LAPORAN LIPUTAN MEDIA HARIAN
SELASA 23 OGOS 2022

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UKKMAFI

UNIT KOMUNIKASI KORPORAT
KEMENTERIAN PERTANIAN DAN INDUSTRI MAKANAN
(UNTUK EDARAN DALAMAN MAFI, JABATAN DAN AGENSI SAHAJA)

TARIKH	MEDIA	RUANGAN	MUKA SURAT
23/8/2022	KOSMO	NEGARA	16

Lagun Sungai Semerak tertimbus digali semula

PASIR PUTEH – Kawasan kuala di Sungai Semerak di sini yang tertimbus sejak lebih 10 tahun lalu digali semula dalam usaha untuk menyelamatkan ternakan akuakultur di lagun sungai tersebut.

Timbalan Menteri Pertanian dan Industri Makanan II, Datuk Dr. Nik Muhammad Zawawi Salleh berkata, kerja menggali kawasan kuala sepanjang 500 meter itu dijalankan sejak dua minggu lalu bagi membolehkan air laut masuk ke sungai itu.

Sebelum ini katanya, taman akuakultur yang membabitkan lebih 5,000 sangkar ikan di sungai itu tidak dapat berfungsi sepenuhnya berikutan air pasang berada pada jarak lebih lima kilometer dari Kuala Tok Bali.

"Keadaan itu menyebabkan lebih 1,000 penternak mengalami kerugian kira-kira RM1 juta setiap tahun kesan kualiti air yang terjejas. Justeru, kerajaan negeri memulakan kerja penggalian kuala lama yang tertimbus dengan peruntukan RM500,000 untuk peringkat awal.

"Bagaimanapun, peruntukan tambahan untuk membenteng tebing bagi mengelak hakisan. Saya akan membawa usul ini ke peringkat tertinggi kerana usaha menternak ikan kerapu hibrid dan siakap putih di taman akuakultur terbesar di negeri ini adalah penyumbang kepada sekuriti makanan negara," katanya ketika ditemui pemberita selepas melawat lokasi penggalian Kuala Semerak di sini semalam.

Menurut Nik Muhammad Zawawi yang juga Ahli Parlimen Pasir Puteh, pihaknya bersedia membantu dari aspek keperluan pembangunan kekal yang turut menjana peluang pekerjaan kepada penduduk setempat.

Katanya, penggalian semula kawasan itu akan dipantau secara berkala bagi membantu kajian pembangunan sokongan yang perlu khususnya dari aspek hakisan.

KAWASAN kuala Sungai Semerak, Pasir Puteh yang digali semula untuk menyelamatkan ternakan akuakultur di lagun sungai tersebut.

TARIKH	MEDIA	RUANGAN	MUKA SURAT
23/8/2022	THE STAR	NATION	2

Ministries tasked with presenting holistic study of food supply

PUTRAJAYA: The Agriculture and Food Industries Ministry (Mafi) and Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry (KPDNHEP) have been directed to study the country's food supplies, said the Special Task Force on Jihad Against Inflation committee member Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed.

He said in a press conference yesterday that it will cover innovative farming strategies, land use for padi crops, meat supply and the increasing price of mackerel.

Mustapa, who is also Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy), said that the committee had heard a presentation from the Malaysia Competition Commission (MyCC) about the study of five food items: cabbage, mackerel, sawi (mustard leaves), baby formula and meat.

"The study has been presented.

"Our only suggestion is that KPDNHEP's views be combined with Mafi's.

"For example, for smart agriculture and (that) related to padi, efforts need to be implemented to ensure that areas of padi cultivation do not decline," he said.

Regarding mackerel, he said the MyCC also made a presentation regarding price increases as there are members of the public who cannot afford to buy this "ikan rakyat".

He said that Malaysia depends on 40% of the mackerel that is caught locally and 60% of the fish that is brought in from other places, like fresh fish from Thailand and frozen fish from China.

