



**LAPORAN LIPUTAN MEDIA HARIAN  
ISNIN 23 DISEMBER 2019**

<b>BIL</b>	<b>TAJUK KERATAN AKHBAR</b>	<b>KEMENTERIAN / JABATAN / AGENSI</b>
1.	MALYSIAN AGRICULTURE SUCCESS MUCH TO BE DESIRED, CORPORATE, THE EDGE -56,57	KEMENTERIAN PERTANIAN DAN INDUSTRI ASAS TANI (MOA)
2.	MAQIS RAMPAS AYAM BEKU DIBAWA MASUK DUA BERANAK, SINAR NEGERI KELANTAN, SH -33	JABATAN PERKHIDMATAN KUARANTIN PEMERIKSAAN MALAYSIA (MAQIS)
3.	PENGHANTARAN IKAN KE NEGERI TERJEJAS BANJIR DIPERTINGKAT, NASIONAL, BH -14	LEMBAGA KEMAJUAN IKAN MALAYSIA (LKIM)
4.	LKIM ARAH TAMBAH PENGHANTARAN BEKALAN IKAN KE NEGERI TERJEJAS BANJIR, NASIONAL, SH -8	
5. 6.	SANGKAR KOSONG SEJAK NOVEMBER, SINAR NEGERI PAHANG, SH -30 TACKLING DOMESTIC FOOD PRODUCTION ISSUES, RISING COST OF LIVING, NEWS/BUSINESS, NST -21	LAIN-LAIN

UKKMOA

UNIT KOMUNIKASI KORPORAT  
KEMENTERIAN PERTANIAN & INDUSTRI ASAS TANI  
(UNTUK EDARAN DALAMAN MOA, JABATAN DAN AGENSI SAHAJA)

Headline	Malaysian agriculture success much to be desired		
MediaTitle	The Edge		
Date	23 Dec 2019	Color	Full Color
Section	Corporate	Circulation	25,910
Page No	56,57	Readership	77,730
Language	English	ArticleSize	593 cm <sup>2</sup>
Journalist	ASHRAF SHAHARUDIN	AdValue	RM 10,210
Frequency	Weekly	PR Value	RM 30,630



## Malaysian agriculture success much to be desired

A new World Bank report, *Agricultural Transformation and Inclusive Growth – the Malaysian Experience*, deems the story of Malaysian agriculture a success, implying little room for improvement. However, this narrative is not likely to be taken too seriously by better-informed observers who view various aspects of Malaysian agriculture as leaving much to be desired.

Lack of attention to the sector for decades is hardly seen as benign neglect. The sector's contribution to national output has been growing rather modestly for many years, especially in the 1990s, reflecting slow productivity growth.

Farmers, especially those growing rice, are still among the poorest Malaysians, while regional inequalities as well as the urban-rural gap remain troubling. With the current government's professed interest in turning agriculture around, a more balanced, even critical, report could have provided useful guidance for reform.

The report highlights agriculture's role as a major source of Malaysia's foreign exchange earnings, long promoted all over the world by the World Bank through its policy advice and conditionalities.

In recent decades, agricultural export earnings have largely been from oil palm, accounting for three quarters of cultivated land, making crop diversification to mitigate the risks of monoculture a major challenge.

### Governance

The Malaysian government's institutional set-up — with two ministries, the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-based Industry (MOA) and the Ministry

BY ASHRAF  
SHAHARUDIN AND  
JOMKI R WAME  
SUNDARAM

of Primary Industries (MPI), responsible for agriculture — has not helped close the gap between tree cash crops and food crops, or between large plantations and smallholdings.

Such arrangements have also not been effectively supportive of efforts to improve farmer incomes — for example, farmers need to deal with multiple agencies under different ministries to integrate farming such as by breeding livestock on tree crop farm land. Beyond administrative hassle, such ministerial arrangements imply different and potentially conflicting policies, priorities and objectives.

Additionally, the Ministry of Rural Development and the Ministry of Economic Affairs (which oversees land settlement, rehabilitation and smallholders under Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA), Felera Bhd and Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority) have their own priorities and agendas, while most states, especially Sabah and Sarawak, have their own agricultural ministers or executive committee members.

