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Effendi-Malaysia Best

DR M TO LAUNCH "MALAYSIA BEST" PRODUCTS NEXT MONTH - DR EFFENDI

PASIR PUTEH, May 7 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will launch next month the "Malaysia Best" products introduced by the Agriculture Ministry for local and overseas markets.

Agriculture Minister Datuk Dr Effendi Norwawi said the products would consist of high quality fruits and vegetables.

He said the move was to convince consumers that products labelled "Malaysia Best" were of good quality and safe for consumption.

"For a start, we'll introduce the products locally before they are exported, including to Japan," he told reporters after visiting the Gong Kulim collection centre complex here yesterday.

He said fruits and vegetables would be allowed to use the "Malaysia Best" tagging if they complied with the stipulated conditions.

Among the conditions are grading according to the standards set by the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (Mardi) and must be pesticide-free.

Initially, efforts would be focused on five fruits -- pineapples, papayas, mangoes, starfruits and honeydew -- for the "Malaysia Best" tagging, he said.

Dr Effendi said the ministry would also introduce a direct marketing system for local fruits to be sent directly to supermarkets in the country.

The fruits would be from five collection centres which have been granted pioneer status, he said.

He, however, said the ministry would have to fine-tune the system before implementing it nationwide.

He said the ministry hoped to implement the system at 258 farmers' organisations throughout the country in efforts to trim down the huge annual food import bill by the year 2010.

-- BERNAMA

WM SHR TS