

Food Security Blueprint sets UPM as agriculture, food security leader

UNIVERSITI Putra Malaysia (UPM) has developed a strategic Food Security Blueprint to position the 53-year-old tertiary institution as an agriculture and food security leader, said UPM's Institute of Tropical Agriculture and Food Security director Prof Dr Anjas Asmara Samsudin.

Speaking to *Bernama*, Anjas Asmara said UPM was mandated by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) to prepare this action plan as a guide for all higher education institutions in the country to strengthen the agriculture and food security sectors.

"This blueprint, developed by UPM, will guide all higher education institutions and educational institutions offering agriculture and food security programmes.

"The essence of this blueprint is based on the National Agri-Food

Policy 2.0, the Asian Productivity Organisation and the Sustainable Development Goals. These three documents served as our references."

Anjas Asmara added that the action plan, initiated in December last year, also involved three prominent figures in agriculture and food security: Prof Dr Siti Fatimah Arshad, Prof Datuk Dr Mad Nasir Shamsudin and Prof Datuk Dr Zulkifli Idrus.

On June 7, Agriculture and Food Security Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Sabu and MOHE Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir launched the UPM Food Security Blueprint.

This blueprint is a strategic driver of the latest agricultural initiatives aligned with technological advancements, enabling the country to achieve sustainable food security.

The introduction of this action plan will strengthen the national agricultural industry and highlight the role of universities in benefiting society.

Anjas Asmara announced that a meeting to brief the representatives from public and private higher education institutions will be held at UPM at the end of this month.

"After this, we will identify the strengths of each institution to ensure that the food security agenda is effectively and efficiently implemented.

"This will lead to the establishment of the Higher Education Institutions Food Security Nexus, ensuring they adopt the UPM Food Security Blueprint," he said.

He added that UPM has been mandated by MOHE to lead the establishment of the Higher Education Institutions Food Security

Nexus to create synergy between public and private higher education institutions.

Anjas Asmara said to advance agriculture and food security, the institute has introduced two new rice varieties, Padi Putra 1 and Padi Putra 2, and is in the process of registering the Climate Ready Seeds rice variety with the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute.

"Once these varieties are officially registered, we can market them widely to rice farmers. Without registration, farmers won't be able to claim subsidies," he said, adding that the institute is also researching alternative feed for livestock.

He highlighted that the institute has six researchers who are also academic staff at UPM, supported by associate researchers from vari-

ous faculties, including the Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Faculty of Food Science and Technology.

"We aim to ensure that each UPM responsibility centre contributes value to the agriculture and food security sectors.

"For example, the Faculty of Engineering develops technology for use in agricultural and food security activities, while the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences ensures that food is nutritious," he said.

Anjas Asmara is confident that these initiatives will strengthen UPM's leadership in advancing food security and transforming the national food sector, ensuring the university's continued excellence in contributing to the nation's food security. — *Bernama*