

Perks to attract ^{528.12} crop ⁹⁸ investors "

KUCHING: The Agriculture Ministry will offer incentives to attract more private sector investments under the Third National Agricultural Policy.

Minister Datuk Amar Dr Sulaiman Haji Daud said existing incentives such as tax relief would be improved.

He said RM21.4bil out of an estimated investment of RM32.4bil required to implement the policy strategies had to come from the private sector.

Citing an example, he

said one possible way to get investors to embark on large-scale padi planting in Sarawak was to lure them to invest in farm roads and irrigation system and then claim incentives from the Government.

The policy, unveiled by Dr Sulaiman last week, would be carried out over 13 years until 2010.

"We feel the need to set up a public-private sector co-ordinating council to oversee and review the progress of policy implementation," Dr Sulaiman told reporters here yes-

terday.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has been proposed as the council chairman.

Dr Sulaiman said the ministry would encourage large-scale planting of some crops, like maize (which the country spent RM1.1bil to import for animal feed last year) and onions.

He said the successful implementation of the policy would allow the country to reduce its food import bill, which amounted to RM10.2bil last year.