

Muhyiddin Wants NAFAS To Set Up A Farmers Bank

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By Abdul Aziz Harun

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 8 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin urged the National Farmers Organization (NAFAS) to set up a Farmers Bank to strengthen the financial status of farmers organizations in the country.

Muhyiddin said the savings of the Area Farmers Organizations (PPK) and State Farmers Organizations (PPN) can be uniformly managed by Nafas through the bank.

The agriculture based cooperative model which succeeded in owning a bank called Rabobank in Holland is successful model that Nafas can follow in the country, he said.

"The structure and direction of the Farmers Organization made up of Nafas, PPN and PPK that has 770,000 farmers as members throughout the country, is a complete network that is very unique.

"The progress of the three stages involving NAFAS, PPN and PPK must support and complement each other. The role and responsibilities at every stage must be scrutinized, especially when planning and implementing economic activities," he said in his speech when opening the 38th NAFAS General Assembly here Tuesday night.

Muhyiddin hoped NAFAS would be more proactive to explore opportunities and marketing strategies through joint venture initiatives in the production and distribution of livestock.

"Joint ventures can create a wide distribution network that will offer Bumiputera entrepreneurs opportunities to dominate the production and distribution in the agriculture industry," he said.

He said farmers organizations must always be alert and able to adapt themselves to changes that take place around them and move as an entity that is both professional and business oriented in line with the motto of 'Pertanian adalah Perniagaan' or agriculture is business.

"If we look at cooperatives in Japan, Taiwan and Australia, they are able to produce farmers who become millionaires by marketing their products worldwide.

"Famous agriculture marketing cooperatives like Sunkist and Blue Diamond are excellent planners, act quickly, grab opportunities and brave enough to take risks to explore international markets.

"So, I want the planning and marketing of Farmers Organizations to be headed by experts who know the trade and marketing strategies well," he said.

Muhyiddin said Malaysia need to elevate its status to become self-sufficient so as not to be over dependant on imported food products.

"We should also not depend on countries that constantly face floods and disasters. So, the

main focus must be to increase food production with the land, water and human resources available and according to the climatic changes," he said.

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