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Fomca-Agriculture

FOMCA CALLS FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIAL AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 24 (Bernama) -- The Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (Fomca) today called on the government to set up an agricultural university with special emphasis on research and agricultural studies.

Its president, Prof Hamdan Adnan, said such a university could help raise food production in the country by further developing research and development (R&D) and inventing the machinery needed to speed up agricultural production.

Besides ensuring the country's capacity to produce food for its own consumption, a review should also be conducted on its food production capacity for export, he told Bernama, here.

He was commenting on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's new vision for Malaysia to develop its agricultural sector to become a major food producer and exporter.

Hamdan said the university could replace Universiti Pertanian Malaysia whose name had been changed to Univeriti Putra Malaysia (UPM) while other institutions of higher learning should set up their own agricultural faculties.

He said the agricultural R&D now done only by the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (Mardi) and UPM was not enough to fully utilise the land available in the country.

Malaysia should emulate countries like Japan, England and the United States which exported agricultural produce besides being major producers in the manufacturing sector.

"We are so dependent on the manufacturing sector that we forget about food production when we have vast land at our disposal. As a result, we have to import nearly RM10 billion worth of food annually," he said.

He reiterated his call for the Agriculture Ministry to be changed to Agriculture and Food Ministry in keeping with the government's aspiration to increase food production.

He said the state governments should allow individuals to lease idle land to farm as well as require estates to rear livestock to increase food production while oil rigs should carry out caged fish breeding in their waters.

-- BERNAMA

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