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## State Governments told to submit food production plans

SUNGAI PETANI, Sat. - Better co-ordination is needed between State Governments and the Agriculture Ministry to establish an efficient food production system.

In line with this, Agriculture Minister Datuk Amar Dr Sulaiman Daud has asked all State Governments to submit their action plans on food production.

The plans should include information like the type of food to be produced and a marketing plan.

"We should have an integrated approach in food production to have an efficient system in the country.

"Once this is in place we should not have any more problems like shortages of certain items at one time and oversupply at another."

Citing the case of an oversupply of tomatoes because of excessive production by farmers in Cameron Highlands recently, Sulaiman said the problem should not have occurred.

Besides dragging down prices, he said farmers also suffered hefty losses due to a glut in supply of tomatoes.

On the 1999 Budget tabled by Prime Minister and First Finance Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday, Sulaiman said it would boost the agriculture sector further as there were incentives for large enterprises to venture into the sector.

He said the involvement of large enterprises to undertake agriculture on a commercial basis could help increase food production in the country.

Sulaiman was speaking to reporters after visiting a tapioca plantation here. The 300ha farm is managed by Syarikat Deepa Sdn Bhd and opened early this year.

Its director Ahmad Shauki Ismail, the company planned to venture into commercial scale tapioca cultivation by opening a 4,000ha plantation in an east coast State next year.

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