

KERATAN AKHBAR

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IPR: Country needs professional farmers who are able to compete - Rafizi



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SERDANG: The country needs professional farmers who are able to compete and work on modern agricultural facilities through the Farming Entrepreneur Initiative (INTAN) under the People's Income Initiative (IPR) programme, said Economy Minister Rafizi Ramli.

He said this group is to come from graduates and participants in the National Poverty Data Bank System (eKasih).

“To graduates and other participants, it is your responsibility to work on modern agriculture facilities because the government has taken the risk of releasing large allocations to ensure that modern agriculture takes place throughout the country,” he said

in his speech when officiating at the IPR-INTAN Agricultural Entrepreneur Programme Centre at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), here today.

“I hope the real work will begin and after that we will make sure the IPR will have an impact in the country.”

Rafizi said the IPR-INTAN Centre for UPM farmers, which was launched today, is a platform for strategic collaboration between the Economy Ministry and UPM to provide theoretical and practical training to participants to manage modern agricultural facilities in the agri-aquaculture sector.

He said the responsibility given to UPM is to train and produce professional agri-entrepreneurs and expose them to the crop cycle so that they learn to survive in the agriculture field.

Rafizi said the IPR is not just a programme to raise participants' income but is to identify the factors, challenges and risks that caused previous agricultural projects to fail.

“Through the IPR we also will look at business modules, weather challenges and pest issues as we do not want to have a repeat of the past failures,” he added.

On Feb 24, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim when tabling Budget 2023 said the government will implement the IPR with an allocation of RM750 million to the Economy Ministry to ensure the success of the programme.

The programme is targeted at helping participants earn between RM2,000 and RM2,500 per month during the 24-month monitoring period, and then generate their own income through the results obtained.

On July 11, Rafizi said that a total of 1,000 acres (404.7 hectares) of land had been identified for cultivation by IPR participants.

Meanwhile, UPM vice-chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Mohd Roslan Sulaiman said the IPR will train 130 participants in a period of between two and three years. Forty per cent of them will be UPM graduates whereas 60 per cent will be participants from eKasih.

He said participants will be given the opportunity to learn and apply modern agricultural technology that will pave the way for them to advance the agricultural industry in this country.

Mohd Roslan said the government had allocated an operating capital of RM3.2 million for one round and participants would be guided to earn a net income of between RM2,000 and RM2,500 per month.

“This is an important step in our efforts to improve the quality of life of the people, reduce the economic gap and enjoy good well-being reflecting the spirit of Malaysia Madani,” he said. -Bernama