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Felda set to progress locally and abroad

By Zaidi Isham Ismail

FELDA is going all out to become the country's top national food producer by establishing the National Food Warehouse.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak says the focus will be on four high valued products which are Kulai chillies and bananas, beef and *talapia* fish.

This programme is divided into two phases. The first is from this year to 2014 and the second from 2015 to 2020.

A sum of RM750 million has been allocated for this project.

"The project will benefit an estimated 40,000 settlers, comprising 11,000 entrepreneurs. The number is expected to swell to 30,000 new entrepreneurs."

To ensure the project's success, Najib says entrepreneurs will be given technical support, skills training and commercial project management training utilising the latest technologies.

"The food warehouse project is expected to give settlers additional income of between RM500 and RM2,500 a month," says

Najib.

Last year, Felda embarked on banana planting on 416ha of land.

The areas are Felda Besout 4, Perak involving 200ha, Felda Jengka 24, Pahang (100ha), Felda Chini Timur 1, Pahang (100ha) and Felda Tersang 4, Pahang (16ha).

Early this year, Felda will start planting Kulai chillies using the fertigation system at Felda Mempaga 1, Pahang on a 5ha plot of land and *talapia* fish rearing in 20

ponds at Felda Titi, Negri Sembilan.

The land development authority aims to produce 48,000 tonnes of chillies using the fertigation system involving empty lands fixed as garden parks.

Other aims include producing 45,000 tonnes of *Berangan* banana also on

replanting land; to produce 15,000 tonnes of beef with a concentration of 111 cattle pen; and to repair or restructure 1,237 fish ponds and to produce 2,500 tonnes of *talapia*.

Najib says Felda is also collaborating up with other government agencies in a win-win partnership.

It is teaming up with the Rubber Industry and Smallholders Development Authority (Risda) and Federal Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Agency (Felcra) to bolster cooperation and enhance synergies.

The three organisations will form a consortium to collaborate on the development of downstream activities.

"The tie-up will be based on new projects such as the building of new oil palm, rubber, fertiliser factories

and to carry out downstream activities."

Najib says current collaboration between the three agencies involved the sharing of palm oil factory for development of research.

A memorandum of understanding is being prepared which will be

followed by a signing ceremony soon.

Each organisation will also allocated RM100 million as capital to fund various activities it will implement.

Apart from plantations,

Najib says education is another sector given emphasis by Felda.

The focus is understandable as Felda does not want to neglect the intellectual needs of the children of 112,000 settler families.

With this goal in mind, the Felda Mara Junior Science College project in Trolak, Perak was mooted. The facility is completed.

"This is Felda's success in increasing more excellent students among settlers' children. It is my hope that they study hard and get good results because Felda has provided a conducive and modern place to study compared with others. They should fully utilise the facilities."

Built at a cost of RM123 million, the college now has 210 Form Two students studying temporarily at Kini College in Trolak while 168 Form One students are placed in 27 National Junior Science College (MRSN) nationwide.

They will move to MRSN Trolak this year which will also accept fresh students, bringing the population to more than 600.

Internationally, Najib says Felda has been making forays into the global market and will continue to spread its wings to strengthen its presence.

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new entrepreneurs."



The endeavour will be undertaken by Felda Global Ventures Holdings Sdn Bhd. Its activities will bolster trade in countries such as China, Japan, Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Netherlands, France, the UK and the US.

"In Saudi Arabia, Felda Global Ventures Middle East Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary, has invested in apartments and food courts at the Al-Safwah complex in Mecca."

Together with Tabung Haji, Felda operates the food court business and has started expanding into haj catering services and kiosk operation for various Tabung Haji "maktab" in Mecca.

In Indonesia, Felda Global has a joint venture with Tabung Haji in plantation and palm oil refinery. Felda also has a joint venture with IFFCO, a Dubai-based company in the food business.

The 50:50 joint venture company, Felda-Iffco is present in many countries

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such as China, India, Indonesia, South Africa, France, Turkey and Australia.

Najib says Felda is also looking into several other proposals for oil palm development in other countries, particularly Indonesia, and expanding its business overseas, with the focus on certain regions such as Europe.

Touching on Felda younger generation, the prime minister says Felda will continue to entice them to continue the legacy of their parents.

The aim is to get the youth to work within the Felda community.

It is hoped that out of five children, at least one will continue to toil the land, says Najib.

"It is good for settlers' children to work as professionals within the Felda community, such as executives, managers or businessmen."

On the other hand, he adds Felda will also be proud to have children of settlers working as accountants, aircraft maintenance engineers and engineers.

Statistics show that almost half of the settlers now above 60. As they can no longer toil their land on their own, it has become necessary for them to hire workers which reduces their income.

Najib says the problem affecting Felda is that

children of settlers are not interested to take over from their parents. With higher education, many are interested to pursue other prospects in urban areas.

Felda has lined up plans to hire locals so as to reduce dependency on foreign workers.

Campaigns, carried out with the Felda Youth Council, are held to attract youth to work in estates run by Felda Plantation and Felda Technoplant.

To date, there are 1,920 local employees in

the estates nationwide, representing 10 per cent of total of employees in the sector.

Generally, local workers enjoy better benefits compared foreigners. They earn an average of RM800 monthly, excluding other benefits such as housing, electricity and water subsidy, medical coverage, annual leave, Employees' Provident Fund contributions, children's school aid and others.

Felda has also put in place plans for locals to gain extra income when they work in Felda estates.

“ This is Felda’s success in increasing more excellent students among settlers’ children. It is my hope that they study hard and get good results because Felda has provided a conducive and modern place to study compared with others. They should fully utilise the facilities.”



PM with the first batch of settlers' children who were sent overseas for their education at some of the top universities in the UK and US.

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NATIONAL FOOD WAREHOUSE TARGET

	Chili	Banana	Beef	Fish
Local demand	261,361	317,144	150,696	-
Current supply	79,111	271,940	38,250	-
Shortage	182,250 (69%)	45,204 (14%)	112,446 (74%)	-
Felda	48,000 (18%)	45,000 (14%)	15,000 (10%)	2,500



Datuk Seri Najib Razak with his deputy Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yasin, Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman (right) and Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor having a closer look of Kulai chillies during the Settlers' Day at Felda Maokil Labis, Johor.