

# The Impact of Farmers' Socio-Economic Conditions Due to the Conversion of Agricultural Land in Setia Mulya Village, Bekasi Regency, Indonesia

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## ARTICLE INFO

### History Article:

Received: 2024-07-08

Accepted: 2024-09-11

Published: 2024-09-30

### Keywords:

Agriculture; Land Conversion; Settlements

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doi: 10.37095/jgej.v5i2.26493

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## ABSTRACT

Land conversion has occurred a lot in Indonesia, especially in rural areas that are close to urban areas, this happens because of the need for residents to have a place to live, so that many agricultural lands have been converted into settlements. The conversion of agricultural land can have an impact on the social and economic conditions of farmers. Socioeconomic conditions are a person's position in a community group that is determined by the type of economic activity, education, and income. The purpose of this study is to analyze changes in the socio-economic conditions of farmers due to land conversion and their impact on farmers' lives. The method used was a qualitative method with data sources obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation with farmers as respondents totaling 15 farmers, with sampling techniques using snowball sampling techniques. The results of the study showed changes in the socio-economic conditions of farmers due to land conversion that occurred in Setia Mulya Village. Changes in socio-economic conditions related to the age of farmers, changes in social status, changes in farmers' income, and farmers' household consumption. Farmers in Setia Mulya Village are cultivators so they have to pay rent to the landowner so that farming activities can continue. Although the area of agricultural land in Setia Mulya Village is very large, the high rental prices and the difficulty of irrigation flows make farmers have to look for decent agricultural land that can be used properly.

**How to cite:** Anastasia, R., Alwin, & Adiputra, A. (2024). The Impact of Farmers' Socio-Economic Conditions Due to the Conversion of Agricultural Land in Setia Mulya Village, Bekasi Regency, Indonesia. *Jambura Geo Education Journal*, 5(2), 104–114. <https://doi.org/10.37095/jgej.v5i2.26493>

## 1. Introduction

The socio-economic activities of the community in an area are physically manifested in the form of land use activities (Rustiadi, 2016). The needs of human life, both born and inward, are fulfilled through activities on the land on the earth's surface (As-syakur et al., 2010). Human activities on the earth's surface in the form of land use also continue to develop dynamically. Thus, encouraging changes in the function of the land (Ayu & Heriawanto, 2018). The community's need for housing is caused by the increase in population which is a factor in the conversion of land use (Prabowo et al., 2020). The increase in the number of people affects the need for the number of existing land, one of which is the need for residents to have a place to live so that agricultural land will be converted into settlements. Meanwhile, the amount of agricultural land area is fixed and will not increase (Indrianawati & Mahdiyyah, 2019). Changes in agricultural land in the suburbs cause a decrease in the quantity and quality of agricultural land, it makes farmers experience difficulties in running their farming businesses and a decrease in farmers' sources of income (Nlerum & Wechie, 2018). Agricultural land that is often converted is rice fields, this is related to production factors, irrigation adequacy, price stability, and disease or pest attacks (Hastuty, 2017).

Economic activities, education, employment, and income obtained within a period of one year are related to the socio-economic conditions of the community (Winarno, 2018). Changes in social and economic conditions in society involve a natural process and will definitely be experienced by every individual. Changes in social and economic conditions are very felt by farmers in Setia Mulya village, because there are many population movements due to land conversion that occurs in Setia Mulya village (Adinda et al., 2022). Land management and the use of the natural environment are the main tasks carried out by farmers in the agricultural sector. Farmers' lives are highly dependent on natural conditions and the surrounding environment, therefore the reduction of agricultural land in Setia Mulya Village has an impact on the socio-economic conditions of farmers (Tandaju et al., 2017). In terms of economy, farmers can be seen based on their ability to generate income, while in terms of social, farmers can be classified based on land owners, farmers on their own land, and smallholders or working farmers (Jamin & Risfaisal, 2021).

