

## Malaysia allocates RM1 million for MD2 pineapple project in Sabah

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The Agriculture and Food Security Ministry has allocated RM1 million, under the Land Use Optimisation Programme carried out in collaboration with the Sabah Land Development Board (SLDB), for the MD2 pineapple plantation project here.

Deputy Agriculture and Food Security Ministry Datuk Arthur Joseph Kurup said Phase 1 of the project, covering six hectares with 250,000 pineapple vines planted, benefits 695 participants.

"The participants are expected to enjoy the first harvest, expected between 12 and 15 months from now, thus supporting efforts to develop the community-based economy in rural areas, particularly in the interior of Sabah, where livelihoods largely depend on agricultural resources," he said in a statement here today.

Arthur said the implementation of the project would not only boost the country's pineapple production but also create job opportunities, generate income for local farmers and promote overall rural economic development.

"SLDB had originally planned to develop oil palm plantations in the area, but the soil conditions proved unsuitable. As a result, SLDB took the initiative to optimise land use by cultivating pineapples instead. The Malaysian Pineapple Industry Board was also involved in exploring the potential for collaboration, particularly in establishing a pineapple industry in Sook, with the ministry always focusing on high-value agricultural sectors such as the MD2 pineapple crop" explains Arthur.

Meanwhile, Arthur said that under the Sook Area Farmers' Organisation (PPK), a group-based MD2 pineapple cultivation project is being carried out in Kampung Sakikilo, involving 42 families. He said LPNM would contribute its expertise in pineapple cultivation and work alongside the Sook PPK to monitor the project, an initiative aimed at boosting the income of the participating communities.

"I am planning for the board and the Malaysian Farmers' Organisation to establish a pineapple industry in Sook, turning it into a new economic source for the interior districts of Sabah," he said, adding that 5,000 pineapple vines, over 300 kilogrammes of fertiliser and a mini tiller machine had been handed over to kick-start the community project.