"It (fish prices) concerns the country's fishery resources. The action taken is to increase the supply of frozen fish because it is much cheaper than fresh fish," he said, adding that efforts need to be made to increase Malaysians' interest in eating aqua fish, or freshwater fish.

In other developments, Mustapa said the supply and price of local chicken were stable, with the average at RM8.57 a kg, lower than the ceiling price of chicken set by the government at RM9.40 a kg in Peninsular Malaysia.

"There is no issue (of oversupply) for eggs; the price is in line with the price set by the government, which is 45 sen per egg for Grade A ones," he said.

Mustapa said that as of last week, 120 of the more than 600 state legislative assembly constituencies had benefited from the Keluarga Malaysia (Malaysian Family) Cheap Sale (JMKM) programme.

"The Special Task Force on Jihad Against Inflation will continue to mobilise all five leading ministries to ensure that JMKM reaches all state assemblies at least twice a month so that as many people as possible can benefit from the JMKM initiative in reducing the cost of living," he said.

In addition to KPDNHEP, the four leading ministries that work together towards implementing the JMKM programme are Mafi, Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives Ministry, Rural Development Ministry and Federal Territories Ministry.

The programme, which provides consumers with essential goods at 10% to 20% less than market prices, is set to run for 18 weeks until the end of the year. — Bernama

TARIKH	MEDIA	RUANGAN	MUKA SURAT
23/8/2022	STAR METRO	MUKA DEPAN	

State of abundance

Perak farmers have helped the state reach self-sufficiency in terms of vegetables and cash crops, with enough left over to export. The authorities are looking at measures to consolidate and improve production to ensure food security.

A good yield: A farmer harvesting okra at a farm in Ulu Kinta, Perak. The state is the largest producer of okra in the country. — RONNIE CHIN/ The Star

By IVAN LOH
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FOOD security is a pressing concern, with governments in many countries, including Malaysia, taking active measures to ensure an adequate supply of essentials such as rice, vegetables and poultry for the local market.

Various states have also implemented measures to bump up production, and Perak is no different.

In fact, the Silver State has more than enough supply at hand, says Perak Agriculture Department.

Its director Norsiyenti Othman said some of the crops were in abundance, and were being sold to other states as well as exported elsewhere.

"We want the people to know that a lot of our crops have achieved the self-sufficient level (SSL), meaning that it is enough for the people in Perak.

"We send a lot of our produce to the Selayang and Seri Kembangan wholesale markets in Selangor," she told *StarMetro*.

"We export items such as starfruit, sweet corn and sugarcane to countries like the United Arab Emirates, while edible foliage or leaves go to Japan," she said.

Norsiyenti said Perak was Malaysia's largest producer of okra, with about 23,000 tonnes produced in 2021.

"We have also been the largest producers of sweet corn and sweet potato in the country for the past 10 years," she said, highlighting that about 23,000 tonnes of sweet corn and about 33,000 tonnes of sweet potato were produced in 2020.

"As for leafy greens, we are the third largest producer of spinach at about 9,200 tonnes, mustard greens at 17,000 tonnes and about 2,000 tonnes of *kailan* in 2020," she said.

"Other crops that we have in abundance include cucumber, lettuce, long bean, cassava, sugar cane, brinjal, calamansi and guava," she added.

However, Norsiyenti said some types of produce had not met the SSL yet.

"They include ginger, chilli, tomato, cabbage and fruits like mango, pineapple, watermelon and *langsat*," she said, adding that the data collected was from the department's registered farmers and that there could be more produce being sold in the local market by unregistered ones.

According to the Agriculture Department's booklet on statistics for crops, Perak produced some 120,424 tonnes of vegetables, 89,081 tonnes of cash crops and 97,985 tonnes of fruits in 2020.

Cash crops include sweet corn, sugarcane, groundnut, sweet potato and jicama.

There are about 5,000 farmers involved in growing vegetables, 7,500 grow fruits and 3,150 plant cash crop.

Sultan of Perak Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah had in July said the country could face a food shortage crisis unless efforts were made to ensure the people's needs are met.