Bekasi Regency as a buffer for the center of national economic growth, which causes land in Bekasi Regency to be in great demand by investors. This has an impact on agricultural land in Bekasi Regency which

continues to decrease every year, because the land has been converted into non-agricultural land to build housing or the industrial sector (Nur, 2007). According to (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2017) the percentage of rice fields in 2016 in Bekasi Regency reached 38.15 percent or an area of 48,608 hectares. This number is reduced from 2015 which was still at 50,857 hectares, and in 2014 it was 51,961 hectares. The rice fields that have been decreasing from year to year are the most widely used to build settlements. The role of the government is urgently needed to reduce the rate of agricultural land conversion that occurs in Indonesia, especially in Bekasi Regency. Providing economic incentives to farmers such as fertilizer subsidies and technology assistance, in addition to increasing agricultural land productivity through the application of modern agricultural technology and effective agricultural extension can improve the quality and selling value of rice, so that farmers continue to maintain their farms and reduce the rate of land conversion.

Setia Mulya Village, Tarumajaya District, Bekasi Regency, West Java, has an area of 5.43 km<sup>2</sup>. The number of residents in Setia Mulya village is 12,154 people with a total of 200 farmer families (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2021). Setia Mulya Village still has a fairly large amount of agricultural land, which is a source of income for farmers in Setia Mulya village, but many have been converted to non-agricultural because the location of Setia Mulya Village is close to the city of Bekasi and Jakarta, so many investors buy land in the area because of its strategic location with the city center. People who choose to live in the village of Setia Mulya apart from being close to the city center, the selling price of houses in the village of Setia Mulya is more affordable than the price of houses in the city. This has an impact on farmers who farm in Setia Mulya village because the land in Setia Mulya Village has begun to decrease. Farmers have to lose their jobs as farmers because the land used for farming will be converted into non-agricultural land. In addition to losing their jobs, farmers are also experiencing an economic decline so many of them are looking for side jobs to keep up with their needs (Monsaputra, 2023). In addition, farmland has economic value to provide food, clothing, and board, but it also has the ability to control water absorption and act as a carbon sink in the air. Food security may be threatened due to the conversion of agricultural land (Nguyen et al., 2016).

Research on the topic of socio-economic conditions of the community due to land conversion has been carried out by (Pramudiana, 2017; Kamarudin et al., 2016). However, the research still has weaknesses in the scope of the research object which is less specific. To overcome this gap, this study will discuss the socio-economic conditions of the community due to the transfer of land use with farmer objects in Setia Mulya Village. The purpose of this study is to analyze the socio-economic conditions of farmers after land conversion that occurs in Setia Mulya Village, and the impact caused by land conversion on the socio-economic conditions of farmers in Setia Mulya Village. This research will produce information related to the socio-economic conditions of the farming community due to the land conversion that occurred and its impact on the social and economic life of farmers.

## 2. Method

This research is located in Setia Mulya Village, Tarumajaya District, Bekasi Regency, West Java The location of the study can be observed in [Figure 1](#).

