

Agriculture census could beef up sector planning, says Fadillah

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SERDANG: The Agriculture Census 2024 will assist the government in establishing a comprehensive agricultural data framework that covers economic, social and environmental aspects within the agricultural ecosystem, says Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof.

The Deputy Prime Minister said the census will culminate in the development of an Integrated Agricultural Statistics Database that encompasses upstream and downstream agricultural data, integrating administrative data from various government agencies down to the state and district levels.

"It will produce a new baseline, providing timely and reliable statistics for the planning of the national agricultural sector," Fadillah said at the launch of the

Agriculture Census 2024 at the Malaysia Agro Exposition Park here yesterday.

Also present were Agriculture and Food Security Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Sabu, Deputy Plantation and Commodities Minister Datuk Chan Foong Hin and Chief Statistician Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin.

The Statistics Department has been given the mandate to lead the data collection for the Agriculture Census 2024.

It is the fourth such census to be conducted in the country, with the previous one held in 2005.

Fadillah also noted that the agricultural sector has been the foundation of the country's economy since achieving Independence.

"This sector had contributed 28.8% to the gross domestic product in 1970.

"This percentage declined to

6.4% in 2023 due to the rapid growth of the industrial and service sectors compared to the agricultural sector.

"Although the contribution of the agricultural sector decreased, its added value increased to RM141.9bil in 2023 compared to RM16.2bil in 1987.

"This is in line with the increase in the country's population from 16.8 million people in 1987 to some 34 million in 2024," he said.

To ensure the well-being of farmers remains protected, the government had allocated RM6.17bil to the Agriculture and Food Security Ministry in the 2024 Budget, said Fadillah.

"This allocation represents a 14.4% increase compared to the previous year, aimed at intensifying programmes and assistance to make farmers more competitive."

Fadillah said his ministry had proposed expanding the agricul-

tural sector through the use of solar panels, given the significant number of solar farms being established.

A study conducted by Universiti Putra Malaysia has shown promising results, he pointed out.

"Integrating agrivoltaic systems into our country's framework, particularly within the National Energy Transition Roadmap, offers significant benefits.

"By combining agriculture with photovoltaic energy generation, agrivoltaic systems efficiently use land to advance our renewable energy," Fadillah said, adding that it supports the ministry's objectives of economic diversification, inclusive growth and technological advancement, revitalising rural economies with new income streams for farmers.

Separately, the Chief Statistician's office said in a statement that a portal has been set up to

enhance the understanding and communication of the Agriculture Census 2024.

"It provides comprehensive and interactive content in the form of infographics and visualisations, allowing the public to access the latest information. As of July 1, the number of visitors to the census portal has reached 1.02 million."

It added that the success of the census requires the cooperation of all agricultural household entrepreneurs, institutions and organisations.

The census, to be conducted from July 7 to Oct 10, will cover four subsectors, namely crops, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture, and forestry and logging.

For more information about the Agriculture Census 2024, please visit www.myagricensus.gov.my and www.facebook.com/bancipertanian2024.