

# Govt move to modernise farming

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Sun.** — The Government is trying to modernise farming in the country by restructuring the farming community through the grouping of subsistence farmers into commercial units.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight the restructuring was a must as sophisticated technology could not be applied on small subsistence farmers.

"Sophisticated modern technology can only yield benefits when applied on a large scale by commercial enterprises."

The Prime Minister who was speaking at the opening of the Fifth Congress of the Federation of Asian Veterinary Associations (Fava) at the Putra World Trade Centre said progress could only be achieved if there was a change in attitude and a better acceptance of modern technology.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said if farmers continued with their subsistence-type of farming as a way of life, they could not and would not adopt new technology.

Citing the poultry and swine industry in Malaysia as an example, Dr Mahathir said meaningful development did not take place until the 1950s when farmers switched from backyard farming into commercial ventures.

## Health

With the acceptance of new breeds and scientific husbandry, the initially small concerns grew into huge modern commercial farms.

Another example of the farmers' unwillingness to accept new technology was over artificial insemination.

While artificial insemination, introduced in Malaysia in 1963, was accepted by commercial dairy farmers, subsistence farmers refused to use the method despite

continuous efforts by the Government to promote it.

Based on this experience, Malaysia has developed a strategy in animal production by upgrading selected subsistence farmers into small commercial units by facilitating the acquisition of more animals or by grouping the farms into larger units.

The Prime Minister said that in beef production, organised units quickly adopted the feedlot technology introduced by the Veterinary Services Department and from one feedlot in 1984, the number has grown to more than 400 today.

"Organising farmers into commercial units and grouping them will also facilitate a more organised marketing system, more cost-effective delivery of services and better control of quality."

Dr Mahathir said veterinarians also played a significant role in human public health.

Their contribution to biomedical knowledge is well-known and from this pool, techniques in disease diagnosis, therapy, surgery, prevention and control have emerged which are applicable to both the medical and veterinary professions.

About 400 veterinarians from 10 countries, including Malaysia, will be attending the three-day congress.