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Land for growing of herbs, spice plants should be available

IPOH, Sun. - The Federal Government wants Perak and Selangor to expedite the allocation of land for the cultivation of herbal and spice plants.

Agriculture Minister Datuk Amar Dr Sulaiman Daud said yesterday a 500ha site in the Batang Padang district in Perak and 250ha in Selangor had been identified for the purpose.

He said the Cabinet had allocated RM2 million for the construction of infrastructure and cultivation of herbs and spices at Batang Padang.

He added the project would be carried out with the co-operation of the Perak Agriculture Development Corporation and the Farmers Organisation Authority.

Sulaiman said this after opening the Desaraya store at Medan Gopeng, a mini-market based on the pasar tani concept.

The Minister said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad wanted the cultivation of herbs and spice plants be done as soon as possible.

Sulaiman said the herbs and spices industry had good growth potential because of their medicinal and therapeutic value.

He also said they were very much a part of the Malaysian culture and tradition.

"The use of herbs and spices must be perpetuated so that the next generation will be familiar with them."

"If not they will only be familiar with Western fast foods like McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken."

Sulaiman said the Ministry was collaborating with the Health Ministry, Universiti Pertanian Malaysia and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia in a study of the medicinal values of the different types of herbs and spices available in the country.

Meanwhile, he urged consumers to be prepared for the double celebration, Hari Raya Puasa and Chinese New Year and purchase their goods early to avoid any shortage.

He said consumers could also make bookings at Desaraya stores so that there would be sufficient food items to go around.

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