simplified 145 regulations into one policy framework. The intended legal and administrative effects are to cut the bureaucratic chain, accelerate fertilizer distribution, improve certainty in procurement and payment, support monitoring and evaluation, and reduce prices for farmers. From a legal policy perspective, this reform is significant because it shows that deregulation can be sector-specific and evidence-based rather than abstract.

However, fertilizer deregulation must remain subject to safeguards. Subsidized fertilizer involves public funds and a vulnerable beneficiary group, namely farmers. Therefore, simplification must be accompanied by accurate farmer data, transparent redemption mechanisms, auditability, sanctions for diversion, and clear complaint channels.

Broader Deregulation in Agriculture and Food Import Policy

In addition to fertilizer, the Ministry of Agriculture has reported a broader deregulation program involving the simplification of 547 regulations, including the revocation of 291 regulations. The policy objective is to accelerate food self-sufficiency, reduce bureaucratic obstacles, and support production growth.

Import policy has also been part of the deregulation agenda. In 2025, the President instructed the elimination of import quotas especially for goods related to the livelihood of many people. Ministry policy materials also explain that Minister of Trade Regulation No. 18 of 2025 regulates import policy and arrangements for several commodity groups, including animals and animal products, rice, corn, sugar, horticultural products, garlic, cassava and derivative products, salt, fishery products, and forestry products.

At the same time, import deregulation has not meant the elimination of control. In 2026, the Ministry of Trade refined import rules for agricultural commodities through Minister of Trade Regulation No. 11 of 2026, which public reporting states

requires Import Approval for commodities such as feed wheat, mung beans, peanuts, and pears, based on technical recommendations from the Ministry of Agriculture. This indicates a mixed model: simplifying general import policy while maintaining controls for commodities that affect domestic supply-demand balance and producer prices.

This mixed model is legally appropriate if it is transparent, data-based, and consistent. Import deregulation should reduce arbitrary quotas and excessive licensing, but it should not expose domestic farmers to sudden import pressure during harvest seasons.

Digitalization of Agricultural Government Assistance

Digitalization is another form of deregulation because it reduces paper-based procedures, duplicate applications, and manual verification. Minister of Agriculture Regulation No. 2 of 2026 concerning the General Guidelines for the Management of Government Assistance within the Ministry of Agriculture has been reported as the basis for electronic management of assistance. Public dissemination materials describe the use of the e-Banper system to support proposal submission, assessment, distribution, handover, monitoring, and accountability of agricultural assistance.

The legal value of this digitalization is transparency. If farmers and farmer groups can submit and monitor proposals through a standardized electronic system, the risk of unequal access, informal fees, and inconsistent local practices may be reduced. Digital systems can also strengthen audit trails and make public spending more accountable.

Mapping of Food Regulations: Deregulated and Not Yet Fully Deregulated

The following table maps food-related regulations and policy areas that have been deregulated or partially deregulated, compared with areas that still require further reform. The classification is based on available legal instruments and public policy information as of May 2026.

No.	Regulation / Policy Area	Deregulation Status	Main Form of Deregulation	Remaining Issues
1	Subsidized fertilizer governance	Deregulated	Presidential Regulation No. 6 of 2025 and Presidential Regulation No. 113 of 2025 created an integrated fertilizer governance framework.	Requires accurate beneficiary data, supervision of redemption, audit of claims, and sanctions for diversion.
2	Agricultural regulations within the Ministry of Agriculture	Deregulated / ongoing	The Ministry of Agriculture reported simplification of 547 regulations, including revocation of 291 regulations.	Needs publication of a consolidated list, impact assessment, and harmonization with local regulations.
3	Import licensing for selected commodity	Partially deregulated	Import policies were simplified under 2025 import regulations and	Needs transparent commodity-balance data and protection during

No.	Regulation / Policy Area	Deregulation Status	Main Form of Deregulation	Remaining Issues
	groups		quota-based mechanisms were reduced for selected goods.	harvest seasons.
4	Import control for agricultural commodities	Controlled / partially re-regulated	Minister of Trade Regulation No. 11 of 2026 reportedly refined import controls for selected agricultural commodities.	Not a full deregulation; it must be assessed against producer protection and price stability.
5	Agricultural government assistance	Deregulated through digitalization	Minister of Agriculture Regulation No. 2 of 2026 supports electronic assistance management through e-Banper.	Digital divide, data protection, and local facilitation remain necessary.
6	Food reserves and price stabilization	Not fully deregulated	Food reserves and price stabilization still require synchronization among central, regional, and logistics actors.	Needs clearer coordination between central and regional authorities and SOE logistics actors.
7	Farmer protection and empowerment	Not fully deregulated	Law No. 19 of 2013 provides protection, but implementation depends on price policy, insurance, financing, and market access.	Needs stronger enforcement and alignment with import timing and subsidy policy.
8	Sustainable food crop land protection	Not fully deregulated	Law No. 41 of 2009 protects agricultural land, but conversion pressure remains high.	Needs integration with spatial planning, investment licensing, and local enforcement.
9	Food safety and consumer protection	Should not be substantially deregulated	Food safety standards must remain strict even when licensing is simplified.	Simplification must not reduce inspection, traceability, labeling, and consumer remedies.
10	Competition safeguards	Should not be substantially deregulated	Deregulation must be balanced by stronger competition supervision to prevent market domination.	Requires monitoring of large distributors, importers, and vertically integrated food corporations.

