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Move to tap African supplies

THE Agriculture Ministry is looking into the possibility of tapping the opportunities of the food production sectors in certain African countries to supplement local demand for food in the country.

Its minister, Datuk Amar Dr Sulaiman Daud, said the ministry is studying the the plan to directly import raw food products such as cashewnuts and corn for local processing to reduce the cost instead of importing it from secondary exporters.

The move follows the recent visit by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to some African countries. During the visit, Dr Mahathir had proposed that Malaysia imports more from these African countries to address the imbalance in the balance of payments.

Dr Sulaiman was speaking at the National Farmers, Breeders and Fishermen Day celebrations and Convention 1998 in Petaling Jaya yesterday.

He said the ministry has directed the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (Fama) to study the possibility of importing cashewnuts from Mozambique as its quality is good.

Fama chairman Datuk Badruddin Amiruddin has informed the minister that the agency will identify the supplier of cashewnuts in Mozambique.

Besides discussing the matter with Mozambique Agriculture Department, he said, Fama will also check the quality of the products and the consistency of its supply. The agency will also review the proposal with local importers.

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