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Plan for co-ordinating council on agriculture

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - A co-ordinating council will be set up to ensure the agriculture sector grows at a more robust pace, Agriculture Minister Datuk Effendi Norwawi said today.

He added that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would head the council which will be established early next year.

The exercise was a strong indication of the importance of the agriculture sector's contribution to the economy, he told reporters after chairing his first post-Cabinet meeting here.

"The Prime Minister has impressed upon me that he wants to see the Third National Agriculture Policy implemented vigorously. His vision is to turn the sector into a major contributor to the economy, besides modernising it".

On Malaysia's food imports, he said his ministry would examine ways to reduce such imports.

"We need to identify the areas in which we have the competitive edge and develop them to be globally competitive. We can be real world class players in areas like biotechnology," he said.

He added that the NAP3 was a high quality plan which had been formulated locally and the agriculture sector was not short of knowledge and expertise.

The ministry was also willing to accept advice from other countries in this matter, especially in those areas where they had already done extensive research.

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