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## MAFI urged to expand cultivation of IS21 paddy seed variety

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*Datuk Ahmad Amzad Hashim*

KUALA TERENGGANU – The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries (MAFI) is urged to expand the cultivation of new high-tech paddy seed, IS21 to increase the country's padi production.

Deputy Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Ahmad Amzad Hashim said currently, only 32,000 hectares or six per cent of the country's total paddy cultivation area was planted with IS21 padi variety developed by the Malaysian Nuclear Agency.

"Currently, the self-sufficiency level (SSL) of the country's rice production is around 70 per cent. "Therefore, it is very important for the country to increase its paddy production immediately to meet the needs of the people and avoid dependence on foreign imports," he said after handing over the IS21 padi seeds to the Kuala Terengganu Farmers' Organisation here today.

A total of 200 bags of paddy seeds were donated to 50 farmers in Kuala Terengganu in an effort to increase their production and income.

Apart from having a high level of resistance to unpredictable weather and crop diseases, the IS21 seed also has a high potential to provide high yield and increase farmers' income as it could produce rice up to 10 tonnes per hectare if managed according to the guidelines recommended by the government.