Sultan Nazrin had said that there was already a food shortage, with prices on the rise caused by disruption to the supply chain due to the Russia-Ukraine war and depreciation of the ringgit.

He had called for the country to come up with strategic measures, including revisiting the Green Book Plan (Rancangan Buku Hijau) launched by the then prime minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein in 1974 to curb excessive dependence on imported food.

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TARIKH	MEDIA	RUANGAN	MUKA SURAT
23/8/2022	UTUSAN MALAYSIA	DALAM NEGERI	6

Seorang lagi bekas pekerja sahkan TFI tidak patuh halal, buat akuan bersumpah

Apa hasil siasatan Jakim, JPV?

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PUTRAJAYA: Selepas lebih empat bulan isu ketidakpatuhan halal di Thomas Food Industries (TFI) didedahkan, pihak Jabatan Perkhidmatan Veterinar (JPV) dan Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (Jakim) masih tidak melakukan pemeriksaan audit di rumah sembelihan berkenaan.

Malah, Supreme Islamic Council of Halal Meat in Australia Inc. (SICHMA) selaku badan halal yang bertanggungjawab ke atas rumah sembelihan di Lobethal Australia belum dikenakan apa-apa hukuman atas kegagalan membuat pemantauan sewajarnya.

Pengakuan terbuka bekas pekerja di situ sebelum ini yang dikenali sebagai 'The Hooded Man' atau Abdullah yang mendedahkan bagaimana haiwan mati lemas dalam takungan darah sebelum disembelih seolah-olah tidak ada pembelaan hanya kerana menganggap ia rekaan semata-mata.

Bagaimanapun, isu berkenaan kembali membuka episod baharu apabila seorang lagi bekas penyembelih di TFI tampil membuat pengakuan serupa.

Mendedahkan kepada *Utusan Malaysia*, lelaki yang mahu dikenali sebagai Ahmad dan memberitahu dia tidak mengenali Abdullah kerana dia meninggalkan syarikat itu lebih awal sebelum Abdullah bekerja di situ.

Menurut Ahmad, sepanjang bekerja antara April hingga Oktober 2020, 'kegiatan' melemaskan haiwan dalam darah sebelum disembelih disaksikan sejak hari pertama dia bekerja.

"Setiap hari kira-kira 6,000 haiwan biri-biri disembelih dan setiap hari saya lihat haiwan jatuh dan mati dalam takungan darah.

"Haiwan-haiwan itu kemudian disahkan halal walaupun nyata ia bangkai," katanya di sini baru-baru ini.

Ahmad berkata, walaupun sudah dibangkitkan berkali-kali kepada dua wakil SICHMA di lapangan yang bersilih ganti, namun tiada tindakan.

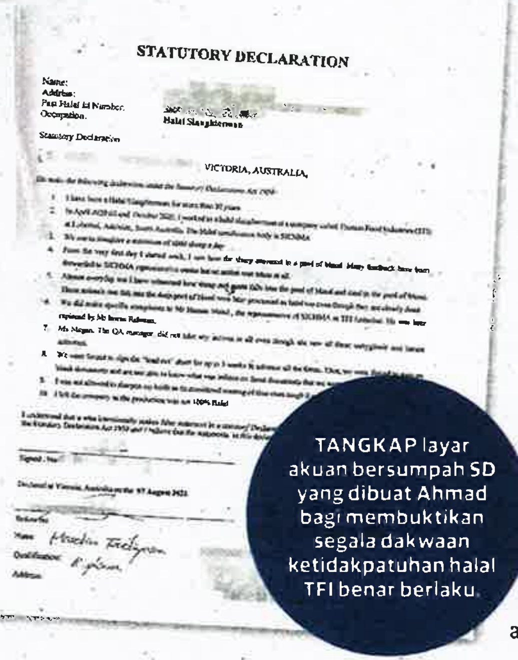
Pengurus jaminan kualiti di TFI juga seolah-olah memejamkan mata.

