

---

## UPM Drives Veteran Agri-Entrepreneurship to Strengthen National Food Security



**By Nur Syamila Kamarul Arefin**  
**Photo by Saleha Haron**

**SERDANG, 11 February** - Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) is reinforcing Malaysia's agri-food sector through the implementation of the USAHAWANTANI PUTRA-PERHEBAT programme, a strategic initiative aimed at developing second-career pathways for soon-to-retire and retired veterans of the Angkatan Tentera Malaysia (ATM).

Director of the Putra Agricultural Centre, Prof. Ts. Dr. Siti Zaharah Sakimin, said the programme, conducted in collaboration with the Perbadanan Hal Ehwal Bekas Angkatan Tentera (PERHEBAT), reflects the university's commitment to transferring advanced agricultural technologies and modern farming practices to the veteran community in line with the national food security agenda.

---

“UPM provides a comprehensive learning ecosystem that includes hands-on training, technical mentoring, technology transfer and exposure to agricultural business models,” she stated.

“This approach ensures that participants are not only skilled in production but are also capable of generating sustainable income.”

She added that UPM channels its expertise to guide participants across three key commercial sectors – crop cultivation, livestock farming and aquaculture. Participants are also exposed to agricultural technologies, cost management, farm productivity optimisation and marketing strategies to strengthen their competitiveness.

Meanwhile, Deputy Defence Minister Adly Zahari commended the university’s proactive role in advancing human capital development and national food security.

“UPM plays a vital role as the nation’s hub for agricultural knowledge and technology.

“Initiatives like this demonstrate that universities contribute not only through research but also through direct socio-economic impact, including among ATM veterans,” he said.

For PERHEBAT participant Mohd Affieq Mohd Rashid, 39, the agricultural training at UPM has significantly enhanced his readiness for retirement.

“UPM has equipped me with the skills to cultivate mushrooms on a large scale, even from home,” he said.

“The training here is highly practical and industry-oriented. We are not just learning planting or livestock techniques but also understanding management and market competitiveness. It gives us the confidence to embark on a new career path.”