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Feasibility Analysis of Durian Cultivation Business (Durio Xinethius) and Economic Benefits for Durian Farmers in Bontang, East Kalimantan

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Abstract

Durian cultivation is a high-value agricultural business with the potential to improve farmers' welfare. However, this business requires a comprehensive economic feasibility analysis because it is a medium- to long-term investment. This study aims to analyze the feasibility of durian cultivation and its contribution to the economic conditions of farmers in Bontang City, East Kalimantan. The research method used was a descriptive quantitative approach with a census method of 19 durian farmers. Data were collected through structured interviews, field observations, and documentation, then analyzed using cost, revenue, income, and business feasibility analysis. The results showed that durian cultivation is economically feasible with revenues far exceeding production costs, including during the pre-production period before the plants bear fruit. The durian business provides high net income and is able to accelerate the return on investment. The discussion shows that the durian business contributes significantly to household income, farmers' economic stability, and seasonal job creation. The study's conclusion confirms that durian cultivation is a viable and strategic business to develop to support farmer economic strengthening and regional economic development.

Keywords: Durian, Business Feasibility, Farmer Income, Agribusiness, Local Economy

INTRODUCTION

Horticultural cultivation plays a strategic role in agricultural sector development because it can boost food security, increase incomes, and sustainably develop regional economies (Ardilla et al., 2025). In Indonesia, demand for high-value horticultural commodities continues to increase in line with population growth and changes in consumer consumption patterns (Siswadi et al., 2022). One leading commodity with strong appeal in both domestic and regional markets is durian. Durian's relatively high sales value and seasonal nature make it a significant source of income for farmers during the harvest season (Wahyuni & Warsiman, 2023). This makes durian cultivation a potential agricultural business alternative for sustainable development. Therefore, durian business management needs to be understood not only from a technical cultivation perspective but also from an economic perspective.

Durian (Durio zibethinus) is known as a tropical fruit commodity with unique flavors, aromas, and strong cultural values in various regions of Indonesia (Sari et al., 2025). Demand for durian continues to increase annually, both for fresh consumption and the development of agro-industry-based processed products (Ernawati et al., 2025). This situation has driven the expansion of planted areas and the increasing number of farmers who utilize durian as a primary or supplementary source of income. However, despite this economic potential, durian cultivation requires long-term investment, relatively high maintenance costs, and proper business management (Fitriyenti et al., 2024). Without thorough economic planning, farmers risk income uncertainty. This underscores the importance of economic analysis in developing durian cultivation businesses.

At the regional level, the development of superior commodities is often used as a strategic instrument to stimulate local economic growth and empower rural communities (Jumania et al., 2025). Bontang City, East Kalimantan, has agro-climatic conditions relatively suitable for durian cultivation, supported by land availability and public interest in smallholder plantations. Durian

cultivation in various regions is generally carried out by small-scale farmers using simple, experience-based management systems (Sukesti et al., 2023). In practice, business decisions are often made without structured, data-driven economic calculations. This situation has the potential to impact the sustainability of durian farmers' businesses and their competitiveness (Wardhani et al., 2025). This situation highlights the need for more in-depth economic studies at the farmer level.

Durian cultivation has distinct characteristics compared to seasonal food crops, as it takes a relatively long time to begin production (Khasanah et al., 2025). During the pre-production period, farmers must bear long-term operational and maintenance costs before generating income (Firgiyanto & Kurniasari, 2020). Furthermore, the risk of production failure due to climate factors, pest attacks, and plant diseases is relatively high in durian farming (Zaenuri et al., 2024). This situation requires farmers to have sound business management skills to maintain their business continuity. Without proper management, the risk of economic loss increases. Therefore, business feasibility is a crucial issue in durian cultivation.

