

09/08/1997

Revised Agriculture Policy likely to be launched next month

KUALA TERENGGANU, Fri. - The revised Agriculture Policy is expected to be launched next month, Deputy Agriculture Minister Tengku Datuk Mahmud Mansor said today.

He said it would be presented to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad this month.

He said the policy contained strategies to increase food production especially by the private sector and overcome problems such as land shortage.

"The policy also looks into integrated farming (involving livestock breeding in plantations) and mechanisation to maximise land use.

"It also focuses on developing the agriculture sector so that it is able to compete internationally by increasing production, having a strong marketing mechanism, and legislating a standard on safety and quality.

"It will look into ways to minimise negative effects on the environment by creating rules and regulations to preserve the balance of nature," he added.

Tengku Mahmud also urged a study on the type of food whose output could be enhanced.

"It is useless to produce food already found in abundance in the country.

"We must undertake agriculture projects which produce food items that we are short of, like beef and milk," he said.

He added that Malaysians had a tendency to venture into projects which were "easy to handle".

"For instance, the poultry industry sees involvement by many because they can get an easy supply of chicken feed at a reasonable price compared with rearing cattle where one has to pay more to get the feed or grass."

He said the production of cattle feed should be stepped up.

Tengku Mahmud said the country could save about RM4 billion on imported beef and milk if local production was increased.

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