

17 JUL 2001

Effendi-Exporter (With Pix)

MINISTRY PROBES PRAWN EXPORTER FOR BRINGING DISREPUTE

KUALA LUMPUR, July 17 (Bernama) -- An investigation is underway against a local exporter whose prawn consignment was recently rejected by an importing country for not meeting international quality and safety standards.

Agriculture Minister Datuk Effendi Norwawi said the exporter concerned had not only disgraced all Malaysian prawn exporters but also tarnished Malaysia's image as well.

While he did not name the company concerned or the country which rejected its prawn consignment, Effendi all the same expressed regret over the firm's conduct.

"In the interest of the nation, all foodstuff exporters should strive to ensure that their products meet international quality standards," he said.

Effendi was speaking to reporters after officiating at a pre-launch of the 2001 national-level farmers, livestock-breeders and fishermen's day celebration here today.

The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is scheduled to launch the event proper at Ladang Infoternak in Sungai Siput on Aug 11.

Effendi said to avoid recurrence of such rejection of foodstuff originating from Malaysia the private sector and agencies under his ministry would have to intensify cooperation.

The ministry already has in place a consultative committee to exchange ideas on application of modern farming and related technologies, he said.

Similar state-level committees have also been activated besides those at offices at all agencies under his ministry's purview, he said.

He said the private sector would also get the opportunity to promote latest agricultural innovations among farmers, breeders and fishermen during the week-long celebration.

This year's celebration carries the theme " modern farming builds the nation."

-- BERNAMA

AKT ZS RYN