

Agro fair a huge success, PM wants it held yearly

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SERDANG: The Malaysian Agriculture, Horticulture and Agro-tourism Show (Maha) 2006 may be held yearly.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said it was time that this was considered as the show had proved to be a success.

"If possible, Maha should be exhibited every year. After this, the organisers will evaluate the success of the show so we can know what products are ready for commercialisation, and what is the level of our progress."

The prime minister, who launched the biennial show on Nov 21, said this after an unscheduled visit to the exhibition yesterday.

He said that agriculture had proved profitable, in line with Maha's theme this year of "Agriculture is Business".

He spent five hours touring the 800 booths at the fair, including the fish pond and padi field, besides inquiring about the various agro-based products and methods used in their production.

Speaking to reporters later, Abdullah said he was pleased with Maha's success.

It had also been well-received by the public, judging from the number of visitors.

"Maha can attract tourists, investors and manufacturers who are looking for new products to commercialise.

"This year, I can see that the products have improved in terms of quality, and there is a bigger number of booths. The good reception from the public also shows that there is growing interest in agriculture and the agro-based industry."

Abdullah said the sector could be further developed to become an engine of economic growth.

"It is already a source of new wealth, of business, and additional income for many," Abdullah said.

The prime minister suggested that in future shows, a separate booth be allocated to display Malaysian agro-based products that had been successfully exported.

"Now all the products are mixed up and, unless you ask, you won't know which ones are already being exported. But there are many which are sold overseas. Perhaps there

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could be improvements on the explanation and presentation of these products," he said.

The biennial show is organised by the Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Ministry, with the co-operation of the Federal Agriculture and Marketing Authority, and the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation.

About 700,000 people had visited the show as of yesterday. The show, which was extended, ends today.