The feasibility of a farming business is determined not only by the amount of income but also by the balance between costs, risks, and economic benefits for farmers (Pujiati et al., 2025). In the context of durian cultivation, farmers often face price fluctuations and uncertainty about harvest yields, which impact income stability (Hikmah & Rahman, 2025). Without a clear economic analysis, farmers will struggle to assess whether their businesses truly provide long-term profits (Kurniawan & Abidin, 2019). This situation can discourage farmers from intensifying or expanding their durian businesses. As a result, the economic potential of durian is not fully utilized optimally. This demonstrates the importance of an economic approach in understanding the dynamics of durian farming at the farmer level.

Beyond the farming aspect, durian cultivation also has significant social and economic implications for farming households (Kusuma, 2023). Income from durian farming contributes to meeting basic needs, accessing education, and improving the health of farming families (Siregar, 2023). When durian farming is well-managed, this commodity has the potential to strengthen household economies and increase farmers' economic independence (Ernawati et al., 2024). Conversely, ineffective management can create economic vulnerability, especially for smallholder farmers. Therefore, durian cultivation cannot be separated from the context of farmers' socioeconomic conditions. A comprehensive analysis is necessary to understand the role of durian farming in farmers' lives.

In the context of regional agricultural development, durian business development requires policy support and information based on data and real-world conditions (Masrifah et al., 2021). Information on the economic conditions of farming is crucial for farmers, local governments, and other stakeholders in formulating policies for developing superior commodities (Setyaningrum et al., 2025). Without a strong analytical foundation, durian development efforts risk being off-target and unsustainable (Fridayanti et al., 2025). This can impact the effectiveness of agricultural development programs and the welfare of farmers. Therefore, a deep understanding of the economic conditions of durian cultivation at the farmer level is highly relevant for scientific study.

Previous research on durian has been conducted extensively, focusing on aspects of business feasibility, development strategies, and economic impact. Arnawa et al. (2025) found that micro-scale durian farming is financially viable because business revenues are able to cover all production costs and provide stable profits. Gaol et al. (2015) showed that smallholder durian cultivation is feasible based on an economic feasibility analysis with an R/C ratio above one. Oktaviana et al. (2017) concluded that durian farming in urban areas has good development prospects if supported by adequate production and marketing management.

In addition to business feasibility, several studies highlight the role of durian in improving the economy and community welfare. Syarifuddin et al. (2022) demonstrated that durian farming

significantly contributes to increasing the income and economic well-being of farming families. Julia et al. (2023) found that implementing geographical indications for durian can increase the product's selling value and stimulate economic growth in rural communities. Wal et al. (2025) demonstrated that converting rice paddies to durian orchards impacts the socio-economic changes of farmers, particularly in increasing income and livelihood patterns.

Other research focuses more on development strategies, marketing, and supporting policies for durian commodities. Setiawan (2024) concluded that developing durian as a superior commodity requires an integrated strategy involving production, marketing, and farmer institutions. Srimenganti et al. (2025) emphasized that the economic value of durian in Indonesia is significantly influenced by an efficient marketing system and distribution chain. Afina and Santoso (2025) found that implementing green industry policies in durian cultivation has the potential to increase business sustainability and post-harvest added value.

Based on these studies, there remains a gap in research related to studies that simultaneously analyze the feasibility of durian (Durio zibethinus) cultivation and its relationship to farmers' economic conditions in the context of a local resource-based urban area such as Bontang City, East Kalimantan. This study aims to analyze the economic feasibility of durian cultivation and understand its role in strengthening the economic conditions of durian farmers. The research results are expected to provide benefits as a basis for decision-making for farmers, policy formulation for local governments, and scientific references for the development of durian agribusiness studies in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a descriptive quantitative approach with a case study method to describe the condition of durian cultivation businesses at the farmer level. The research location was selected in Bontang City, East Kalimantan, due to its active durian farmers and high commodity development potential. The research object was durian (Durio zibethinus) cultivation businesses managed by smallholder farmers, focusing on one production season and current business conditions.

The study population included all 19 active durian farmers in Bontang City. Due to the relatively small population, this study used a saturated sampling technique (census), so all farmers were selected as respondents. This approach was chosen so that the analysis results could fully represent the actual conditions of durian cultivation businesses in the study area without resorting to sampling.

