

29/12/1998

New farming policy: Ministry to get feedback

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The Agriculture Ministry will obtain feedback on the recently-unveiled Third National Agricultural Policy to ensure its success.

Minister Datuk Amar Dr Sulaiman Daud said the policy was approved by the Cabinet last Wednesday.

The Ministry will soon sell copies of the two-volume policy to the public.

Speaking to the New Straits Times, Dr Sulaiman said the policy outlined action to be undertaken by relevant institutions and stakeholders and the time frame for the implementation.

He said the Ministry welcomed feedback from the public and private sectors on the policy and also the national action plan, which sought to identify problems faced in implementing the policy.

Dr Sulaiman will also consult State Governments to gather feedback and to ensure continued commitment to meeting the policy's goals.

"The visits will include briefings on the policy and discussion on problems, such as land tenancy agreements, as we have to move quickly while everything is still fresh," he said.

Dr Sulaiman plans to begin the tour, scheduled for January, by visiting Johor, Pahang and Terengganu.

He said the Ministry also planned to organise forums with the public and private sectors to discuss the policy and how to implement its short-, medium- and long-term action plans.

The forums would be part of the Public-Private Sector Co-ordinating Council chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the Higher Planning and Implementation Committee chaired by Dr Sulaiman.

Among those involved would be relevant Ministers, Federal agencies, State Governments and the private sector, supported by secretariats in the Agriculture and Primary Industries Ministries.

The implementation of the policy's action plan will require RM32.4 billion - RM11 billion from the public and RM21.4 billion from the private sector - between 1998 and 2010.

The development cost allocated for the Agriculture Ministry is estimated at RM9.2 billion, of which RM7.2 billion will be for infrastructure, RM1.1 billion for supporting services, RM0.5 billion for research and development and RM0.3 billion for human resource development.

The Primary Industries Ministry will require a development allocation of RM1.2 billion while State Governments must allocate RM0.58 billion for agriculture development.

Industrial crops will require a private sector investment of RM9.9 billion, of which RM6.1 billion will be for oil palm.

The food sector and the development of new industries will require a private sector investment of RM11.5 billion.

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