Lebih mendukacitakan, petugas penyembelih 'dipaksa' menandatangani dokumen 'load out' (pengesahan produk halal di tapak operasi) untuk tiga minggu lebih awal selain diarahkan menandatangani borang kosong walaupun tidak tahu butiran yang bakal ditulis.

Ia sekali gus merupakan satu bentuk penganiayaan terhadap pekerja, kata Ahmad.

"Saya juga tidak dibenarkan menajamkan pisau kerana dianggap pembaziran masa jika berbuat demikian walaupun ia keperluan wajib penyembelihan halal.

"Atas sebab-sebab itu, saya meninggalkan syarikat terbabit kerana ia 100 peratus tidak halal," katanya yang sudah 10 tahun bekerja sebagai penyembelih halal di negara berkenaan.



TANGKAP layar akuan bersumpah SD yang dibuat Ahmad bagi membuktikan segala dakwaan ketidakpatuhan halal TFI benar berlaku.

Membuktikan segala dakwaan adalah benar tanpa prejudis, Ahmad membuat satu pernyataan bersumpah di bawah Akta Akuan Berkanun 1959 pada 7 Ogos lalu di Victoria.

Melalui akta tersebut, sekiranya membuat akuan palsu, mana-mana pihak boleh dikenakan tindakan di bawah seksyen 11 sebagai satu kesalahan jenayah.

Jakim pada 8 Ogos lalu memberitahu, pihaknya masih lagi menunggu laporan audit daripada JPV melibatkan rumah sembelihan di Australia dan belum menerima laporan daripada agensi berkenaan untuk dibuat tindakan susulan.

TARIKH	MEDIA	RUANGAN	MUKA SURAT
23/8/2022	UTUSAN MALAYSIA	DALAM NEGERI	31

Pendapatan nelayan merosot sehingga 30 peratus sebab sampah di laut

KANGAR: Pendapatan nelayan di negeri ini merosot 20 hingga 30 peratus akibat kurangnya tangkapan hasil laut disebabkan masalah sampah di laut yang tidak dibersihkan sejak dua tahun lalu.

Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Pertanian dan Industri Makanan negeri, Nurulhisham Yaakob berkata, sampah-sarap tersebut tidak dibersihkan selama dua tahun semasa pandemik Covid-19 sebelum ini.

Katanya, sampah-sarap yang terdampar di kawasan pesisir pantai boleh merosakkan ekosistem marin.

"Sampah tersebut boleh mengganggu pertumbuhan plankton yang menjadi sumber makanan hidupan marin seperti ikan, udang dan ketam sekali gus menjejaskan sumber makanan di negara ini jika tidak dikawal.

"Untuk pengetahuan semua, pendapatan nelayan di Perlis merosot 20 hingga 30 peratus akibat kurangnya tangkapan hasil laut sejak dua tahun ini," katanya ketika ditemui pemberita selepas merasmikan program konservasi marin 'Save Our Sea' di sini semalam.

Pada majlis itu juga, hampir 400 kilogram sampah dikutip di kawasan pesisir pantai sepanjang satu kilometer di Dataran Kurong Tengar, Kuala Perlis di sini hanya dalam tempoh tidak sampai dua jam.

Sebelum ini, tular satu klip video yang dimuat naik oleh seorang pempengaruh dari luar negara yang memaparkan keadaan sampah tidak terurus di sekitar kawasan tebing persisiran laut di kampung itu.

Tambah Nurulhisham, seramai 150 peserta termasuk 80 komuniti nelayan setempat serta wakil jabatan dan pertubuhan bukan kerajaan (NGO) Pahlawan Sampah Perlis menyertai aktiviti kutipan sampah pesisir laut anjuran Jabatan Perikanan negeri itu.

Katanya, kebanyakan sampah yang dikutip adalah bungkusan plastik makanan dipercayai dibuang oleh pelancong dan orang tempatan.

"Sekiranya tidak boleh menjaga kebersihan, tidak perlu untuk datang ke pesisir pantai di Perlis kerana kesannya besar kepada alam sekitar, ekonomi dan sumber makanan kita," ujarnya.

