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**Report Name:** FAS Jakarta Promotes Role of Women in Agriculture Under ASEAN Umbrella

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**Report Highlights:**

FAS Jakarta and FAS Hanoi teamed up with U.S. Mission to ASEAN to organize a woman farmers' roadshow bringing two U.S. woman farmers to Vietnam and Indonesia. The Nebraska rancher and Maryland farmer raised awareness of women's role in agriculture ahead of the International Year of the Woman Farmer in 2026. While in Indonesia, the two speakers led a seminar attended by local woman farmers, agricultural extension workers, students, researchers, and faculty members from Indonesia's leading agricultural university Bogor Agricultural University (IPB). They shared their experiences and best practices in agribusiness and discussed shared concerns and proposed ways to advocate for woman farmers' equal access to resources and opportunities.

FAS Jakarta and FAS Hanoi teamed up with U.S. Mission to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to organize a woman farmers' roadshow from August 12-16, 2024. The roadshow featured two U.S. woman farmers: Jennie Schmidt, a farmer from Maryland, and Jaclyn Wilson, a rancher from Nebraska. They traveled to Vietnam and Indonesia as guest speakers to raise awareness of women's role in agriculture ahead of the International Year of the Woman Farmer in 2026.



*Figure 1. U.S. woman farmers lead seminar on leveraging technology in agriculture to Indonesian woman farmers, agricultural extension workers, students, researchers and IPB faculty members.*

While in Indonesia (August 15-16), the two speakers led a seminar attended by local woman farmers, agricultural extension workers, students, researchers, and faculty members from Bogor Agricultural University (IPB). They shared their experiences and best practices in agribusiness, including the use of digital technology to raise productivity and efficiency and to mitigate risks. The seminar explored women's vital role in the agricultural economy and the challenges they encounter. Participants also discussed shared concerns and proposed ways to advocate for women farmers' equal access to resources and opportunities.

### **A Shared Understanding on Women's Central Role in Agriculture**



*Figure 2. U.S.-ASEAN DCM Kate Rebholz provides opening remarks highlighting women's contribution to agriculture.*

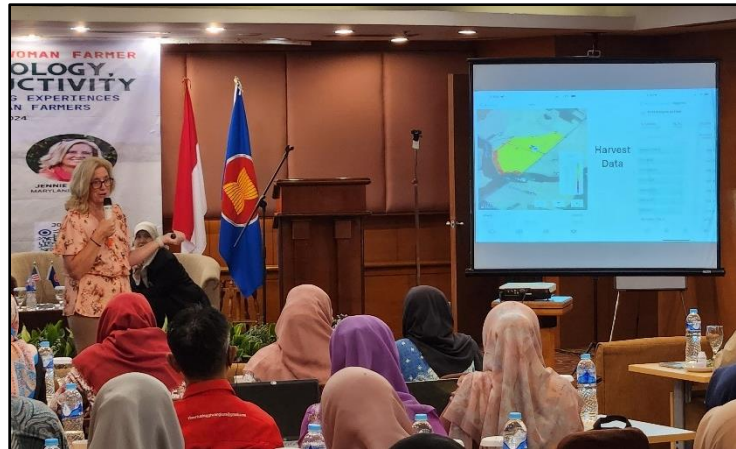
Women have a central role in agricultural development, ensuring food security, and improving family finances in Southeast Asia, the U.S. woman farmers emphasized to seminar participants on August 15. U.S.-ASEAN Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) Kate Rebholz highlighted in her opening remarks that society has not always recognized women's role in agriculture. She explained this is why the United States proposed to designate 2026 as the International Year of the Woman Farmer at the UN to highlight woman farmers' important role in strengthening food security and poverty alleviation around the world.

Bogor Agricultural University Dean of the Faculty of Human Ecology Dr. Megawati also underscored women's contributions

to agricultural innovation and called for action to promote their equal access to technology, resources, and opportunities. The university's Head of Communication Science and Community Development Department Dr. Anna Fatchiya highlighted the importance of engaging with women to ensure food security and promote the adoption of technology to increase production, enhance sustainability, and mitigate climate change.

### **U.S. Woman Farmers Share Best Practices in Agribusiness**

During the seminar, the U.S. woman farmers shared their experiences and best practices in deploying technologies to support their agribusinesses. Jennie Schmidt elaborated on how she regularly monitors and controls her farm using various mobile applications, some of which help forecast weather conditions, while others assist with marketing. These applications provide notifications, such as when certain areas of the farm have lost biomass due to drought, diseases, wildlife, or changes in rainfall. She emphasized that technology helps avoid overlap and human error in farming and improves accuracy and efficiency in applying inputs like water, fertilizer, and pesticides.



