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## Census sets new benchmark for agricultural sector

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2024 AGRICULTURE CENSUS INTERIM REPORT

# Census sets new benchmark for agricultural sector

**Chief statistician:**  
It will provide vital input into key national strategies

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**T**HE findings from the 2024 Agriculture Census Interim Report are set to become a critical new benchmark for the development and transformation of Malaysia's agricultural sector.

Statistics Department chief statistician Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said the insights — gathered through the nationwide census conducted from July 7 to Dec 31 last year, would provide vital input into several key national strategies — including the 13th Malaysia Plan, the National Agrofood Policy 2021-2030, the National Agrocommodity Policy 2021-2030 and the National Food Security Policy Action Plan 2021-2025.

These findings are not merely statistical data, they reflect the real conditions, challenges and opportunities within the sector," he said after the launch of the 2024 Agriculture Census Interim Report on Thursday.

Gracing the launch event was Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof, who is also the energy transition and water transformation minister.

Also present were Agriculture and Food Security Deputy Minister Datuk Arthur Joseph Kurup, ministry secretary-general Datuk Seri Isham Ishak and Energy Transition and Water Transformation Ministry secretary-general Datuk Mad Zaidi Mohd Karli.

Among the key findings from the 2024 Agriculture Census, Uzir said, was that Malaysia recorded 1,030,020 agriculture holders, with a staggering 97.9 per cent for 1,008,829 being individual agriculture holders.

The remaining 21,191 operations are managed by establishments' agricultural holders.

He said the data also indicates that 258,129 agriculture holders are involved in food crop cultivation, including padi, vegetables and fruits.

At the same time, 623,365 individuals manage commercial crops such as oil palm and rubber. Additionally, 43,816 agriculture holders are engaged in livestock, 8,407 in aquaculture, 48,267 in fisheries and 7,930 in forestry and logging.

In terms of age groups, the largest proportion of individual

agricultural holdings is in the 40 years and over category, with 458,263 individuals (45.4 per cent), followed by those aged 46 to 59 years at 326,267 individuals (32.4 per cent).

The 31 to 45 years age group accounts for 190,952 individuals (18.9 per cent) while the 15 to 30 years age group represent only 33,207 individuals (3.3 per cent).

The data highlights Malaysia's agricultural sector's strong dependence on older farmers, with 45.4 per cent of agricultural holders aged 40 and above, while only 142,888 youths aged 15 to 40 are active in the industry.

"This situation poses serious challenges, such as labour shortages, a slow integration of modern technologies and the urgent need to revitalise the sector."

"It is crucial to attract more young people to agricultural careers to safeguard the sector's future sustainability and the country's food security."

Uzir said other key takeaways from the census is that establishment agriculture holders recorded much higher productivity than individual agriculture holders such as oil palm, pineapple and cocoa.

"This shows the importance of economies of scale, the use of technology and more systematic governance."

Among the main challenges faced by individual agriculture holders is the limited land area, especially land of less than 2.02ha.

"This small land size has a significant impact on the effectiveness of agricultural activities, especially in terms of productivity and yield."

"This not only affects farmers' income, but also has implications for the development of the country's agricultural sector as a whole."

Uzir said the census also found potential in the cultivation of new crops such as kenaf, napier and seaweed.

Kenaf, for example, has a cultivated area of 1,477.0ha with a production of 9,716.1 tonnes, while Napier recorded a cultivated area of 1,387.7ha with a production of 35,687 tonnes.

"These industries have great potential in terms of value added exports and production of downstream products, where the supply chain needs to be strengthened to drive the growth of this segment."

Uzir said from the census, crop industries such as coffee, coconut and cocoa have shown a decline in terms of planted area, productivity and the number of active entrepreneurs.

"However, the industry retains significant strategic value and can be revitalised through well-



Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof (centre) holding up the 2024 Agriculture Census Interim Report at its launch on Thursday at the Malaysia Agro Exposition Park Serdang. With him are Agriculture and Food Security Deputy Minister Datuk Arthur Joseph Kurup (second from left), ministry secretary-general Datuk Seri Isham Ishak (second from right), Energy Transition and Water Transformation Ministry secretary-general Datuk Mad Zaidi Mohd Karli (left) and Statistics Department chief statistician Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin (right). NSTP PIX BY ALIUDIN SAAD

planned, modern and integrated approaches."

Uzir added that engagement sessions will be organised with stakeholders to discuss the findings of the census.

These sessions serve as a platform to discuss agriculture issues including food security concerns.

"It is hoped that all stakeholders including government agencies, research institutions, academia, industry players and farmers can utilise agricultural statistics to the fullest in making evidence-based decisions and contributing to the growth of a sustainable and competitive agricultural sector."

During the event, the department also released 15 interim reports encompassing the Interim Report on Agriculture Sector, which presents statistics for the entire agricultural sector, followed by five subsectors: crops, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture, as well as forestry and logging.

The remaining 14 reports covered oil palm, rubber, padi, pineapple, kenaf, cocoa, pepper, fruits, vegetables and other crops.

The reports covered six key parameters — agricultural holdings profile, area planted, harvested area, quantity of production and sales and sales value.

The agriculture census plays a vital role in supporting not only farmers and policymakers, but also businesses within the broader agricultural value chain.

Doluwo Sdn Bhd chief executive officer Rose Yasmin Abdul Karim said the data gathered from the census is instrumental in helping companies plan for growth and



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Statistics Department chief statistician Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin giving a presentation at the launch of the 2024 Agriculture Census Interim Report.

source raw materials more effectively.

As the manufacturer of Popsmalaya, a homegrown brand known for fruit-based ice lollies, Yasmin emphasised the importance of using local ingredients.

One of our key strategies moving forward is to collaborate directly with local farmers through contract manufacturing.

The latest data from the agriculture census helps us make informed decisions that align with our long-term goals," she said.

Although not all ingredients — such as berries — are sourced locally, Popsmalaya remains committed to showcasing Malaysian produce, with pineapple emerging as a signature flavour.

"When we participate in international trade shows, people are often intrigued by unique flavours like pineapple. Pineapple lollies are still

uncommon overseas, which gives us a competitive edge," Yasmin said.

Popsmalaya exports to over 30 countries and attributes its global success to support from agencies such as the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority.

Yasmin's sentiment was echoed by Mohd Azhan Fhitr Md Rafi, a sales coordinator at Mascorn Sdn Bhd.

"For companies like Mascorn, access to accurate and comprehensive agricultural data enables us to better align with market trends and plan strategically."

"It also helps identify emerging needs and opportunities across the sector."

"We fully support efforts to strengthen agricultural data collection, as it is key to ensuring a resilient, efficient, and forward-looking agri-food industry."