



PRESS RELEASE

MEDAC TO ADDRESS COUNTRY'S UNEMPLOYMENT AND FOOD SECURITY ISSUES BY PRODUCING MORE AGRI-PRENEURS

Kuching, 27 December 2020 – Ministry of Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives (MEDAC) is prepared to take the lead in churning out modern *agripreneurs* to help the country address issues concerning unemployment as well as food security.

Minister Dato Sri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar Malaysian said Malaysia, to date, is relying too much on imported agri-based products and it is time for Malaysians to be more involved in the food production sector ecosystem.

It was earlier reported in 2019, Malaysia's total agricultural imports stood at around US\$18.3 billion, of which roughly 7 per cent was sourced from the United States.

He said the recent meat cartel issue should serve as an eye opener on the need for Malaysians to be more involved in food production, especially halal food.

"We want more youths and unemployed graduates become agripreneurs. They need to change their mind set ...don't just focus on becoming wage earners. They should open up their eyes on the enormous business potential in the food production sector.

"MEDAC, via agencies such as TEKUN and SME Corp, has already come up with various programmes and incentives, aimed at producing more agripreneurs. In addition, we are also collaborating with Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry (MAFI) to further develop the country's food production sector via modern farming, he told reporters after his visit to Angkatan Koperasi Kebangsaan Malaysia Berhad (ANGKASA) office, here today

With 1.6 billion Muslim population across the globe, there is certainly a huge demand for halal products. It is estimated that the global market demand for halal products and services in 2019 was at US\$2 trillion.

Looking at the huge global halal market, Dr Wan Junaidi called on Sarawak entrepreneurs, namely Muslim youths, to venture into the highly lucrative agri-based halal food production sector.

With the right training and support from various agencies, particularly from the Federal Government, he is optimistic that the state could strategically position itself as an international organic halal food producer.

“Sarawak is a huge state and its land is fertile. We hope the Federal Government can support us in our effort to position Sarawak as an international producer of organic halal food products – a more premium level in the entire food production chain,” he added.

Meanwhile, Dr Wan Junaidi applauded ANGKASA for the setting up of Project BA100 – an integrated programme that took off earlier this year, to help groceries stores owners cushion the impact of COVID-19.

The BA100, supported by MEDAC, is an e-commerce business programme that gathers purchases of basic goods in bulk from cooperative-owned grocery stores by offering daily necessities at more economical prices than the regular market. All transactions will be done via an app simply known as *Jimat Biz*.

“This initiative is very much in sync with one of MEDAC’s main focus, which is the digitalisation of small businesses, particularly those in the B40 category. Not only will this programme help them in transforming their business operations to suit the new norm but it also helps in minimising involvement of middlemen by helping to shorten the supply chain system,” he added.

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