

**PM To Launch Agro Food Policy Soon**  
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MELAKA, Oct 18 (Bernama) -- The National Agro Food Policy will be launched soon, covering a period from 2011 to 2020 and focusing on ensuring the agriculture sector continues to drive the economy through exports.

Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Deputy Minister Datuk Chua Tee Yong said the cabinet had approved the policy which outlined four strategies to ensure adequate supply of food and to boost the value added of food products.

"The policy, which will complement and strengthen the supply chain and provide trained and knowledgeable manpower, will be launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak," he said after opening the National Horticulture 2011 Conference, here today.

The conference, which seeks to further develop the agriculture sector and the horticulture industry, was the fourth since it was first organised in Kuala Lumpur in 1999. It was attended by 220 local and foreign participants.

Chua said under the policy the government would give serious attention to the national food supply and to reduce dependency on imports and avoid shortages in the event of natural disasters.

According to Chua, the core of the policy was to produce enough food for the country other than generating national income through commerce and marketing.

He also said the agriculture sector continued to contribute significantly to the national economic development, totalling 7.8 per cent to the Gross Domestic Product last year or RM27.5 billion.

The contribution of the horticulture industry to the national economic development was increasing each year with the production of fruits going up from 1,027 million tonnes in 2000 to 1,875 tonnes last year, he said.

He said the production of vegetables in the same period had also increased from 511,000 tonnes to 900,000 tonnes while the production of the floriculture industry went up to 80,400 tonnes from 9,725 tonnes.

The government would provide more funds for innovations and new technology needed to develop the agriculture sector, he added.

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