Results and Expected Outcomes of Food Deregulation

The results of food deregulation can be assessed at three levels: legal-institutional outcomes, economic-distribution outcomes, and social welfare outcomes. The first legal-institutional outcome is the strengthening of policy coherence. The establishment of the Coordinating Ministry for Food Affairs and the creation of monitoring mechanisms for subsidized fertilizer are important because deregulation needs an institution that can coordinate implementation and resolve cross-sectoral bottlenecks.

The second outcome is faster distribution of production inputs. Fertilizer deregulation is expected to shorten procurement and distribution chains, reduce administrative delays, and improve access for farmers. This may increase planting

certainty and production productivity, especially for rice and other strategic food commodities.

The third outcome is cost reduction. When licensing, verification, and distribution procedures are simplified, operational costs can decline. In the fertilizer sector, public reporting has linked deregulation and revitalization with lower fertilizer prices. In the broader food sector, lower logistics and administrative costs can contribute to more stable consumer prices, although the actual effect depends on infrastructure, market structure, fuel costs, and regional distribution capacity.

The fourth outcome is greater transparency through digital governance. Electronic assistance systems can reduce manual discretion and improve auditability. If properly implemented, digitalization can help ensure that agricultural assistance reaches eligible farmer groups and can be evaluated through data-based monitoring.

The fifth outcome is acceleration toward national food self-sufficiency. Deregulation can support self-sufficiency by improving input availability, encouraging investment, reducing import dependency where domestic production is sufficient, and enabling faster policy response. However, self-sufficiency cannot be achieved by deregulation alone. It also requires irrigation, seed quality, land protection, mechanization, farmer financing, climate adaptation, and fair market access.

Legal Safeguards for Balanced Deregulation

Food deregulation should be guided by four legal safeguards. First, deregulation must be consistent with the 1945 Constitution, especially the principles of social justice, public welfare, and state control over strategic resources for the greatest prosperity of the people. Second, deregulation must remain aligned with Law No. 18 of 2012 concerning Food, which emphasizes availability, affordability, quality, safety, nutrition, and food sovereignty.

Third, deregulation must protect farmers. Law No. 19 of 2013 requires protection and empowerment of farmers through business certainty, price protection, access to financing, risk protection, and institutional strengthening. Any import deregulation must therefore be synchronized with domestic harvest calendars and producer-price protection.

Fourth, deregulation must preserve consumer and competition safeguards. Law No. 8 of 1999 concerning Consumer Protection protects consumers from unsafe or misleading food products. Law No. 5 of 1999 concerning the Prohibition of Monopolistic Practices and Unfair Business Competition prevents large corporations from exploiting deregulation to dominate food markets unfairly.

CONCLUSION

Food deregulation is urgent for Indonesia because the national food system has long been affected by overlapping regulations, lengthy bureaucracy, fragmented authority, high logistics costs, and inconsistent import policy. Deregulation can strengthen national food security when it simplifies unnecessary procedures, harmonizes institutional authority, accelerates distribution, and improves legal certainty without weakening public supervision.

The revised analysis shows that the Coordinating Ministry for Food Affairs has an important role as an institutional integrator. Based on Presidential Regulation No. 147 of 2024 and the ministry's official task description, its mandate is to synchronize, coordinate, and control policy implementation in the food sector. This role is essential for ensuring that deregulation is not merely a formal reduction in regulations but a practical improvement in governance.

Subsidized fertilizer is the clearest example of current deregulation. Presidential Regulation No. 6 of 2025 and Presidential Regulation No. 113 of 2025 created a more integrated governance framework intended to improve certainty in procurement and distribution, support agricultural intensification, and accelerate national food security objectives.

Beyond fertilizer, the government has also pursued broader deregulation by simplifying 547 regulations within the Ministry of Agriculture, refining import policy for selected commodity groups, and digitalizing agricultural assistance through Minister of Agriculture Regulation No. 2 of 2026. These reforms may improve transparency, distribution speed, and administrative efficiency.

The main recommendation is that food deregulation must be selective, measurable, transparent, and supervised. Indonesia needs a consolidated regulatory map, periodic impact assessment, harmonization between central and regional rules, data-based import decisions, protection of farmers during harvest seasons, and digital systems that are inclusive for small farmers.

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