



Characteristics of Sheep Farmers in Gucialit Village Based on Age, Education Level, Livestock Farming Experience and Number of Livestock Raised

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ABSTRACT: Local sheep farming in Indonesia, especially in rural areas, is essential in supporting food security and improving the community's economy. Sheep not only provide a source of animal protein but also contribute to farmers' income. This study aims to identify the characteristics of sheep farmers in Gucialit Village, Lumajang Regency, East Java, which has excellent potential for developing the livestock sector. The method used is a case study with primary data collection through direct observation and farmer interviews. Samples were taken using incidental sampling techniques. The results showed that most farmers were aged between 41-60 years (51.25%), with the participation of the younger generation (21-40 years) reaching 35%. However, farmers' education level is still low; 51.25% only have elementary school education. Livestock farming experience varies, where 42.5% of respondents have 11-20 years of experience. Most farmers keep 6-10 sheep (45%), reflecting the scale of small to medium businesses. This study found that despite challenges in adopting modern technology, the regeneration of young farmers and the experience of older farmers can complement each other to improve livestock practices. The conclusion of this study emphasizes the importance of improving education, training, and management development to increase the productivity and sustainability of sheep farming businesses in Gucialit Village. The integration of older farmers' experience and innovation from the younger generation is expected to create more efficient and sustainable farming practices.

KEYWORDS: farmer, livestock business, small scale

INTRODUCTION

Local sheep farming in Indonesia, especially in rural areas, is significant in supporting food security and improving the community's economy. Sheep are not only a source of animal protein through their meat but also contribute to farmers' income. Gucialit Village, Lumajang Regency, East Java, has a reasonably high sheep population and great potential for developing the livestock sector. To maximize this potential, it is essential to understand the profile of local sheep farmers in this village. The profile of farmers can include various aspects such as age, education, farming experience, and the number of livestock kept. These factors greatly influence how farmers manage their businesses and contribute to the performance of sheep production. Farmers still face many challenges in raising sheep, including limited knowledge of modern husbandry techniques, access to resources, and technical support from the government. By understanding the profile of local sheep farmers, this study aims to identify the characteristics of farmers in Gucialit Village who run sheep farming businesses. The results of this study are expected to provide helpful information for policy makers in designing more effective development programs and improving the welfare of sheep farmers in Gucialit Village.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Location and time

This research was conducted on community farms in Gucialit Village, Lumajang Regency. The time of this research was conducted from January to February 2024. The object used in this study was 80 sheep farmers in Gucialit Village, Lumajang Regency. In this study, the tools used consisted of questionnaires and stationery. The questionnaire was used to ask questions to the informants. Stationery was used to record the results of interviews with informants.

Research method

This study uses a case study method to explore the phenomena and conditions related to local sheep farming in Gucialit Village, Lumajang Regency, East Java. Primary data collection was carried out through direct observation in the field, where researchers



conducted direct interviews with informants (breeders); the sample of informants was taken using incidental sampling techniques, namely sampling from the available sheep farmer population.

Data Analysis

The data from interviews with farmers that have been collected will then be analyzed using descriptive analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The characteristics of farmers can be divided into four main interrelated aspects, namely age, education, length of farming experience, and number of livestock raised. Understanding these four aspects is very important to evaluate the livestock business in Gucialit Village, as well as to identify the challenges and opportunities faced by farmers in managing their businesses.

Characteristics of livestock farmers based on age

Table 1 is the result of a study that describes the age distribution of livestock farmers in Gucialit Village.

Table 1. Percentage of Farmer Age

Characteristics of livestock farmers	Number of Farmers	
	N	%
Age		
21 – 40 years	28	35
41 – 60 years	41	51,25
> 61 years	11	13,75

Source: Primary data processed, 2024.

Based on research data in Table 1, most sheep farmers are aged between 41-60 years, reaching 51.25% of the total research sample. According to the Manpower Law No. 13 of 2013, which explains the size of the productive age is between 15 and 60 years. Farmers at a productive age show continuous regeneration, which reflects that the livestock business still has the potential to be further developed (Hasan et al., 2021). Referring to Table 1, 35% of informants are in the age range of 21-40 years, which shows that there is a younger generation involved in sheep farming. The presence of young farmers is very important for regeneration and renewal in the livestock business. According to Simamora and Matoneng (2024), the younger generation tends to be more open to the adoption of new technologies and innovations in livestock practices, which can contribute to increased productivity, but still need guidance from the older generation to understand more deeply about the ins and outs of the livestock business. Based on research data, there are 13.75% of informants who are over 61 years old, indicating that the group of older farmers is starting to decrease. Older farmers often bring invaluable experience and traditional wisdom, but they are sometimes slower in adopting new technology or modern farming methods. Combining the experience of older farmers and innovation from the younger generation, it is hoped that sheep farming businesses can continue to grow and adapt to existing challenges.

Characteristics of livestock breeders based on education

Table 2 is the result of a study that describes the distribution of livestock breeder education in Gucialit Village.

