Agro census to chart food policies

Data vital to help lawmakers formulate better schemes, says Economy Ministry

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SABAK BERNAM: The Agricultural Census 2024 aims to help lawmakers formulate better policies on food security by collating data on agriculture and agrobased industries, says the Economy Ministry.

Its secretary-general Datuk Nor Azmir Diron said the census will involve all agricultural subsectors nationwide such as crops, livestock and fisheries to bring attention to the issue of the nation's food security.

"Preparations for the Agricultural Census 2024 have begun and will involve as many respondents as possible so that lawmakers can formulate better policies related to agriculture," he told reporters after the World Statistics Day 2023 celebration here.

He also said it is important for the country to rely more on locally-produced food as it currently imports RM40bil worth of food from other countries each year.

Nor Azmir also said Sabak Bernam is being developed into a fisheries and agricultural hub for the country.

"Two large-scale fishing projects have been developed under Sabak Bernam Development Area (Sabda) and the project is expected to create 7,000 jobs in the next 10 years," he said.

Nor Azmir added that the ministry will be launching the Central Database Hub (Padu) next year which will centralise all government and population data in one website.

"Padu will help the government employ targeted subsidies more efficiently so that more funds can be saved and re-allocated for public and development projects," he said.

He said the government will introduce a progressive wage policy in the second quarter of next year.

Meanwhile, Statistics Department chief statistician Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin praised the department's achievement of publishing a total of 1,180 data reports as of this month.

"We also launched the OpenDOSM NextGen platform earlier this year which is a modern website to retrieve statistics produced by the department and other agencies.

"Many interactive visuals are included such as Dashboard Kawasanku, Dashboard Consumer Prices, Dashboard Gross Domestic Product, Dashboard Labour Markets and Dashboard Industrial Production," he said.

World Statistics Day is celebrated every Oct 20 and this year's national theme was "Statistik Nadi Kehidupan" (Statistics are the pulse of life).

This year's celebration included the launching of the Agricultural Census 2024 portal and plans to strengthen the national statistical system.

Mohd Uzir said statisticians around the country should be celebrated for their work as statistics have the power to convey important data to people.

"This includes personal information, economic activities, the environment and social narratives. It is also important in planning and formulating government policies," he said.

Mohd Uzir said the Air Pollutant Index (API) is a good example of how influential statistics are as many schools were closed after the API reading exceeded 200 in some areas.

"The gross domestic product (GDP) is another important statistic that greatly influences a country's policy," he said.