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Effendi-Nucleus

ORCHARD OWNERS URGED TO JOIN NUCLEUS PROGRAMME

MELAKA, May 30 (Bernama) -- Orchard owners have been urged to participate in the Agriculture Ministry's nucleus programme to ensure their orchards are managed in an organised way using the latest technology.

Its Minister Datuk Dr Effendi Norwawi said under this programme, orchard owners could also earn more as their farm produce was marketed together with that from other orchards.

"The Agriculture Department will advise on modern technology management while the Malaysian Agriculture Research and Development Institute (Mardi) will assist on research to boost quality and yield."

Effendi told reporters this after attending a briefing on the progress of the Sungai Udang Satellite Farm here today.

Marketing of produce from the orchards in the cluster programme would be handled by the Federal Agriculture Marketing Authority (Fama), he said.

On opportunities from the RM1 billion fund for farmers in the economic stimulus package, Effendi said: "Loans can be made through Bank Pertanian and with the nucleus orchard programme, farmers can increase their income many times."

He said the ministry would also meet its agencies next week to identify potential projects to be developed under the RM2.86 billion allocation which could benefit some 400,000 farmers, fishermen and livestock breeders nationwide.

Effendi said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed would launch the Satellite Farm concept in July and this involved selling farm, fisheries and livestock produce in one area.

"There will be six satellite farms comprising 500 hectares and approximately 300 farmers in Melaka, Selangor, Johor, Kedah, Perak and Pahang," he said.

He said apart from getting fresh produce in one area, the satellite farms could be tourist attractions as well as weekend recreation spots for families.

-- BERNAMA

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