

**UPM's Role In Food Security Crucial - Muhyiddin
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SERDANG, Sept 30 (Bernama) -- Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) must play an important role in helping the government guarantee food security for the country, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said.

Food security was a national issue because many government initiatives had been implemented to ensure self sufficiency in several food components, he said.

"As a Minister of Agriculture and Agro-based Industry earlier, I outlined several strategies and plans to ensure that the country is capable of producing a reasonable, and if possible, sufficient amount of needed food items.

"Five years there (at the ministry), and I think, until today, the target is yet to be met. This is a problem not only in our country but also at the global level," he said when speaking in conjunction with his working visit to UPM, here.

Hence, he said, the role of UPM was critical and important in helping to carry out research to modernise the agriculture sector.

Muhyiddin also said it was a major challenge to UPM to assist so that the agriculture sector should be able to sustain itself permanently.

"Could the agriculture sector be modernised to boost output? Although it involves a big expenditure, in the long term it is more economical and can have high output," he said.

Muhyiddin also said that the role of the Veterinary Hospital must be expanded because the existing expertise was capable of expanding the national livestock sector.

"It is hoped that the production of meat could be increased in the future, because currently the national meat output is around 80 per cent. The rest has to be imported," he said.

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