TARIKH	MEDIA	RUANGAN	MUKA SURAT
23/8/2022	SINAR HARIAN	NEGERI	29

Serangan penyakit hawar terkawal - MADA

ALOR SETAR – Penyakit jenis hawar bulir bakteria atau *Bacterial Panicle Blight* (BPB) di kawasan penanaman padi di bawah Lembaga Kemajuan Pertanian Muda (MADA) berada dalam keadaan terkawal.

Cawangan Komunikasi Korporat MADA menjelaskan, BPB merupakan penyakit tanaman padi yang berlaku disebabkan bakteria *burkholderia glumae* dan *burkhloderia gladioli*.

Menurutnya, serangan penyakit ini berkait rapat dengan cuaca panas dan kering terutamanya apabila suhu malam adalah tinggi berpanjangan.

"Secara keseluruhan, kawasan penanaman padi di kawasan Muda adalah seluas 96,558 hektar meliputi 77,882 hektar kawasan tanaman di Kedah dan 18,676 hektar lagi di Perlis.

"Di kawasan Muda, simptom penyakit ini mula dikesan pada musim 1/2017 sehingga musim 1/2022 dan ia masih dalam keadaan terkawal," katanya dalam kenyataan pada Isnin.

Tambah kenyataan itu, MADA telah merekodkan data serangan perosak dan penyakit padi di dalam sistem yang dikenali sebagai GIS SMP.

"Berdasarkan laporan dikeluarkan oleh sistem ini sehingga 17 Ogos 2022, seluas 26.41 hektar serangan BPB telah direkodkan iaitu 0.026 peratus daripada keluasan MADA," jelasnya.

Ujarnya, ia melibatkan 7.70 hektar serangan penyakit di kawasan Wilayah I Perlis; 5.29 hektar di Wilayah II Jitra; 3.55 hektar di Wilayah III Pendang manakala 9.87 hektar di Wilayah IV Kota Sarang Semut.

Sehubungan itu, MADA telah melaksanakan beberapa tindakan bagi mengurangkan risiko serangan dan kemerebakan BPB terhadap tanaman padi seperti kempen pengembangan, pemantauan melalui program pengawasan dan ramalan perosak (PNR).

Pada 17 Ogos lalu, *Sinar Harian* melaporkan kira-kira 300 pesawah di bawah MADA sekitar daerah Yan mengalami kerugian sehingga RM1.5 juta selepas 500 hektar tanaman mereka diserang penyakit BPB.

TARIKH	MEDIA	RUANGAN	MUKA SURAT
23/8/2022	KOSMO	NEGARA	5

ZAMRI (tengah) menyampaikan hadiah bar emas kepada Mohd. Aziz (kanan) di ibu pejabat Nafas di Kota Damansara, Petaling Jaya semalam.

Nafas sampaikan hadiah cabutan bertuah MAHA 2022

PETALING JAYA – Pertubuhan Peladang Kebangsaan (Nafas) menyampaikan hadiah cabutan bertuah kepada para pemenang seperti yang di umumkan pada hari terakhir MAHA 2022, 14 Ogos lalu semalam.

Pemenang tempat pertama bar emas 50gram, Mohd. Aziz Rawi, 38 dari Gombak, Selangor tidak menyangka bertuah memenangani hadiah utama.

"Saya petugas di MAHA 2022. Tapi hanya bertugas tiga hari sahaja. Saya isi suka-suka. Banyak juga peraduan lain yang saya sertai di MAHA ni.

"Saya sangat teruja dan tak sangka menjadi individu paling bertuah daripada 20,000 penyertaan," katanya ketika ditemui di ibu pejabat Nafas.

Beliau yang merupakan kakitangan kerajaan berkata, hadiah tersebut akan disimpan sebagai kenang-kenangan MAHA lebih-lebih lagi ia merupakan simbolik 50 tahun Nafas.

Majlis penyampaian hadiah Cabutan Bertuah MAHA 2022 kepada para pemenang disampaikan oleh Pengerusi Jemaah Pengarah Nafas, Datuk Zamri Yaakob.