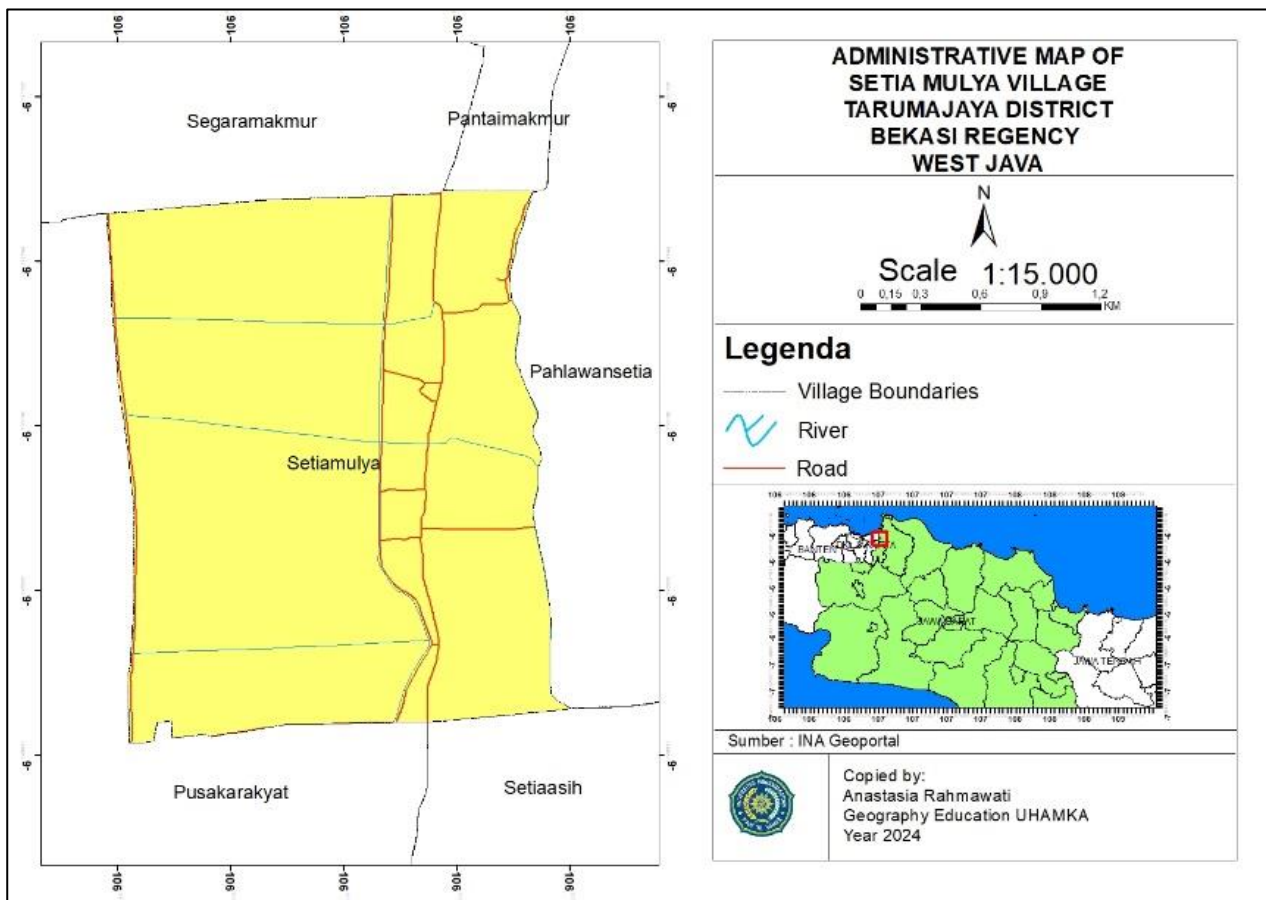
**Table 1.** Social and Economic Indicators

	Indicators
Social	- Age and gender
	- Social Status
	- Membership in community groups
Economics	- Livelihood
	- Income
	- Household consumption

**Source:** (Linton, 2000; Badan Pusat Statistik, 2022)

The stages carried out by the researcher began by making direct observations in the field related to the living conditions that occurred at the research site, this was done to find out what problems existed at the research location. To focus more on the object to be researched, it was decided to conduct research on the socio-economic condition of the farming community due to the land conversion in Setia Mulya Village. Then the next step is the step of collecting data through observation, interviews, and documentation, this aims to get relevant and accurate information so that it can answer research questions ([Table 1](#)). Then the data is presented in the form of charts and conclusions can be drawn. The data in this qualitative research is in the form of words,

statements, sentences and pictures. The data sources of this research consist of primary data and secondary data. The sampling technique in this study is using the snowball sampling technique.