The research data consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through structured interviews and field observations, while secondary data were collected from literature and supporting documents. Data analysis was conducted using a farm feasibility analysis and farmer economic analysis, including calculations of costs, revenues, income, and the R/C ratio. To ensure data validity, consistency checks and clarifications were conducted, and the analysis results were then presented descriptively in tables and narrative form.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Feasibility Analysis of Durian (Durio zibethinus) Cultivation Business in Bontang City

Durian (Durio zibethinus) cultivation in Bontang City is managed by small to medium-scale farmers with a focus on fresh fruit production on relatively homogeneous, self-owned land. The conventional cultivation pattern has demonstrated stable production potential, making durian a smallholder plantation commodity with important economic value. The technical characteristics of the business show relatively uniform planting densities and varieties, with the

dominance of montong durian due to its clear market and stable price, as stated by a farmer, "The durian we plant is mostly montong because the market is clear and the price is stable" (Farmer AR). This finding is in line with Oktaviana et al. (2017) and Gaol et al. (2015) who stated that smallholder durian farming has good economic prospects, and is reinforced by Ardilla et al. (2025) and Srimenganti et al. (2025) who emphasized that superior varieties contribute significantly to productivity and market competitiveness.

Table 1. Technical Characteristics of Durian Cultivation Business in Bontang City

Component	Average Condition
Number of farmers	19 person
Land area	± 1–2 ha
Dominant variety	Montong
Planting density	± 120 trees/ha
Age begins to bear fruit	± 4–5 year
Production per tree	± 20–30 fruit

The cost structure of durian cultivation in Bontang City consists of initial investment and annual maintenance costs. Investment costs primarily come from seedling purchases and initial planting, while maintenance costs include fertilizers, pesticides, and routine plant care. Farmers stated that maintenance costs can be reduced through efficient garden management: "If you take care of your own plantations, the costs can be more economical than using outside labor" (Farmer MS). This finding supports the research of Fitriyenti et al. (2024) and Fridayanti et al. (2025), which emphasize the importance of cost efficiency in increasing the viability of durian farming. Furthermore, improved cultivation techniques also have the potential to reduce long-term costs, as noted by Firgiyanto and Kurniasari (2020).

Revenue from durian farming in Bontang City is derived from the sale of fresh fruit using a weight-based system. Durian selling prices are relatively stable and contribute significantly to farmers' income during the harvest season. One farmer stated, "One harvest can cover several years of maintenance costs" (Farmer HR). This indicates that although durian requires a long production lead time, the harvest can generate substantial income. This finding is consistent with Gaol et al. (2015), who stated that revenue from smallholder durian farming can cover production costs and provide economic benefits. Furthermore, strengthening the marketing system also plays a crucial role in maintaining price stability (Srimenganti et al., 2025).

Table 2. Total Revenue from Durian (Durio zibethinus) Cultivation Business per Hectare per Year

Component	Average value
Number of trees per hectare	± 120 tree
Production per tree	± 20–30 fruit
Average fruit weight	± 4–5 kg
Total production per hectare	± 9.600–18.000 kg
Average selling price	± Rp70.000/kg
Total revenue per year	**± Rp672.000.000–Rp1.260.000.000**

Based on Table 2, the total annual revenue from durian cultivation per hectare is considered very high, especially during the phase when the plants have entered their productive phase. This high revenue is influenced by a combination of production volume, fruit weight, and relatively stable selling prices at the farmer level. A farmer stated that, "When the harvest is full, the yield from one hectare can be very significant, especially since the price of Montong durian rarely drops drastically" (Farmer AR). This finding aligns with Srimenganti et al. (2025), who stated that the economic value of durian in Indonesia is strongly influenced by production volume and price stability.

The high revenue also indicates that durian is a high-value commodity compared to other smallholder plantation crops. This condition supports the findings of Ardilla et al. (2025), who asserted that durian productivity in Indonesia is competitive and provides significant economic value. Furthermore, high revenue is a key motivating factor for farmers to maintain and expand their durian businesses, as also found by Ernawati et al. (2025) in the context of developing a locally based durian agro-industry.

