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Malaysia wants Tunisia to import pepper directly

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - To help promote greater bi-lateral co-operation, Malaysia has suggested that Tunisia import pepper directly from it, Minister of Agriculture Datuk Amar Dr Sulaiman Daud said today.

Last year, he said Tunisia imported 640 metric tonnes of Malaysian pepper indirectly.

If it were to import directly it would be possible to import more from Malaysia.

He was speaking to reporters after a meeting with Tunisia's Foreign Minister Said Ben Mustapha at Wisma Tani today.

Said later paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Said hoped Malaysia, which has been importing about 200 metric tonnes of rock phosphate fertiliser from Tunisia since 1994, would increase such imports.

Tunisia is the third largest fertiliser producer in the world.

"Rock phosphate is a natural fertiliser and can be used for direct application in acidic soil which makes it very good for Malaysian soil and can be used for growing rubber, oil palm, pepper and rice," said Said.

Sulaiman said the Ministry would inform the relevant people, particularly those in the rice and pepper growing sectors.

"We will study the possibility. If we find it suitable for padi and the price is competitive we will consider importing more phosphate," he said.

Along with pepper, Tunisia imported rubber and palm oil from Malaysia. His country was also identifying other areas to expand co-operation including tourism and wood products, Said said.

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