**Figure 1.** Map of the Research Location

### 3. Results and Discussion

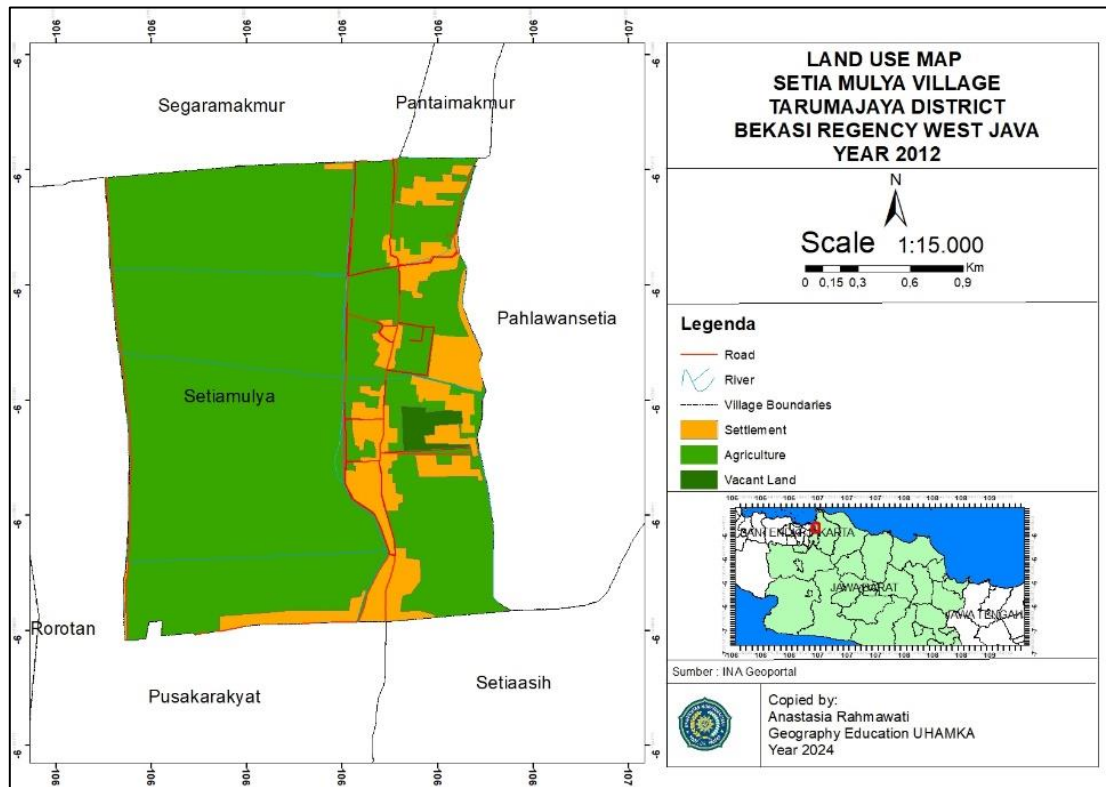
#### 3.1. Land Conversion

Land conversion generally concerns changes in the allocation of land resources from one use to another. This process is a significant phenomenon that reflects the dynamic nature of land use in response to socioeconomic development, urbanization, and population growth. Land conversion is particularly common in rural areas close to city centers, where the pressures of urban expansion are most intensely felt. The proximity of these rural areas to urban hubs makes them attractive targets for development, as they offer ample space for new housing, commercial enterprises, and infrastructure projects at costs that are often lower than fully urbanized regions.

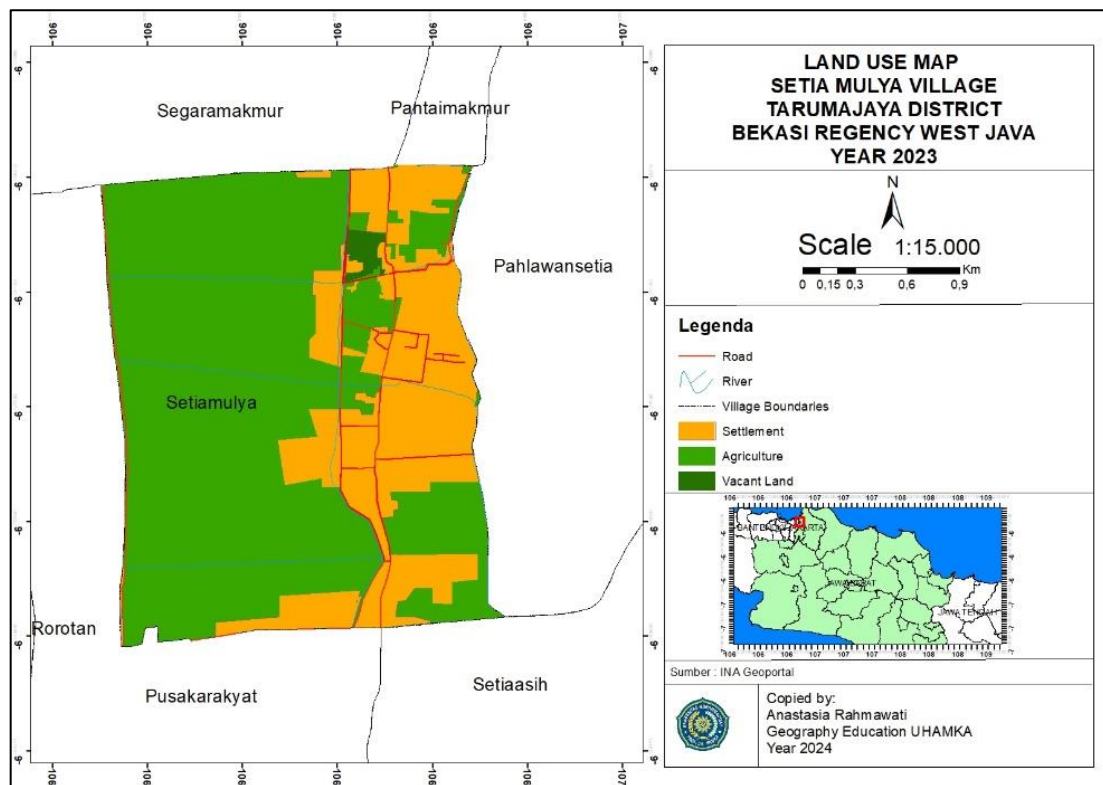
According to (Mulya et al 2022), in rural areas, the land that is converted is predominantly agricultural land. This is in contrast to urban areas, where vacant land is typically repurposed into housing or commercial developments. The conversion of agricultural land happens because it can be purchased at an affordable price compared to other types of land. Investors and developers are drawn to these lower costs and the potential for high returns on investment once the land is developed. After acquisition, the agricultural land is conditioned or prepared for construction, transforming it into what is referred to as built land.

