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Bolstering food security with new technologies from MAFI-MOSTI cooperation

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Collaboration between MAFI and MOSTI could yield new technologies needed to strengthen the country's food security apart from ensuring sufficient food supply, MAFI Minister, Datuk Seri Ronald Kiandee said. - Astro AWANI

KUALA KANGSAR: Collaboration between the Agriculture and Food Industries Ministry (MAFI) and the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry (MOSTI) could yield new technologies needed to strengthen the country's food security apart from ensuring sufficient food supply.

MAFI Minister, Datuk Seri Ronald Kiandee said the application of technology in the production of food such as the internet of things (IoT) and artificial intelligence (AI) are important for the viability of food supply for the benefit of Malaysians in future.

"Even if a plot of land is small, the production of food is still possible by using the best technologies to grow vegetables and fruits.

"We are confident of moving towards modern agriculture via the synergy of both ministries apart from the involvement of state governments and the private sector which could indirectly reduce dependence on food import.

"We have to reduce our food import including rice, fruits and vegetables and should instead maximise available capacity to export our produce to other countries," he said after visiting the Kuala Kangsar Permanent Agro Market (PTK) and the Agrofood Marketing Centre of the Federal Agricultural Authority (FAMA) in Manong.

Also present were Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Saarani Mohamad, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Special Functions) cum Kuala Kangsar MP, Datuk Mastura Mohd Yazid, state Plantation, Agriculture and Food Industry Committee chairman Razman Zakaria and FAMA director-general Datuk Zainal Abidin Yang Razalli.

Ronald added that efforts by the ministry and the agencies involved to ensure sufficient food in the country would not be affected by modern agriculture such as hydroponics.

In this regard, Saarani said the state government is prepared to increase the number of agrofood centres in the state apart from the one in Manong, Kuala Kangsar to improve the income of local residents.

"Agriculture needs new methods and technologies which do not require a large area. What is important is that the produce could be marketed by villagers. This is an important network to create food supply hubs and ensure sufficient food for security.

"We want to make Perak as the largest food producer. I am confident it could be carried out after discussions with MAFI and MOSTI. It can be a success as the Perak State Agricultural Development Corporation (SADC) has carried out farming projects for young agro farmers," he said.

Meanwhile, Mastura said the centre had fulfilled the dreams of the people of Kuala Kangsar as a hub for various agricultural products that had an impact on the surrounding community, especially youth who want to be involved in agriculture.

Through a press release, the FAMA Agro-Food Marketing Centre in Manong, Kuala Kangsar said the only such centre in Perak, has been upgraded on four acres of land as a business model and reference centre for the marketing of technological agricultural products.

The development of this centre can directly provide opportunities and exposure to the youth on the latest technology in the agricultural sector as well as optimise the use of idle lands owned by the government by applying the concept of IoT that is using fertigation, hydroponics and aquaponics in one area.

This project is also a manifestation of the government to optimise the use of idle and undeveloped land owned by the federal government and Malay Reserve land leased for agricultural or business projects.

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