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The place to be for flora, fauna study

THE Melaka Tropical Fruit Farm in Sungai Udang is a place not to be missed for those interested in flora and fauna and the rearing of animals in a systematic manner.

The farm, spread over a 69.2ha plot, houses a variety of animals and herbal plants.

It is run by the State Agriculture Department and Syarikat Pembangunan Pertanian Melaka Sdn Bhd (SPPM), a subsidiary of Yayasan Melaka, which is the State Government's education arm.

This Sungai Udang farm is the second of its kind in the State.

The first, opened by former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, is sited in Selandar, Jasin.

However, the Sungai Udang farm is closer to Malacca town, which is only 30km away.

Close to RM2 million has been spent by the Agriculture Department and SPPM to upgrade facilities at the farm, opened by Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam in November last year.

At the entrance, one would be greeted with a beautifully-crafted gateway, besides shops selling various plants.

Visitors have an option of driving through the park or taking a tram ride, which would take them through padi fields and see how it is planted.

A more worthwhile visit to the farm is during the fruit season.

An agriculture museum is also located nearby where visitors can view the traditional methods used to process padi and equipment used for its cultivation.

Other products on display include various ulam, coconuts, rubber trees, vegetable plots and tropical fruits like rambutan, durian and mango.

The animals reared here include goats, sheep, rabbits, chicken and ostrich.

Mohd Ali said the farm was set up to show that farming could be turned into a profitable venture if done systematically.

"It is also to enable visitors who have never seen certain types of plants to view them closely.

"The public can also be educated on certain items produced for consumption," he said.

This project, opined Mohd Ali, would go a long way to help boost agro-tourism in the State.

He added although Malacca was known for its historical attractions, the State Government strove to introduce other attractions for tourists.

A man-made lake has also been built at the centre of the park, surrounded by 11 chalets.

It is learnt the SPPM has utilised land development and concepts adopted from Thailand, Indonesia and Australia in planting the trees, vegetables and herbs.

Some of the trees and vegetables use the hydroponic method, which can be seen at some of the vegetable patches.

Visiting hours are from 9am to 6pm with the entrance fee set at RM4 for adults and RM2 for children.