The research location of Setia Mulya Village serves as a prime example of this phenomenon. Located in a rural area close to the city center, Setia Mulya Village has become an attractive location for both the community and investors seeking to build settlements. The allure of living near urban amenities while enjoying the benefits of a rural setting draws people to the area. Consequently, the agricultural land in Setia Mulya Village is increasingly being converted into non-agricultural land, such as residential zones and commercial areas. This trend has significant implications for the productivity of agricultural land in the village. As noted by (Lin and Yao 2014), the conversion of agricultural land into non-agricultural uses leads to a decrease in the overall productivity of agricultural land in the area. This decline affects not only local food production but also has

broader impacts on food security and the agricultural economy. The reduction of arable land limits the capacity for local farming activities, which can lead to a reliance on imported food products and affect the livelihoods of farmers who depend on agriculture for their income.



**Figure 2.** Land Use Map of Setia Mulya Village in 2012



**Figure 3.** Land Use Map of Setia Mulya Village in 2023



Land conversion is a significant issue in rural areas close to urban centers, exemplified by the situation in Setia Mulya Village. The transformation of agricultural land into non-agricultural uses is driven by economic factors and the attractiveness of these areas for development. However, this process has adverse effects on agricultural productivity and can have broader socioeconomic consequences. Understanding and managing land conversion is essential to balance development needs with the preservation of agricultural land, ensuring sustainable land use practices that benefit both current and future generations.

In [figure 2](#) is a map of land use in Setia Mulya Village in 2012, it can be seen that agricultural land is very dominating in the village. almost the entire area of Setia Mulya Village is agricultural land. Meanwhile, [figure 3](#) is a map of land use in Setia Mulya Village in 2023. It is very visible that agricultural land has been transformed into settlements. Although agricultural land in Setia Mulya Village is still large, according to farmers, many land that is suitable for use as agricultural land has been converted into non-agricultural land. The land conversion that occurred in Setia Mulya Village was caused by an increase in the population and an increasing need for housing. The strategic location of the research with the city center and economic center makes people interested in having a place to live in Setia Mulya Village, thus making the existing agricultural land converted into housing. This makes farmers lose a decent place to carry out agricultural activities, although the agricultural land in Setia Mulya Village is still large, but many are not suitable as a place to farm, because the irrigation flow is difficult to reach the agricultural land.