With growing concerns over sustainability, food security, nutrition, rural development and native customary rights, the agricultural sector would benefit from more comprehensive and coherent policies, implementation and enforcement.

### Agricultural labour

Although progressive agricultural transformation implies adoption of labour-saving technologies, the report avoids discussing the all-too-obvious elephants in the room — agricultural wage labour and the impact of heavy reliance on undocumented foreign workers.

The former human resources minister estimated the number of undocumented foreign labour in Malaysia at around 4.5 million, about double the number of documented workers. Although agriculture's share of employment has been declining over the years, the sector is said to have employed the biggest share (27% in 2017) of documented foreign labour in Malaysia. Meanwhile, many more undocumented foreign workers are employed in agriculture.

The easy availability of cheap foreign workers who are willing to take 3D (demeaning, dirty and dangerous) jobs not only depresses agricultural wages, it also disincentivises investment in agricultural mechanisation, discourages youthful participation in agriculture and depresses working conditions for the entire labour force in Malaysia.

Nevertheless, ostensibly as a short-term measure to tackle the shortage of agricultural workers, in 2019, the government reduced the extension levy for foreign workers, which is likely to further slow labour productivity growth in the long run.

### Agricultural subsidies

Agricultural subsidies and their implementation need more careful review and critical examination to support progressive agricultural transformation. Instead, they have often been abused for clientelist political advantage and have inadvertently blocked agrarian progress.

While the specific objectives of various agricultural subsidies vary, they should enable farmers to become more productive, earn much more and become progressively less reliant on government subsidies.

The very considerable subsidies received by paddy farmers now is due to colonial era policies. On

Headline	Malaysian agriculture success much to be desired		
MediaTitle	The Edge		
Date	23 Dec 2019	Color	Full Color
Section	Corporate	Circulation	25,910
Page No	56,57	Readership	77,730
Language	English	ArticleSize	593 cm <sup>2</sup>
Journalist	ASHRAF SHAHARUDIN	AdValue	RM 10,210
Frequency	Weekly	PR Value	RM 30,630

the one hand, the British sought rice self-sufficiency to maximise net foreign exchange earnings from Malaya. On the other hand, to create a yeoman peasantry, Malay reservation land often had cultivation conditions attached, typically to grow only rice.

While almost half of the MOA's total budget over the years — approximately RM1.8 billion in 2019 — has gone to various rice subsidies, the industry has not seen major improvements. The subsidies received have disincentivised crop diversification while doing little to raise productivity. It has even encouraged farmers to misrepresent themselves to continue receiving subsidies.

A recent Auditor-General's report reveals that thousands of deceased paddy farmers, including many who had died more than a decade ago, received subsidies of RM57.92 million between 2016 and 2018. The report also pointed to problems of subsidy targeting, provision of poor-quality paddy seedlings and delays in fertiliser distribution.

Malaysia's food security policy ought to be more broadly reconsidered — to go beyond rice self-sufficiency — to better address the nation's very avoidable malnutrition problems, including micronutrient deficiencies and diet-related non-communicable diseases. For example, under-nutrition remains high in Malaysia, with stunting among chil-

dren below five years rising from 17.2% in 2006 to 20.7% in 2016.

A comprehensive national nutrition strategy is required while programme initiatives such as universal school feeding should not only address food security and nutrition but also improve children's socialisation and physical and mental development. Similarly, food procurement policies can promote healthy food agriculture and raise farmers' incomes.

While the World Bank report lauds the public sector's involvement in agriculture, little is said about needed reforms, the need for greater transparency and accountability. Scandals involving FELDA, National Farmers Association and National Feedlot Corporation to name a few, have not only cost billions of public funds but also undermined public confidence in government, politics and public policy. **E**

**Ashraf Shaharudin is a research associate at Khazanah Research Institute. Jomo Kwame Sundaram, a former economics professor and United Nations assistant secretary-general for economic development, is the recipient of the Wassily Leontief Prize for Advancing the Frontiers of Economic Thought and a member of the Economic Action Council**

## Maqis rampas ayam beku dibawa masuk dua beranak

**KOTA BHARU** - Jabatan Perkhidmatan Kuarantin dan Pemeriksaan Kelantan (Maqis) Kelantan merampas ayam sejuk beku dari Singapura tanpa sebarang dokumen sah yang cuba dibawa masuk dua beranak.

