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Focus-Agriculture

MAHA 2000: AN EXPO TO SPOTLIGHT NATURE'S BOUNTY

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KUALA LUMPUR: Various efforts have been made by the government to develop and expand the agriculture industry in the country in line with the New Agriculture Policy to make Malaysia the centre of excellence in that field.

The latest is a special agriculture exhibition to display the country's varied bountiful harvest as well as the latest sophisticated technology and innovations at Stadium Putra Bukit Jalil here, from July 22 to 30.

Jointly organised with a private company, Syarikat Happening Events Sdn Bhd, the expo is billed as the "Malaysian Agriculture, Horticulture and Agrotourism Show" or "MAHA 2000".

Apart from the technology, goods and produce from throughout the country, the exhibition is incorporating a huge tourism promotion, specifically, agro-tourism.

Head of the Public Relations Unit of the Agriculture Ministry, Nur Ashikin Othman said MAHA is hoped to be the starting point for efforts to strengthen and enhance the agriculture sector to face the stiff competition posed by globalisation.

It is also meant to be a guide to the efforts to overcome the issue of food security and improve agricultural output in order to export, and hence trim the hefty food import bills.

She said MAHA 2000 can also be a channel for the decision and policy-makers of the sector to exchange views and experience, in addition to the exposure and business opportunities so that the agriculture produce and agro-based products can be better known and exported.

#### POTENTIAL AND INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Nur Ashikin said the organisers hoped that through the expo, there could be new links-up and synergy to benefit agriculture and tourism, especially in providing a new impetus and new image to the sector.

Comprehensive information on the potential and investment opportunities in the agriculture sector or those based on agriculture, would be available at the expo.

Those expected to take part are intellectuals, researchers, scientists, international representatives and those from non-governmental organisations (NGO).

The expo itself will feature the products and produce of members of the associations for horticulture, floriculture, herbs, aquarium fish and chambers of commerce.

To enliven the expo, there would be shows and auctions of live animals.

She said MAHA 2000 would provide the avenue for the ministry, departments and government agencies to display their work, agricultural produce and products.

Some of them would exhibit their findings and innovations from their research and development (R&D).

The latest/new products found like herbs, or new potential like bio-technology would be displayed at the expo to attract the participation of the private sector in that sub-sector.

#### MEETING PLACE FOR INVESTORS & PARTNERS

Nur Ashikin believed that the presence of the various participants would add importance to MAHA 2000 because it will be a meeting place for

investors and their partners, suppliers and distributors of products and technology, not to mention the opportunity to develop networking.

The MAHA 2000 exhibition would be divided into three main segments, that is, a commodities and industry developments section, a segment displaying new findings from research work and lastly, an exhibition of new industrial products.

The first segment would focus on plants, fisheries, animal husbandry and agro-tourism.

The second would introduce new findings by local scientists and researchers in agriculture.

She said MAHA would highlight the tourism attractions in the country, particularly agro-tourism and the different cultures and traditions found in the country.

#### FARMERS DAY

MAHA 2000 is also timed to mark the 25th Farmers Day celebration and there would be fruits galore or a fruit festival.

The celebration is to appreciate the role played by farmers and fishermen in producing food for the nation.

Both MAHA 2000 and the Farmers Day celebration would be launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on July 22. -- Bernama

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