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Workshop on automation for agriculture next month

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Fourteen experts from the United States, Europe, Japan, New Zealand and Malaysia will give talks at a workshop on automation for agriculture from March 13 to 15.

The SMART Farming II workshop is jointly organised by the Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysian Centre of Remote Sensing, Malaysian Society of Agricultural Engineers and the Agriculture and Food Engineering Technical Division of the Institute of Engineers Malaysia.

The workshop is in line with a statement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad recently about making Malaysia an exporting country of surplus agricultural produce.

Smart Farming essentially implies the application of Scientific knowledge in the production of Marketable agricultural produce using Advance and Reliable technologies for Timely operation (SMART).

The talks will be on topics such as Variable Rate Technologies, Remote Sensing and Supporting Technologies, Yield Monitoring Technologies, Precision Farming, Energy Demand Mapping Technologies, Robotics, Automation, Knowledge Engineering and K-economy.

According to the head of the Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering UPM Dr Azmi Yahya last year there was a dire need to increase food production at a competitive cost to reduce the RM15 billion on food imports.

"Recent census statistic have also concurred with the fact that Malaysian households, on the whole spend a substantial amount of their income on food. It can be seen from the recent economic events, that any country hoping to survive should place priority to feed the population without having to pay a hefty price."

He added that inadequate technological input and diminishing labour are major problems.

Introducing new engineering technologies in the agricultural sector "will enhance productivity."

"The greater awareness and demands of modern society for quality food that coincides with environmental preservation dictates the use of superior technology," explains Azmi.

The workshop will be held in Putrajaya. For more information please contact 03-89486101 ext: 2018/2047. Information can also be obtained at <http://www.eng.upm.edu.my/kpb> or e-mail wiji@eng.upm.edu.my or azmiy@eng.upm.edu.my.

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