Pemeriksaan terhadap wanita berusia 55 tahun bersama anaknya itu dilakukan dengan kerjasama Jabatan Kastam Diraja Kelantan di Lapangan Terbang Sultan Ismail Petra (LTSIP) di sini petang kelmarin.

Pengarah Maqis Kelantan, Mohd Azam Yahya berkata,

anak lelaki wanita itu yang berusia 22 tahun membawa sebuah kotak yang dibalut plastik lut sinar dan mengandungi empat bungkusan plastik berisi ayam sejuk beku seberat tujuh kilogram dengan nilai RM100.

“Produk tersebut dipercayai dibawa masuk untuk kegunaan-nya sendiri tetapi penumpangnya warga tempatan terbabit gagal mengemukakan dokumen Permit Import yang dikeluarkan Maqis dan sijil kesihatan veterinar dari negara asal.

“Perbuatan penumpang ter-

sebut yang membawa keluaran pertanian tanpa melalui prosedur yang betul boleh menyebabkan kerugian besar kepada negara jika produk ini mempunyai penyakit berbahaya,” katanya ketika dihubungi di sini semalam.

Mohd Azam berkata, pada 20 November lalu juga pihaknya berjaya mematahkan cubaan membawa masuk pelbagai jenis hasil ikan dan daging termasuk sosej babi seberat 50 kilogram (kg) di lapangan terbang yang sama.

# Penghantaran ikan ke negeri terjejas banjir dipertingkatkan

Arahan pastikan bekalan cukup, elak berlaku kenaikan harga

Oleh Siti Azila Alias  
sitiiazila@bh.com.my

**Bukit Mertajam:** Persatuan Nelayan Kebangsaan (NEKMAT) dan persatuan nelayan negeri sudah diarahkan untuk meningkatkan penghantaran bekalan ikan ke negeri yang terjejas dalam memastikan stok mencukupi selain mengelakkan berlakunya peningkatan harga.

Pengerusi Lembaga Kemajuan Ikan Malaysia (LKIM), Muhammad Faiz Fadzil, mengakui banjir di beberapa negeri di Semenanjung, terutama di kawasan Pantai Timur menjejaskan industri perikanan serta mata pencarian nelayan.

Bagaimanapun, katanya, setakat ini bekalan masih mencukupi bagi menampung keperluan pengguna sepanjang tempoh berkenaan.

"LKIM sudah mengarahkan NEKMAT dan persatuan nelayan (negeri) serta pemain industri untuk meningkatkan bekalan



Muhammad Faiz bersama pelajar dari DUN Permatang Pasir dan Nelayan Ujung Batu di Permatang Pauh, Pulau Pinang, semalam. (Foto Ramdzan Masiam/BH)

ikan ke negeri yang terkesan dengan banjir.

"Bekalan ikan mencukupi tetapi kita berharap orang tengah dan peniaga supaya tidak menjadikan bencana banjir ini sebagai alasan untuk menaikkan harga," katanya kepada pemberita ketika ditemui pada Program Kembali ke Sekolah Anak-anak Dewan Undangan Negeri (DUN)

Permatang Pasir dan Anak-anak Nelayan Ujong Batu di sini, semalam.

Pada program itu, seramai 110 pelajar menerima bazar RM200 setiap seorang bagi membeli pakaian serta kelengkapan sekolah, dengan kerjasama pihak PETRONAS.

Mengulas lanjut, Muhammad Faiz berkata, LKIM tidak mempunyai kuasa untuk memantau

harga ikan kerana terletak di bawah tanggungjawab Kementerian Perdagangan Dalam Negeri dan Hal Ehwal Pengguna (KPDNKK).

Namun begitu, katanya, pihaknya sentiasa bekerjasama dengan agensi terbabit bagi memastikan harga ikan tidak dinaikkan sewenang-wenangnya demi kepentingan rakyat.