*Figure 3. Maryland farmer Jennie Schmidt gives presentation titled "Harvesting Innovation: Integrating Digital Technology into Modern Farming."*

Rancher Jaclyn Wilson explained that technology has enabled her farm to better contribute to wildlife preservation, environmental protection, and sustainability. Wilson also advised local woman farmers of the importance of record-keeping in preserving knowledge about their business operations and in marketing their products. She explained that record-keeping can help



*Figure 4. Nebraska rancher Jaclyn Wilson gives presentation titled "Cowgirl AI" on using artificial intelligence to find balance between sustainability and maximizing productivity in livestock production.*

smallholder ranchers to improve business efficiency through review and analysis. She pointed to specific examples of useful information to keep, including body weights of livestock and feed sources, adding that technology can now be used to track details like biometrics and the heartbeat of livestock. Whether in small or large businesses, presenting records in labelling and packaging enhances traceability and boosts customer confidence in the products,

according to Wilson. Schmidt similarly stressed the importance of documentation for risk mitigation. She shared the example of how documenting her farm's losses ensured her eligibility for crop insurance and other government protection programs when prices fall below production costs.

### Strategies to Prevent Women from Vulnerabilities in Agriculture



Figure 5. Jaelyn Wilson and Jennie Schmidt with Indonesian woman farmers, extension workers, and agricultural academic experts, including third speaker Dini Tri Lestari.

Seminar participants exchanged their experiences with challenges and discussed ways to overcome them. The Indonesian speaker during the seminar, Dini Sri Lestari, Intermediate Expert Agricultural Extension Officer of Bogor Regency Horticulture and Plantation Food Crops Service, explained that many Indonesian women work as farm laborers under physically demanding and poor conditions. She emphasized they often work from 6:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., earning only \$3 to \$6 a day. She advocated using farmer groups or

associations to empower women farmers. These associations can provide social support and facilitate meaningful exchanges of best practices and technologies among woman farmers, including knowledge of how to use agricultural equipment and machinery, she added.

According to Dini's experience, members of these farmer groups can also effectively and quickly coordinate and share market information through messaging applications. Additionally, she suggested that farmers associations could serve as platforms for woman farmers to learn from one another's successes and develop common strategies for product innovation and income improvement. Dini added that farmers associations can empower women by providing easier access to the support and resources needed to improve income, and women are more likely to receive support from agricultural extension services from the government through these associations. Conversely, not belonging to an association puts woman farmers at greater risk of low productivity and poverty.



Figure 6. U.S. farmers visit Neglasari demonstration farm in Bogor, West Java to observe cultivation constraints faced by woman farmers.

## Challenges of ASEAN Women Farmers in Adopting Technology



Figure 7. Students of the Faculty of Agriculture, IPB University, who help local farmers in the area of Neglasari in developing their farms, presented their agribusiness ideas to the visiting U.S. farmers.

Audience members asked whether it is worthwhile for Indonesian farmers to invest in technology when their farms are small-scale. Dini highlighted land ownership as a significant challenge, as most Indonesian farmers either have very limited land or are just renting land, making it difficult to achieve economies of scale that justifies investment in technology. In response, Wilson pointed to social media as an easily accessible marketing tool. She reiterated the importance of documentation for

businesses to showcase their distinction or excellence, believing that the more farmers tell their stories, the more their businesses will grow.

## The Need to Interest Young People in Agriculture

The U.S. woman farmers and their Indonesian audience shared the same concern regarding the younger generation's lack of interest in agriculture. To cultivate the next generation of farmers, Wilson suggested appealing to their interest in technology. Schmidt shared that her farm is highly mechanized, particularly in the application of fertilizers and pesticides, making agricultural production more efficient but also more sustainable in terms of managing labor needs. However, she admitted that adopting advanced technology is challenging for someone of her age, so she relies on younger people to help her understand and operate these technologies.

## Suggestions for Follow-Up Activities

During a debrief of their roadshow with U.S. Mission ASEAN's DCM Kate Rebholz, the two farmers discussed ways forward in advocating for gender equality in ASEAN. Schmidt and Wilson expressed interest in networking with and mentoring ASEAN woman farmers. They observed that many ASEAN woman farmers do not view agriculture as a real business venture, a mindset that limits their earnings. They also suggested more targeted capacity building and knowledge exchanges between farmers from U.S. regions that share similar climates to Southeast Asia that would be even more relevant to the audience.



Figure 8. U.S. woman farmers and FAS Jakarta's Agricultural Counselor Lisa Ahramjian sample traditional juices made by local women agribusiness entrepreneurs.

**Attachments:**

No Attachments.