

Youth should be job creators

LETTERS: The success of young agropreneurs acts like a magnet, pulling more young people into the world of agriculture which can bail them out of poverty.

Thus, it can also help the country address dire problems, such as unemployment and food insecurity.

Young agropreneurs who have successfully applied modern, innovative and technological methods can serve as role models and motivations for other young people in the country to embark on the same path.

The emergence of new technologies in the agricultural sector can drive innovation in improving product quality and increase production volume to meet the needs of customers and market demand, as well as generate maximum profits for young agropreneurs.

Therefore, the agricultural landscape needs to be transformed from being dominated by elderly farmers with low technology skills to being dominated by young farmers with high technology skills.

Success in the agricultural sector needs to come to the fore to boost young people's interest in exploring the world of agriculture, such as livestock, fisheries, forestry, logging and agro-based industries.

This is not only to inculcate their interest but also to spur them to venture and succeed when taking further steps to break into international markets.

They have to come to terms with the fact that they should become job creators rather than job seekers in order to bear more fruit to society.

Unfortunately, to date, the agricultural sector still lags far behind other sectors, such as services and manufacturing. The majority of players in the agricultural sector are the older generation with low-technology skills.

Despite the favourable impacts of agriculture on the economy and society, the success rate of small and medium enterprises in the sector is still unsatisfactory.

According to the Department of Statistics, the agriculture sector experienced modest growth of only 3.7 per cent in the third quarter of 2019.

Last year, employment in the sector accounted for 10.09 per cent of total employment.

This figure shows that more attention needs to be given to the sector to increase that percentage. In addition, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor reported a decline in the number of new enterprises or businesses in the sector.

What is more alarming is that many young agropreneurs fail to survive the first three to five years after their inception.

The main challenge that needs to be addressed in order to achieve a higher number of successful young agropreneurs is their misperceptions.

They describe jobs in the agricultural sector as dirty, difficult, dangerous, unglamorous and low-paid, and they believe that these jobs do not promise any bright future for them.

Therefore, these misperceptions need to be debunked. Agriculture is actually a lucrative source of livelihood for young people, especially unemployed graduates.

Nowadays, more fresh graduates have proven that they can fly high and rake in enormous profits working in the agricultural sector.

Therefore, success in the agricultural sector, especially among young agropreneurs, needs to be enhanced to achieve the optimum contribution to the country's economic and social development.

To date, Malaysia is still too reliant on imported agro-based products.

Therefore, it is time for young people, especially fresh graduates, to get involved in the agricultural sector and become young agropreneurs who are innovative and keeping pace with changing technologies.

Failure in this sector will have repercussions on the food security of the country.

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