## LKIM arah tambah penghantaran bekalan ikan ke negeri terjejas banjir

**BUKIT MERTA JAM** - Lembaga Kemajuan Ikan Malaysia (LKIM) telah mengarahkan Persatuan Nelayan Kebangsaan (Nekmat) dan persatuan nelayan negeri supaya meningkatkan penghantaran bekalan ikan ke negeri-negeri terlibat banjir bagi memastikan bekalan mencukupi dan tidak berlaku peningkatan harga.

Pengerusi LKIM, Muhammad Faiz Fadzil berkata, pihaknya memberi jaminan stok bekalan ikan mencukupi untuk keperluan seluruh negara termasuk di beberapa negeri dilanda banjir seperti Johor, Pahang, Terengganu dan Kelantan.

"Banjir yang berlaku di beberapa negeri telah menjejaskan mata pencarian nelayan terlibat, namun setakat ini bekalan ikan mencukupi.

LKIM turut menyediakan bekalan menerusi stok simpanan ikan segar beku atau 'QFish' bagi memastikan bekalan ikan dalam negara sentiasa mencukupi terutama ketika musim tenkujuh," katanya selepas menghadiri Program Kembali ke Sekolah di sini semalam.

Pada program itu, seramai 110 murid sekolah kurang berkemampuan dari kawasan Dewan Un-



**Banjir yang berlaku di beberapa negeri telah menjejaskan mata pencarian nelayan terlibat, namun setakat ini bekalan ikan mencukupi."**

- Muhammad Faiz Fadzil

dangan Negeri (DUN) Permatang Pasir dan anak-anak nelayan Ujong Batu menerima peralatan sekolah dan baucar pembelian pakaian sekolah bernilai RM200 setiap seorang.

Dalam pada itu, Muhammad Faiz yang juga ADUN Permatang Pasir memberi amaran kepada peniaga dan orang tengah agar tidak mengambil kesempatan dengan menaikkan harga ikan di negeri terjejas banjir.

Katanya, LKIM telah membuat persediaan awal bagi memastikan bekalan ikan mencukupi termasuk menyimpan dan menambah stok ikan selain menyediakan bekalan ikan sejuk segar pada harga yang murah.

"Jadi, usaha yang kami buat ini akan dapat menstabilkan harga ikan. Harga

ikan ini bergantung kepada permintaan tapi apa saya boleh kata harga tidak akan naik sebab kami membuat persediaan awal bagi memastikan stok mencukupi. Jadi tidak timbul isu bekalan berkurangan sehingga harga ikan dinaikkan oleh orang tengah dan peniaga.

"Kami tidak ada satu punca kuasa untuk menetapkan harga ikan di pasaran jadi kami perlu bekerjasama dengan Kementerian Perdagangan Dalam Negeri dan Hal Ehwal Pengguna untuk memastikan tidak ada kenaikan harga mendadak," katanya.

Katanya, kerajaan juga mengambil langkah untuk menghadkan pengesportan ikan bagi memastikan bekalan dalam negara mencukupi terutama ketika musim perayaan. - Bernama

# Sangkar kosong sejak November

*Pengusaha ikan sangkar buat persediaan hadapi musim tengkujuh*

ROSLAWATI ROSEDI

TEMERLOH

**P**engusaha ikan sangkar di pesisir Sungai Pahang di sini melakukan pelbagai persediaan berdepan musim tengkujuh untuk mengelakkan kerugian lebih besar.

Selain mengosongkan sangkar mereka, pengusaha terlibat mengatak tali dan menggantikan tong rosak supaya sangkar mereka tidak mudah hanyut apabila dilanda banjir.

Seorang pengusaha,



MOHD SYAHIR

Khaidir Ahmad, 57, yang memiliki 50 sangkar di Kampung Lebak di sini berkata, dia sudah mengosongkan sangkar sejak November lalu.

Menurutnya, ia sebagai langkah berjaga-jaga kerana apabila arus deras ia tidak mudah hanyut.

"Saya akan mengisi balik benih ikan pada Januari nanti. Saya juga gantikan tali pengikat yang rosak," kata-



Khaidir menunjukkan sangkar miliknya yang telah dikosongkan sejak November lalu.

nya ketika ditemui di sini semalam.

