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Pig farmers advised to seek new trade

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PORT DICKSON, Sun. - MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said he expected about 40 to 60 per cent of pig farmers hit by the recent Viral Encephalitis outbreak to leave the business.

Dr Ling said the world trend had shown that pig rearing was not a safe industry as the farmers were faced with many problems especially with the onset of diseases such as VE.

"Following the recent VE outbreak in Taiwan, it had been observed that 40 per cent of the pig farmers there had left the business altogether.

"The pig farming industry there had been hit by at least three VE outbreaks in the past decade and everytime this happens, the farmers lose everything."

Dr Ling said the group of German veterinary experts who were in Malaysia during the VE outbreak had indicated that even with proper protection, they expected VE outbreaks to occur at pig farms here once every six years.

"My advice to farmers here is that they should not regard pig farming as the only industry to make money; they should start looking at alternatives.

"In my recent trip to China with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, I noted that turtle soup was very popular there and I realised that this was one industry that our farmers could venture into."

He said similarly the rearing of frog or "padi chicken" and Tilapia could also offer lucrative sources of income for former pig farmers as there was a large market for these in China and Japan.

Dr Ling was speaking to reporters after launching an entrepreneur course and motivation talk for women from VE-affected areas in the State here today.

He said recent widows of pig farmers and workers following the course could take up alternative farming ventures.

He added the MCA JE Fund which had sponsored the course would also arrange for loans and other form of assistance to participants if they wished to go into the new ventures.

Dr Ling said the MCA JE Fund was also willing to sponsor more such courses run by the Women's Institute of Management if and when the need arose.

"Pig farmers should realise that change is inevitable and they should learn to embrace it rather than reject it if they wished to progress.

"Besides farming activities, former Bukit Pelandok pig farmers or their widows can even take advantage of the hospitality industry in Port Dickson to launch into the restaurant business," Dr Ling said.

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