

17 JAN 2000

Effendi-Council

COUNCIL TO MONITOR NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL POLICY

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 17 (Bernama) -- A public-private sectors consultative council will be set up to supervise implementation of all major programmes under the National Agricultural Policy.

Agriculture Minister Datuk Effendi Norwawi said the council, proposed by his ministry, was expected to hold its first meeting in March.

The council, to be chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, would comprise experts and captains of the agro-based sector as well as to include all Menteri Besar and Chief Ministers.

"The council will also forge closer relationship with all the states to develop the agriculture sector in the country," he said after attending the signing for the establishment of the headquarters of International Centre for Living Aquatic Resources Management (Iclarm) here today.

The current third National Agricultural Policy (1998-2010) seeks to gradually transform the sector to meet the needs for food security as well as challenges in the globalised economy.

Effendi said there would also be a coordination committee which he would chair and to comprise of all state executive council members in charge of agriculture.

He said the committee would report to the consultative council.

Effendi said the ministry would organise a forum in March to create awareness about the vast investment potential in the agricultural sector.

He said the sector has not been given much importance in recent years and as a result the country had to spend some RM10 billion annually on food imports.

-- BERNAMA

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