

# Ministry to set up task force for consolidation of paddy fields

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KOTA BHARU, Sept 27 -- The Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-based Industry has set up a task force comprising top officials involving various government agencies to realise the intention of consolidating paddy fields.



Its minister Datuk Salahuddin Ayub said the task force would conduct an in-depth study and identify the appropriate model to be applied following Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's proposal.

"We already have a model for us to put forward by the end of this year and which we can apply for a land development like this.

"We hope that when applied, it will add value to the farmers especially in the area of land management," he told reporters after opening a carnival at the Kota Bahru Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA) Training Institute, here today.

Also present were FAMA chairman, Ishak Ismail and Kemubu Agriculture Development Authority (KADA) chairman Datuk Husam Musa.

On Sept 10, Dr Mahathir said the problem of poverty affecting the paddy farmers could only be solved if they were willing to accept the method of incorporating their paddy fields to cultivate them as a farm estate.

The prime minister said learning from the successful consolidation of the rubber and oil palm lands, future paddy field owners would be able to undertake large-scale paddy cultivation by incorporating agricultural expertise and skills.

Commenting on the matter, Salahuddin said the Muda Agricultural Development Authority (MADA) and KADA would be given an important role in how the consolidation concept would work, adding that the ministry would ensure that the B40 group was not left out.

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