Sementara itu, pemenang Samsung S20, Chew Lin Lin, 52 dari Klang, Selangor berkata, tidak menyangka dengan hanya satu borang diisi dia berjaya memperoleh hadiah kedua.

"Saya pegi MAHA dengan suami dan dua anak pada Isnin (8 Ogos). Kami sekeluarga memang setiap kali MAHA atau HPPNK kami akan pegi.

"Sangat seronok kerana ini pertama kali saya sertai peraduan. Tak sangka nama dicabut menjadi pemenang," katanya.

Selain dua penerima itu, pemenang-pemenang hadiah lain iaitu Samsung A52, basikal lipat, seterika stim, Samsung tab dan televisyen turut hadir menerima hadiah.

Nafas menganjurkan Cabutan Bertuah dengan peraduan jawab dan menang bermula 4 hingga 14 Ogos 2022 lalu.

TARIKH	MEDIA	RUANGAN	MUKA SURAT
23/8/2022	SINAR HARIAN	NASIONAL	20

Kakitangan kerajaan menang bar emas

Dalam cabutan bertuah yang dianjurkan Pertubuhan Peladang Kebangsaan sempena MAHA 2022

Oleh NURFARDLINA IZZATI MOKTAR
SHAH ALAM

SHAH ALAM - Seorang kakitangan kerajaan, Mohd Aziz Mohd Rawi memenangi hadiah utama berupa bar emas seberat 50 gram dalam cabutan bertuah yang dianjurkan Pertubuhan Peladang Kebangsaan (Nafas).

Pertandingan itu diadakan sempena Pameran Pertanian, Hortikultur dan Agropelancongan Malaysia (MAHA) 2022 pada 4 hingga 14 Ogos lalu.

Mohd Aziz, 38, dari Gombak bersyukur dan tidak menyangka memenangi hadiah utama iaitu bar emas seberat 50 gram.

"Saya petugas di MAHA 2022 tiga hari sahaja. Sebenarnya saya isi permohonan itu sekadar suka-suka dan banyak juga peraduan lain yang saya sertai di MAHA.

"Saya teruja dan tak sangka menjadi individu paling bertuah daripada 20,000 penyertaan," katanya dalam satu kenyataan pada Isnin.

Ujarnya lagi, hadiah itu akan disimpan sebagai kenang-kenangan memandangkan ia merupakan simbolik 50 tahun Nafas.

Nafas pada Isnin menyampaikan hadiah cabutan bertuah kepada pemenang seperti yang telah diumumkan pada hari terakhir MAHA 2022 iaitu pada 14 Ogos lalu.

Cabutan bertuah itu diadakan pada hari terakhir MAHA 2022 oleh Ketua Setiausaha Kementerian Pertanian dan Industri Makanan (MAFI), Datuk Haslina Abdul Hamid dan disiarkan secara langsung menerusi laman Facebook Nafas.

Majlis penyampaian hadiah kepada pemenang cabutan bertuah pula disampaikan oleh Pengerusi Jemaah Pengarah Nafas, Datuk Zamri Yaakob.

Sementara itu, pemenang Samsung S20, Chew Lin Lin, 52, dari Klang berkata, dia tidak menyangka dengan hanya satu borang diisi telah berjaya memperoleh hadiah kedua.

"Saya pergi ke MAHA dengan suami dan dua anak pada Isnin (8 Ogos). Kami sekeluarga memang akan pergi ke sana setiap kali MAHA diadakan.

"Sangat seronok kerana ini pertama kali saya sertai peraduan. Tak sangka jadi pemenang," jelasnya.

Selain itu, pemenang-pemenang hadiah cabutan bertuah lain turut menerima hadiah termasuk 'Samsung A52', basikal lipat, seterika stim, 'Samsung Tab' dan televisyen.

Pemangku Pengurus Besar Nafas, Saripol Baharin (kiri), Zamri (tengah) dan Mohd Aziz.

