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Modernising agricultural sector

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PEKAN, Wed. - The Agriculture Ministry will launch its nationwide modern agricultural transformation programme so that local farmers, breeders and fishermen could be on par with their counterparts in developed countries.

Minister Datuk Dr Mohd Effendi Norwawi said the programme would help free those in the industry of third parties when marketing their products.

This means that their products will be sent directly to supermarkets and hypermarkets.

However for this to materialise, Effendi said, farmers, breeders and fishermen must ensure that their produce were of high quality.

"We have completed the transformation programme on paper and are waiting for the right time to implement it. This might be done in a month or two.

"The new system will see the optimum use of modern equipment and technology by our target groups. This will enable them to commercialise their ventures," he said at the Peninsular Malaysia Agricultural Assistant Social Services programme dinner at the Pekan District Council Hall last night.

Also present were Cuepacs president Datuk N. Siva Subramaniam, Pahang State Assembly Speaker Datuk Wan Razali Wan Mahussin, State Agriculture director Datuk Saleha Ibrahim and Peninsular Malaysia Agricultural Assistants Union (PMAAU) president Norasid Othman.

Some 275 PMAAU members in the country, including Sabah and Sarawak, took part in the five-day programme which required them to stay with farmers, breeders and fishermen in the Pekan district and help implement the programmes outlined by the Ministry and obtain feedback on the problems faced in the sector.

He said the modernisation programme was in line with the call by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to see local farmers, breeders and fishermen on par with their counterparts in developed countries.

"Our main aim is to bring them out of poverty," he said.

Effendi said to ensure the programme would be a success, those in the agricultural sector must be willing to accept changes and transfer of technology to be introduced by the Ministry.

"The people involved in the sector should look at their venture as a commercial business and not a part time job."

Effendi also called on the agricultural assistants to be more proactive and to help convince the people in the sector to accept the changes in the industry.

"To do this they should acquire more knowledge and keep abreast with the latest technology in the sector," he said.