**Figure 4.** Conversion of Agricultural Land into Housing in Setia Mulya Village

The land use analysis of Setia Mulya Village demonstrates considerable transformation over the period from 2012 to 2023. In 2012, a substantial portion of the village's land was dedicated to agricultural activities, particularly in the western and southern parts. Residential areas, by contrast, were mostly concentrated along the main road in the eastern portion of the village. However, by 2023, significant expansion in residential development was observed, which has considerably reduced the amount of agricultural land. The most pronounced change occurred in the central and southern areas, where former agricultural lands were converted into residential and infrastructural zones.

This shift is largely indicative of the pressures brought by urbanization. As population growth in nearby urban areas rises, the demand for housing and development in surrounding rural areas also increases. Setia Mulya Village, located relatively close to an urban center, has experienced this demand firsthand. Additionally, vacant land that was scattered across the village in 2012 has mostly been repurposed for residential development by 2023, leaving less room for agricultural practices or the preservation of natural green spaces.

The conversion of agricultural land into residential zones could have a profound impact on local agriculture. The reduced availability of farmland may lead to a decline in agricultural productivity, which could affect both the livelihoods of local farmers and the overall food security of the region. This shift mirrors broader trends

seen in rural areas close to cities, where agricultural lands are increasingly being replaced by urban developments. The situation calls for careful and sustainable land-use planning, ensuring that the expansion of residential areas does not come at the expense of agricultural sustainability or environmental health.

These findings are consistent with prior studies, which have shown that rural areas near urban zones are particularly vulnerable to land conversion due to interest from real estate developers and investors. In summary, the significant land use changes observed in Setia Mulya Village from 2012 to 2023 exemplify the challenges faced by rural areas experiencing urbanization pressures. Moving forward, sound land management practices will be critical to balancing the needs for development with the preservation of agricultural land and environmental resources. Land changes from agricultural land to housing have occurred in many rural areas close to urban areas, one of which occurred in Setia Mulya Village, Bekasi Regency. According to (Sari & Yuliani., 2021) the conversion of agricultural land into housing, farmers lose their agricultural land and have an impact on decreasing income. In [figure 4](#) is the change of agricultural land that has been converted into housing in Setia Mulya Village. The land is agricultural land that was once used by farmers for farming, but after it was planned to build housing, farmers looked for other agricultural land that was suitable and suitable for agricultural activities. This makes farmers experience a decrease in income due to high land rental prices and difficulties in irrigation flows.

### 3.2. Social Conditions of Farmers

Social interaction is a process that cannot be separated from humans as social creatures. As social beings, humans will form certain groups in order to achieve a common goal ([Kamarudin et al., 2016](#)). The social interaction built by the farming community in Setia Mulya Village shows a pattern of peace, harmony, mutual respect, and a high attitude of tolerance. This can be seen from the response of the farmers as resource persons when conducting a research study in Setia Mulya Village which was very warm and received the researcher very well. According to the results of interviews conducted by researchers, the farming community in Setia Mulya Village seems to be helping each other, especially in terms of irrigation flow because the flow of water from the river does not reach the residents' farms so that farmers whose rice fields are not properly drained become dry and rice becomes damaged due to lack of water. Meanwhile, irrigation on agricultural land is a very important component to support the agricultural sector ([Riswanto, 2017](#)). Farmers whose rice fields are not properly irrigated, they work together to make water flow from the river to their farmland. It certainly cannot be done alone in a short time, therefore the farmers help each other so that their farmland is immediately drained by water from the river.

The farmers of Setia Mulya Village are male, this shows that the farmers in Setia Mulya Village are heads of families who work to meet the needs of their families. According to ([Kartasapoetra, 1991](#)) farmers who are over 40 years old, it will be difficult to receive updates, their way of thinking, as well as their way of working and living. The age of farmers greatly affects their physical ability and response in dealing with new changes in their farming business. Based on the results of the interviews conducted, the farmers in Setia Mulya Village have an age between 41-65 years old, which is very difficult to get a new job, therefore the farmers can only use their expertise in agriculture to meet their economic life, and in that age range farmers find it difficult to accept new innovations and only tend to carry out agricultural activities in the old way ([Rasoki & Nurmalia, 2023](#)). In addition, the education level of farmers in Setia Mulya Village is on average only elementary and junior high school graduates. The limited knowledge that farmers have is an obstacle for farmers in their farming business. The level of education of farmers can have an impact on the way of thinking applied to their efforts in farming and the way of thinking of farmers in taking advantage of every opportunity that exists in their agricultural field ([Ante et al., 2016](#)).

