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Forging links to tap markets for farm products

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LANGKAWI, Sun. - A review of the 3rd National Agricultural Policy (1999-2010) has suggested that plans be made to forge links between producers and main markets and products based on consumer demand, market potential and consumer preferences.

Agriculture Minister Datuk Dr Sulaiman Daud said: "By using marketing methods based on products, it would place emphasis on the needs and taste of consumers as well as the global market.

"It will also provide opportunities to increase production and raise marketing efforts of agriculture related industries which have been identified under the second Industrial Master Plan (1996-2005)."

The third NAP has been reviewed to ensure food supply for the nation's needs is adequate and to raise productivity in the sector.

New strategies would be adopted to strengthen ties with other sectors and develop new clones for various produce.

Sulaiman was speaking at the opening of the Institute Pengurusan Peladang Langkawi (Management Training Institute for Farmers) by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Relying on commodities which were presently in demand was no longer suitable as it limited the efforts and effectiveness of the agriculture sector to venture into high value markets.

He said the steps would make it easier for farmers and entrepreneurs to take decisions on output and raw materials needed to fulfil consumer demand.

The policy, to be launched next year, would also make it easier to meet the needs of various market segments, both local and abroad.

Meanwhile, the Farmers Organisation Authority said it had taken long-term measures to help strengthen the position of farmers by using funds from its own institutions and members.

These funds were invested professionally in instruments within the country's economic system, FOA chairman Tan Sri Datuk Mustafa Abdul Jabar said.

He said FOA would help by giving encouragement and support to all farmers and organisations so that they would involve themselves in investment schemes.

Among the programmes to be emphasised was the members' savings scheme which was tied to investment activities under Permodalan Peladang Berhad.

"The savings scheme should be mobilised and controlled in an effective manner to ensure members' savings were enlarged and returns enjoyed by farmers," Mustafa said before Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad opened the the Institut Pertubuhan Peladang.

Earlier, chairman of National Farmers Organisation Datuk Abdul Rashid Abdul Rahman said Nafas was entering into a joint venture with Petronas to start an urea factory on a four hectare plot of land in Gurun, Kedah, next year.

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