



Easy does it: Peter Hoeks (in red T-shirt) demonstrating proper hoof care with the assistance of two farmers during the Farmer2Farmer programme in Perak.

Raising efficiency of local dairy farms

Dutch farmers share best practices and knowledge during two-week visit under programme

LOCAL dairy producer Dutch Lady Milk Industries Berhad (Dutch Lady Malaysia) has embarked on its Farmer2Farmer programme (F2F) for the second time in collaboration with the Department of Veterinary Services (DVS) and the Embassy of the Netherlands.

First launched in 2013, the F2F is a part of Dutch Lady Malaysia's Dairy Development Programme, which is aimed at enhancing the local dairy industry by improving the quality and volume of milk produced locally, thereby developing local farmers' skills and improving their livelihoods.

Under the programme, three Royal Friesland Campina (RFC) co-operative Dutch farmers will spend two weeks in local farms in Negri Sembilan, Malacca and Perak, sharing best practices and exchanging knowledge with local farmers on ways to improve their farming skills.

This year, F2F will involve 24 department officers and 89 local farmers, who supply fresh milk to Dutch Lady Malaysia.

It will focus on good farm management and administration (sustainability and profitability), good milking/handling practices, effective feed and nutritional programme for cattle, monitoring methods, and good breeding and fertility programme.

"This is a rare and unique opportunity for local farmers to be exposed to other farmers, not least from RFC in the Netherlands, whose Dutch dairy farming tradition dates back more than 140 years.

"We are glad to collaborate with Dutch Lady Malaysia again to bring F2F back as we have seen clear improvements in our local dairy output since the first F2F in 2013," said department assistant senior director Dr Emelia Aini Kamaruzzaman.

Malaysia's current dairy industry contributes to only 5% of the country's needs, with an aim to increase that to 8% by 2020, she added.



Vital collaboration: Dutch farmers Peter Hoeks (third from right), Minne Holtrop (centre) and Andre Bakker (third from right) with representatives from the Department of Veterinary Services and Dutch Lady Malaysia.



Increasing output: Minne Holtrop (right) advising Perak-based farmer Harban Singh (second from right) on how to optimise milk production, while two Universiti Putra Malaysia students who are under practical training look on.

"The country's dairy farming industry is about 40 years old, with many being family-owned.

"To help raise efficiency and management practices, DVS works closely

with farmers to help raise productivity, increase their business competencies as well as improve milk yield and quality for better earning opportunities," said Dr Emelia Aini.