Social status is a set of rights and obligations of a person in the community. Social status classifies society into different layers of each individual. These layers can determine the degrees, obligations, and responsibilities within the group. The layers between communities can be referred to as social stratification. Social stratification generally refers to a system of society that divides each individual into stratified groups. Social stratification is also referred to as the layer between societies that distinguishes one group from another. In the social stratification, farmers are divided into farmers who own land, farmers who work for their own land, and working farmers or smallholder farmers ([Leilani & Handoyo, 2024](#)). Land ownership before land conversion is mostly land owners and a small part are land tenants. Meanwhile, after the transfer of land ownership of farmers' land ownership, farmers who own their own land sell their agricultural land. This shows that there is a change in the social status of farmers in Setia Mulya Village. Farmers who only have abilities in agriculture continue their farming business by renting agricultural land, so that the social status of the farmer

changes from a landowner to a working farmer. The change in social status that occurred can change the social stratification of farmers in Setia Mulya Village from the upper class to the lower class.

Agricultural groups are farmer associations formed due to the existence of common interests, similar socio-economic conditions, and increasing familiarity and harmony between farmers. Setia Mulya Village has a farmer group formed by the head of Setia Mulya Village. The respondents interviewed were members of the Setia Mulya Village farmer group. Information related to agriculture can be obtained from the farmer group, besides that the difficulties of farmers in carrying out agricultural activities can be discussed with other members of the farmer group to find a way out of the problems faced by farmers. Farmer groups are also used by farmers as a learning forum to improve agricultural production and rice quality in terms of food, by participating in trainings or counseling organized by the local government.

### 3.3. Economic Conditions of Farmers

The economy of the farming community of Setia Mulya Village after the land conversion has greatly decreased (Figure 5). Agricultural land is an important thing in farming, but the farmers of Setia Mulya Village do not have their own agricultural land, but they rent land to land owners. The agricultural land in Setia Mulya Village is very large, half of the area of Setia Mulya Village is agricultural land. The high price of land rent and difficult irrigation flows are obstacles for farmers in utilizing existing agricultural land. Farmers have to pay rent of around 4 million to 5 million per hectare to landowners, so farmers can only use agricultural land according to their economic capabilities.



**Figure 5.** Agricultural Land of Setia Mulya Village

Income is very important in supporting the family economy. Everyone's decision to choose a job is influenced by the expertise of each individual. The income of the farming community in Setia Mulya Village varies greatly depending on how much land they rent and the rice production obtained. The income generated by farmers before the land conversion is relatively high (Yao et al., 2010). Based on the results of the interview, the income generated by farmers before the land conversion was relatively high. The highest income before land conversion averaged 4.6 million. After the land conversion, farmers' income decreased, this is because agricultural land is the main source of income for farmers in Setia Mulya Village, so farmers only use agricultural land as a basic income, even by paying high land rental costs. After the land conversion, the farmers only have an average income of 1.9 million. It can be seen from the income before and after the land conversion that there is a change in the farmer's economy due to the land conversion. The economic change occurred because before the land conversion, some farmers had their own land and some other farmers rented land, but at a relatively small price. After the land conversion, the farmers are worker farmers, who rent land to carry out agricultural activities. High land rental prices and increasing agricultural needs have made farmers'



income decrease. Farmers who have a high income are farmers who rent agricultural land quite widely, besides that the farmer also rents tools for farming, one of which is a tracker to plow the rice fields.

The crops sold are the results of holding or rice that is not processed first. They sell their crops to the nearest rice mill with selling prices varying between 400-500 thousand/quintal. In one harvest, farmers can get 2-10 tons of rice according to the area of the rice fields they have. The yield is not always the same every time it is harvested, because there are obstacles, especially in irrigation and land to be rented.

