

# Agriculture is more than just producing food, says PM

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The agriculture sector goes beyond the production of food to encompass the pharmaceutical and herbal medicine sectors, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

“My picture of agriculture is not confined to the mere production of food. I also consider the aspects that are linked to the agro-based sectors. Today, many agricultural products have become the basis for other industries, such as biotechnology and nanotechnology.

“Therefore, the scope of the

Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry Ministry is wide, encompassing the pharmaceutical, biotechnological, medicinal sectors and so on,” he said in an interview on RTM on Monday night.

Abdullah dismissed any notion that agriculture was not a dynamic sector and one that could not achieve growth. He said the Netherlands, which was only the size of Pahang, was the world's second biggest producer of food products.

The sector did not draw greater interest because much

of the land under agriculture was in less developed areas such as northern Peninsular Malaysia and the east coast, he said.

“Coincidentally, these areas are largely populated by Malays who, comparatively, have yet to attain the desired targets,” he said.

“The bumiputras of today have improved tremendously from those of yesteryear. We do not want a situation in Malaysia where progressive and successful bumiputras are still seen as a backward group.” — Bernama