Table 3. Production Costs and Net Income of Durian Cultivation Business per Hectare per Year

Component	**Average value**
Initial seed costs	± Rp6.000.000
Annual maintenance fee	± Rp6.000.000–Rp12.000.000
Total production costs	± Rp12.000.000–Rp18.000.000
Total revenue	± Rp672.000.000–Rp1.260.000.000
Net income	**± Rp654.000.000–Rp1.242.000.000**

Table 3 shows that the production cost structure of durian (Durio zibethinus) cultivation in Bontang City is relatively low compared to the total income earned by farmers, resulting in very high net income. The main costs come from the initial investment in seedlings and annual maintenance costs, while labor costs can be reduced because the plantations are managed independently, as stated by a farmer, "The most expensive maintenance is fertilizer and medicine, but this can still be reduced if done independently" (Farmer MS). This condition confirms that cost efficiency is a key factor in increasing the net income of the durian business and supports the findings of Firgiyanto and Kurniasari (2020). The high net income indicates that durian cultivation is very economically viable, in line with the results of research by Gaol et al. (2015) and Oktaviana et al. (2017), and is supported by the role of training, sustainable policies, and post-harvest management in increasing added value and business sustainability (Afina & Santoso, 2025; Fridayanti et al., 2025).

Table 4. Pre-Production Cost Structure of Durian (Durio zibethinus) Cultivation Business per Hectare During the Pre-Fruiting Period (4 Years)

Cost Components	**Cost per Year (Rp/ha)**	**Time Stages Expenditure**	**Total Cost for 4 Years (Rp/ha)**
Purchase of seeds	± 6.000.000	Year 1	± 6.000.000
Maintenance plant	± 6.000.000–12.000.000	Years 1 to 4	± 24.000.000–48.000.000
Total Pre-Production Costs			**± 30.000.000–54.000.000**

Based on Table 4, the total costs incurred by farmers during the pre-fruiting period are relatively limited compared to the potential revenue when the plants enter the productive phase. The largest costs come from annual maintenance, while seed investment is only made once at the initial planting stage. A farmer stated, "There are costs in the first four years, but after the first harvest, the returns are immediately felt" (Farmer HR). This indicates that the pre-production period for durian is still within the reasonable investment range for medium-term plantation businesses. This finding aligns with Gaol et al. (2015), who stated that the initial costs of durian cultivation are relatively small compared to the long-term economic benefits obtained by farmers.

Compared to the potential net income for a full production year, the total pre-production costs for four years can be covered in a single harvest season. This indicates that the payback period for durian farming is relatively quick once the plants begin to bear fruit. Oktaviana et al. (2017) also found that the waiting period for production in durian farming does not pose an economic barrier if farmers are able to maintain consistent orchard maintenance. Furthermore, support for cost efficiency and improved cultivation techniques can further accelerate returns on investment (Firgiyanto & Kurniasari, 2020; Ernawati et al., 2024). Thus, although it requires patience in the initial phase, durian cultivation remains viable and economically rational for farmers in Bontang City.

The Contribution of Durian Cultivation to the Economic Condition of Farmers in Bontang City

Durian (Durio zibethinus) cultivation contributes significantly to farmers' incomes in Bontang City, especially after the plants enter the productive phase. Research shows that an average hectare of durian orchard can produce an annual yield of around 9.6–18 tons of fruit, generating hundreds of millions of rupiah in revenue annually. This substantial value makes durian a primary source of income for most respondent farmers. One farmer stated, "My income from durian can be greater than from other businesses I run" (Farmer AR). This finding aligns with Syarifuddin et al. (2022), who stated that durian farming significantly contributes to improving the economic well-being of farming families.