To meet their living needs, farmers do not only use income from farming products. The income from farming is not enough to meet the needs of the family and the capital for farming, therefore the farmers choose to find a side job and get additional income to meet the needs of the family and find additional capital for farming. Farmers' side jobs are mostly construction workers, a small percentage of farmers have side jobs as traders and lawn hunters. Farmers are more likely to find a side job as a construction worker because they have expertise in the construction field and usually get a job call from local villagers. The income generated from construction workers can reach 500 thousand/week, but not every week they get a call to work as a construction worker. Meanwhile, farmers who have a side job as traders earn income from trading in the range of 400 thousand/week and farmers who have a side job as grass hunters earn an income of around 300 thousand/week.

Household consumption is household expenditure on goods and services for the purpose of meeting household needs. Household income, the amount of goods and services used, and future savings are economic factors that affect the level of household consumption. Housing is a basic need for every human being, every human needs a place to live as a place to shelter, a place to gather, and carry out activities with their families. At the research site, most farmers have privately owned residences. However, a small number of farmers rent houses. This shows that most of the farmers in Setia Mulya Village are ready for a place to live, while a small number of other farmers still do not have their own place to live, so farmers who do not have a private house must prepare expenses for their housing needs. In addition, farmers must prepare expenses to pay electricity bills every month and other household needs.

The economic condition of farmers in Setia Mulya Village is not all the same, the economic ability of farmers in renting land varies. The capital of the farmers to support agricultural activities is their own capital so that the income from side jobs that helps the economy of the farmers of Setia Mulya Village to increase capital in farming. Based on the results of interviews with farmers, there are many farmers whose land has previously been converted into housing so they have to find new land to continue agricultural activities. However, there are some farmers who do not get suitable land to be used as agricultural land, so the farmers stop being farmers and choose to find other livelihoods.

### **3.4. Impact of land conversion on the socio-economic conditions of farming**

Land conversion that occurs in Indonesia has a positive and negative impact on the community, especially on people who work in the agricultural and plantation sectors. Land changes that have been converted to Setia Mulya Village are agricultural land that has been converted into settlements. Population growth in an area is one of the drivers of land use change. Fulfillment of living needs such as the provision of housing and other facilities and infrastructure that make agricultural land converted into built land (Mubarak et al., 2022). This has an impact on the socio-economic condition of farmers in Setia Mulya Village. The socio-economic impacts caused by land conversion that occur in Setia Mulya Village on farmers is a reduction in the area of land suitable for farming. Although the agricultural land in Setia Mulya Village is still very large, the difficulty of irrigation flows makes farmers choose not to continue their profession as farmers and look for other jobs. Then the decrease in farmers' income is the impact of land changes in Setia Mulya Village. The high land rental price makes farmers have to turn around capital in order to pay the next rent. Farmers must also accept that land that is usually used for farming will be converted into built land and cannot be used for agricultural activities, so that it has an impact on farmers' income. The impact of land conversion into housing has caused a lot of population movement, so that cultural differences and economic differences can affect the interaction of the people of Setia Mulya Village.

Based on the results of interviews with farmers in Setia Mulya Village, the farmers accept that one day the land they use for farming will be built into settlements or other built land, because they are only tenants of the land and do not have rights to the land. Farmers hope that landowners will not immediately build agricultural land that they use to carry out agricultural activities.



#### 4. Conclusion

Based on the results of research related to changes in the socio-economic conditions of farmers due to land conversion in Setia Mulya Village, Tarumajaya District, Bekasi Regency, it can be concluded that the conversion of agricultural land is caused by the needs of residents for housing. The strategic location of the research with the economic center and close to the city makes people choose to live in Setia Mulya Village. The results of the study show that the land conversion has had a significant negative impact on the socio-economic conditions of farmers. The age condition of farmers has an impact on the social condition of farmers because it is difficult to accept updates and new innovations. The social status of farmers in Setia Mulya Village is that of working farmers who rent land to land owners, but there has been a decrease in the social stratification of farmers from landowner farmers to working farmers due to the land conversion that occurred in Setia Mulya Village. Economic changes can be seen in the income of farmers before the land conversion and after the land conversion, many farmers whose income is getting smaller because the rental price of agricultural land is getting higher, this is the impact of the land conversion on the economic condition of the farmers. The land use change in Setia Mulya Village shows how important integrated and sustainable spatial planning is. By understanding the impact of land conversion on farmers' livelihoods, we can formulate better policies to protect farmland, improve farmers' welfare, and maintain environmental sustainability.

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