Table 2. Percentage of Farmer Education

Characteristics of livestock farmers	Number of Farmers	
	N	%
Education level		
Elementary school	41	51,25
Junior high school	21	26,25
Senior high school	17	21,25
Bachelor	1	1,25

Source: Primary data processed, 2024.



Based on the research data in Table 2, 51.25% of the informants only had elementary school education, which shows that the level of formal education of farmers in this area is still relatively low. Education plays an important role in the ability of farmers to understand new technologies, access information, and implement more effective management practices. According to Saputri and Sulistyansih (2019), farmers with lower education may face difficulties in accessing more complex knowledge, especially those related to modern technology. Referring to Table 2, 26.25% of the informants had completed junior high school education, and 21.25% graduated from high school. This level of education allows them to have a better knowledge base in livestock management and the implementation of more efficient livestock practices. Farmers with higher education tend to be more open to extension and training provided by the government or other institutions and are better able to integrate innovation into their farms. Simamora and Matoneng (2024) stated that higher formal education is positively related to the ability of farmers to adopt new technologies. Based on the research data in Table 2, as many as 1.25% of the informants had a college education, which shows that very few farmers have a higher formal educational background. This phenomenon can be a challenge in improving the quality and competitiveness of livestock farming in Gucialit Village. Increasing literacy and access to education will be very beneficial for farmers to improve their knowledge in various aspects, from production technology to business management and marketing. According to Dewi and Rahmani (2022), better education contributes to increasing the productivity and sustainability of livestock businesses.

Characteristics of livestock breeders based on livestock farming experience

Table 3 is the result of a study that describes the distribution of livestock breeder experience in Gucialit Village.

Table 3. Percentage of Farming Experience

Characteristics of livestock farmers	Number of Farmers	
	N	%
long experience in farming		
1-10 years	32	40
11-20 years	34	42,5
21-30 years	12	15
> 31 years	2	2,5

Source: Primary data processed, 2024.

The length of livestock experience is essential in assessing farmers' skills and knowledge. Based on research data in Table 3, as many as 42.5% of respondents have 11-20 years of livestock experience. This long experience gives them a deep understanding of the livestock growth cycle, health, and resource management. According to Pratiwi and Ermanda (2023), farmers with long experience tend to be better able to face challenges such as disease, price fluctuations, and extreme weather conditions, thanks to the knowledge and skills they have developed. Based on research data in Table 3, as many as 40% of respondents have 1-10 years of livestock experience, which shows that many new farmers are involved in this business. Although their experience is still limited, the presence of new farmers shows a strong interest in the sheep farming business. Support from more experienced farmers is critical to develop their skills. Referring to Table 3, 2.5% of respondents have been running the business for more than 30 years. Farmers in this group often have invaluable knowledge and skills, although they sometimes use traditional methods. Yunianto et al. (2022) argue that their long-term farming experience enables them to sustain their businesses in changing market and climate conditions. Younger farmers need to learn from the experiences of these senior farmers to combine tradition with innovation, thus creating more efficient and sustainable farming practices.

Characteristics of livestock farmers based on the number of livestock kept

Table 4 is the result of a study that describes the distribution of the number of livestock kept by farmers in Gucialit Village.

**Table 4. Characteristics of livestock farmers based on the number of livestock**

Characteristics of livestock farmers	Number of Farmers	
	N	%
the number of livestock		
1-5 tail	31	38,75
6-10 tail	36	45
11-15 tail	10	12,5
> 15 tail	3	3,75

Source: Primary data processed, 2024.

Most informants kept between 6-10 sheep, which covered 45%, indicating that the scale of livestock businesses in this area tended to be small to medium. As many as 38.75% of farmers kept between 1-5 sheep, which showed more characteristics of micro-scale livestock businesses. Small-scale farmers tend to be more careful in making decisions regarding significant business changes due to limited resources (Simamora and Matoneng, 2024). Based on the research data in Table 4, 12.5% of informants had between 11-15 sheep and 3.75% who had more than 15 sheep. This group of farmers has a more significant business scale, which allows them to implement more professional management and potentially gain higher profits. Still, they also need better knowledge and skills in resource management, especially in terms of feed, livestock health, and production efficiency, to compete in the broader market. Tatipikalawan et al. (2022) argue that farmers with a larger business scale tend to market more livestock than those with fewer livestock. Farmers have strong economic motives, so livestock businesses are run optimally to generate income.

CONCLUSIONS

Most sheep farmers in Gucialit Village are aged between 41-60 years, indicating positive regeneration with the participation of the younger generation in livestock farming. Most farmers have only elementary school education; there is potential to improve knowledge and skills through extension. Livestock farming experience also varies, with most respondents having 11-20 years of experience, which gives them a deep understanding of livestock management. Most farmers keep 6-10 sheep, reflecting the scale of small to medium businesses. Some farmers are just starting in the sheep farming sector, and support from those who are more experienced is very important to improve their livestock practices. Increasing productivity and business sustainability requires improving education, training, and better management development, especially for farmers with larger business scales. The integration of the experience of older farmers and innovation from the younger generation is expected to create more efficient and sustainable livestock practices.

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