

Prepare for subsidy reduction, farmers told
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Farmers in the country must be prepared for a reduction in government subsidy in the agricultural sector, Deputy Agriculture and Agro-based Industries Minister Mohd Johari Baharom said today.

Farmers could not expect to enjoy the subsidy forever because the time would come when the government could no longer afford to provide any subsidy, he told Bernama after handing over mechanical ploughs donated by Agrobank for flood victims in Kodiang, Kedah.

The reduction of subsidy was in accordance with the subsidy rationalisation programme of the government which was being implemented in stages, he said.

"From now on, farmers must decide how to buy pesticides, fertiliser, seedlings and such. They cannot expect the government to take care of all their needs," he said, adding that the money saved from the subsidy reduction could be used to implement flood mitigation or irrigation projects to raise agricultural productivity.

He said the government now subsidised about RM2,500 per hectare of padi.

At the event, Mohd Johari handed over 14 mechanical ploughs sponsored by Agrobank at a cost of RM100,000 to nine Area Farmers Organisations in Kedah.

Earlier, Agrobank managing director Ahmad Said said the bank had rescheduled the loan repayments totalling RM2.614 million of 667 farmers in Kedah who were affected by the floods last month.

- Bernama

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