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Kelantan-Agriculture

FEDERAL ALLOCATION OF RM108 MILLION FOR AGRICULTURE IN KELANTAN

KOTA BAHARU, June 19 (Bernama) -- The Federal government will set aside RM108 million to develop the agricultural sector in Kelantan with the cooperation of the state government.

Agriculture Minister Datuk Effendi Norwawi said the cooperation is aimed at turning Kelantan into a major food producer in efforts to make agriculture one of the main economic sectors of the country.

"The Agriculture Ministry and 12 of its agencies will be involved in this effort in Kelantan," he said after signing a memorandum of understanding for the establishment of a food production base between the Federal government and the state government here today.

The Kelantan state government was represented at the signing by Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat.

Effendi said RM58 million of the allocation will be used to finance commercial agricultural projects on idle land in the state aimed at improving the income of farmers.

He said another RM50 million will be used to establish a collection centre for all types of agricultural produce in the state in a bid to improve the marketing process.

Effendi said his ministry has also recently sought a RM1 billion allocation from the Finance Ministry to develop and improve the infrastructure facilities at the Tok Bali fish landing centre in Pasir Puteh.

"The Tok Bali fishing landing centre will be made the most modern and biggest in the east coast," he said.

"Catches landed at the centre now amount to 50,000 tonnes a year and we aim to see this increased to 100,000 tonnes a year."

The MOU signed today was the fourth by the ministry with previous MOUs signed being with the state governments of Johor, Kedah and Perlis.

Nik Aziz, meanwhile, thanked the Federal government for assisting the Kelantan PAS state government in developing the agricultural sector.

"I would like to especially thank Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for broaching the idea of coordinated action involving the Federal government, state government and private sector," he said.

"Such an effort is expected to greatly benefit not only farmers and agricultural project operators but the government as well."

Nik Aziz hoped youths in the state would not shun employment opportunities in the agricultural sector which now offers lucrative returns with the introduction of modern technology.

-- BERNAMA

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