TARIKH	MEDIA	RUANGAN	MUKA SURAT
23/8/2022	STAR METRO	NEWS	3

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Growing more agro food parks

Norsiyenti said the department's short-term strategy to increase production of crops that did not meet the SSL, was to allocate more budget to aid the respective growers or farmers.

"We will prepare the budget for farmers to grow more chilli, ginger, cabbage and other crops.

"As for crops that have achieved SSL, we will continue selling these, including value-added products like snacks such as sweet potato chips, to other states and abroad," she said.

As for the long-term strategy, Norsiyenti said the department planned to maintain the level of production for all its crops, including rice.

"Last year, the Perak Mentri Besar chaired a meeting on district development and decided to maintain all *padi* fields in Kerian and Seberang Perak.

"These areas are to be used only for producing rice, and district officers have been instructed to reject applications for other developments or projects that are not related to rice," she said.

"We will also try to look for new areas to develop Agro Food Parks."

She said there were currently six Agro Food Parks, located in Gua Tempurung, Lekir, Degong, Slim, Sungkai and Titi Gantung.

"The ones in Gua Tempurung, Slim and Sungkai are collaborations with Perak government-linked companies such as the State Agriculture Development Corporation (SADC) and Perak State Secretary Incorporated.

"We are planning to add a seventh one, in Manong, so that we can produce more food.

"We have also advised other state agencies with land, like the Perak Islamic Religious Department, to rent them out to farmers," she added.

Norsiyenti said the agency was serious about issues like food security.

"We will help farmers with financial and technical assistance so that they can increase food production.

"During the movement control order periods, we had also put up some of our lands for rent so that people who lost their jobs could go into farming," she said.

She noted that more people were encouraged to take up urban farming to produce food for self-sustainability.

"We have given out about 30,000 urban farming sets.

"We used to campaign and advise people to grow edible plants for their enjoyment, but now it is more for their own (food) security," she said.

"In 2021, we were allocated about RM31mil to encourage people to do urban farming and have given out equipment to individuals, schools, welfare homes and kindergartens," she added.

Norsiyenti said the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (Mardi) had conducted a study on urban farming and found that it was able to help people reduce their expenses.

"It helped people to save between RM50 and RM70 per person.

"If a household has four people, they could save up to RM280," she pointed out.

Norsiyenti (left) advising farmers at a chilli fertigation project farm in Kampung Changkat Larang, Ipoh.

A corn field at the Agro Food Park in Titi Gantung. It contributes to Perak being the country's largest producer of sweet corn for the past 10 years. (Right) Pineapples growing at the Desa Tambun Indah community garden in Ipoh.

Community gardens

At Desa Tambun Indah in Ipoh, some residents have taken up urban farming in a community garden.

They have planted crops like spinach, bitter gourd, sweet potato, pumpkin, papaya, lemongrass, curry leaf, basil and pineapple, to be enjoyed by the community.

Led by Persatuan Rakan Prihatin Kinta Perak chairman Prof Dr Richard Ng, the garden, located on a 500m-long by 3m-wide area at the housing estate's field, has been managed by eight residents since the third quarter of last year.

"I am very encouraged by this development where the community has come out to get involved.

"Previously, they were reluctant to do it for fear of being fined by Ipoh City Council enforcement officers," said Prof Ng.

"Now, they can plant whatever they want to eat and have already had six harvests.

"They share the produce with the other residents. They can take whatever they want for their consumption but these are not meant to be sold," he said.

"The community garden provides solutions to food security and safety issues.

"It is also therapeutic for the residents who spend time working together, and it provides the opportunity to get to know one another better," he added.

Prof Ng, who is also Ipoh City councillor, said there was always a misconception that community gardens were not allowed to be set up, especially on state land or idle fields.

"The city council is encouraging people to take up community gardening.

"A guideline has also been developed (by Housing and Local Government Ministry) to facilitate it," he said.

"For community gardens, it must involve the community in the area and is subject to the community's agreement.

"Any community interested in setting up a community garden can apply directly through the city council's Town Planning Department with an application fee of RM100," he elaborated.

"Those interested in starting one can contact me," he added.