Khaidir yang juga Pengerusi Persatuan Peniternak dan Peniaga Ikan Sangkar Temerloh Pahang (PPPISTP) berkata, ketika kejadian banjir pada tahun

2014 lalu, dia mengalami kerugian lebih RM1 juta dan kejadian itu dijadikan iktibar untuk lebih bersedia sedia berdepan setiap kali musim tengkujuh.

Katanya, buat masa ini bekalan ikan khususnya pa-

tin tidak terjejas walaupun pada musim tengkujuh kerana kebanyakan peniaga dan pemilik restoran telah membuat persediaan dengan bekalan stok masing-masing.

Sementara itu, seorang

lagi pengusaha, Mohd Syahir Hamka, 28, di Kampung Pangsenam berkata, dia juga telah melakukan persediaan sejak November lalu.

"Setakat ini tiada apa-apa yang berlaku. Buat masa ini, saya telah menggantikan tali dan melakukan pemeriksaan terhadap sangkar yang berpotensi rosak dengan mengalihkan terlebih dahulu supaya tidak hanyut.

"Selain itu ikatan tali ke pokok ditambahkan daripada tiga pokok ke enam pokok supaya lebih kukuh," katanya.

Mohd Syahir yang memiliki 42 sangkar terdiri pelbagai jenis ikan iaitu patin, tilapia, kerai dan lampam sejak tahun 2006 turut mengakui banjir pada tahun 2014 turut menenggelamkan kawasan gerai-gerai jualan ikan yang terletak berhampiran kawasan sangkar tersebut.

## CHALLENGES

# Tackling domestic food production issues, rising cost of living

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Transforming Malaysia into a net food exporter may not mean the country off the need for imports. Neither will it completely address the cost of living issue.

While challenges in food production require relevant policies and time, the cost of living, on the other hand, will need to be tackled by raising productivity and improving education to lift income levels, said Bank Negara Malaysia.

The central bank said Malaysia is self-sufficient for a considerable number of food items although its total import content for food of about 24 per cent is rather significant.

In reality, Malaysia produces enough for domestic consumption for many basic food items.

The impact of exchange rate movements explains only a fraction of food price changes and other factors may be equally, if not more, important, according to a Bank Negara article entitled "Food Imports and the Exchange Rate: More Than Meets the Eye".

For example, the exchange rate pass-through is estimated at 26

per cent for Indian mackerel fish prices, compared to eight per cent for apple prices.

This corroborates with the fact that there are other factors that affect food prices, such as labour, utilities, logistics, industry margins, market structure and other policies and regulations.

As such, caution should be exercised when citing the exchange rate as the main reason for rising food prices.

Since food items are globally traded commodities, global demand and supply are also important determinants of import prices. These fundamental factors serve to drive fluctuations in world food prices.

For example, prices of imported beef from India have been on an uptrend in recent years even though the ringgit had appreciated against the rupee.

Global prices for fish and seafood have also risen as supply tightened and demand grew.

Despite these challenges, the value of the ringgit against a trade-weighted basket of major trading partners' currencies has been stable, said Bank Negara.

"The problem of rising food prices has to be addressed comprehensively; reducing imports alone may not necessarily result in lower prices, especially when imported inputs are a significant component in the costs of producing food items domestically."

In addition, the lack of economies of scale may be an obstacle in achieving self-sufficiency in food production; in which case a more practical approach would be to import food items at a lower cost, it said.

"In light of the multifaceted layers involved in food production, the relevant domestic policies currently proposed are timely, which include diversifying import sources, streamlining regulations and modernising production and distribution technology."

Bank Negara said policies to raise productivity and improve education in lifting income levels are imperative for a more sustainable approach to address the cost of living.

"Focusing our efforts on getting the right policy mix to stimulate productive investment and employment creation, as well as modernising infrastructure, will go a long way in raising incomes and alleviating the cost of living," it said. **Bernama**



Global prices for fish and seafood have risen as supply tightens and demand grows, said Bank Negara Malaysia.