The economic contribution of durian farming is also reflected in the proportion of durian income to total household income. Interviews revealed that some farmers reported that more than 60% of their annual family income comes from durian farming. This income is used to meet both primary and long-term needs, such as education and housing improvements. One farmer stated, "Once the durian harvest is over, my annual needs are usually met" (Farmer MS). This finding supports the research of Arnawa et al. (2025) explained that durian farming can improve the economic stability of business owners' households.

In addition to increasing income, durian farming also contributes to the local economy through seasonal job creation. During the harvest season, each hectare of durian plantations employs an average of 3–5 additional workers for harvesting, sorting, and distribution. The involvement of local workers has an indirect economic impact on the surrounding community. One farmer stated, "When the harvest is large, I usually ask my neighbors to help with the harvest" (Farmer HR). This finding aligns with Kusuma (2023) and Siswadi et al. (2022), who stated that durian cultivation can empower communities and increase income at the local level.

Efforts to improve fruit productivity and quality also contribute significantly to the economic contribution of durian farming. Farmers who implement better cultivation and post-harvest techniques report improved fruit quality and higher selling prices. One farmer stated, "After participating in training, the fruit is more uniform and sells faster" (Farmer SN). This finding aligns with Setiawan (2024) and Wardhani et al. (2025) found that increasing durian productivity and quality directly impacted farmer income. Thus, technical and managerial aspects are important factors in strengthening the economic contribution of durian farming.

The economic contribution of durian farming is also strengthened through diversification of derivative activities and waste utilization. Some farmers have begun utilizing durian waste for compost or additional economic activities. Although its contribution is not yet significant, this activity helps reduce production costs and increase business efficiency. One farmer stated, "Durian skins are no longer thrown away; they can be reused" (Farmer RS). This finding supports Masrifah et al. (2021) and Zaenuri et al. (2024), who emphasized that utilizing durian waste contributes to the sustainability and economic efficiency of the business.

To clarify the quantitative contribution of durian farming to farmers' economic conditions, a summary of the economic contribution is presented in Table 5. This table shows that durian farming has a significant and sustainable economic impact on farmers in Bontang City.

Table 5. Summary of the Economic Contribution of Durian Cultivation Business to Farmers

Indicator	Average value
Durian income contribution to household income	> 60%
Seasonal labor per hectare	3–5 orang
Business income per hectare per year	Hundreds of millions of rupiah

Overall, the research results indicate that durian cultivation provides a significant economic contribution to farmers in Bontang City. This contribution extends beyond increased income to economic stability, community empowerment, and opportunities for sustainable business development. These findings align with those of Julia et al. (2023), Siregar (2023), Sukesti et al. (2023), Wahyuni and Warsiman (2023), and Sari et al. (2025), who assert that durian is a strategic commodity for sustainably strengthening the economy of farmers and communities.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that durian (Durio zibethinus) cultivation in Bontang City is economically viable and makes a significant contribution to farmers' economic well-being. The analysis shows that business revenues significantly exceed production costs, including pre-production costs before the crop bears fruit. Durian farming generates high net income, accelerates return on investment, and serves as a primary source of income for most farmers. Furthermore, durian cultivation plays a role in improving household economic stability, creating seasonal employment, and stimulating local economic activity. Therefore, durian is a strategic commodity with potential for sustainable development in Bontang City.

The results of this study have practical and policy implications for regional agricultural development. For farmers, the research findings can inform decision-making in managing and developing durian cultivation businesses more efficiently and economically. For the local government, these findings can serve as a reference in formulating policies for developing superior commodities, providing technical training, and providing capital and marketing support. Furthermore, strengthening farmer institutions and developing durian-based agribusinesses has the potential to improve farmer welfare and encourage sustainable local economic development. This study is limited by its regional scope and the limited number of respondents to durian farmers in Bontang City, so the results cannot be generalized to other regions. Furthermore, the economic analysis did not include detailed aspects of climate risk and long-term price fluctuations. Therefore, further research is recommended to cover a wider area, use a longer

observation period, and incorporate business risk and sensitivity analysis. Further research could also examine the development of downstream durian product diversification to increase added value and the sustainability of farmers' businesses.

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