# LAPORAN LIPUTAN MEDIA HARIAN
# JUMAAT 6 SEPTEMBER 2024

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UNIT KOMUNIKASI KORPORAT
KEMENTERIAN PERTANIAN DAN KETERJAMINAN MAKANAN
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BERITA RTM

# KPKM lapor MCMC berhubung hantaran palsu, tidak benar

Jenayah - Dicipta: 05 September 2024 04:43 PM
- Kemas kini: 05 September 2024 04:43 PM

*Foto fail*

***KUALA LUMPUR, 5 September -*** Pejabat Menteri Pertanian dan Keterjaminan Makanan hari ini membuat laporan kepada Suruhanjaya Komunikasi dan Multimedia Malaysia (MCMC) berhubung tangkap layar palsu membabitkan bekalan baja kepada pesawah.

Dalam siaran medianya kementerian itu berkata laporan dibuat bagi membolehkan siasatan dan tindakan sewajarnya dikenakan kepada pihak yang membuat hantaran palsu dan tidak benar.

"Pejabat Menteri juga ingin mengesahkan bahawa tangkap layar yang dibuat itu adalah palsu.

"Pejabat Menteri ingin menafikan Menteri Datuk Seri Mohamad Sabu ada mengeluarkan kenyataan 'pesawah diminta berjimat cermat menggunakan baja bagi membantu kerajaan' seperti yang ditularkan," menurut kenyataan itu.- Bernama

#MCMC #LAPORAN

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## Berita Lain

### Polis tembak mati anggota kumpulan samun warga Afrika

06 September 2024 07:52 AM - Jenayah

### Bayi perempuan masih bertali pusat ditemui dalam beg

05 September 2024 07:02 PM - Jenayah

### Bapa tidak mengaku salah, lakukan sumbang mahram dua anak perempuan

05 September 2024 06:32 PM - Jenayah

### KPKM lapor MCMC berhubung hantaran palsu, tidak benar

05 September 2024 04:43 PM - Jenayah

# Mat Sabu tak pernah keluar kenyataan pesawah kena jimat guna baja

Oleh **Muhammad Azizul Osman** - 5 September 2024

*Tangkap layar Kementerian Pertanian dan Keterjaminan Makanan*

KUALA LUMPUR – Pejabat Kementerian Pertanian dan Keterjaminan Makanan (KPKM) menafikan sebaran palsu berkaitan kenyataan menterinya, Datuk Seri Mohamad Sabu.

Dalam satu kenyataan, KPKM berkata, Mohamad tidak pernah mengeluarkan kenyataan "pesawah diminta berjimat cermat menggunakan baja bagi membantu kerajaan" seperti yang ditularkan dalam satu poster.

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"Pejabat Menteri juga ingin mengesahkan tangkap layar yang dibuat adalah palsu," kata KPKM dalam satu kenyataan hari ini.

KPKM dalam kenyataan sama berkata, pihaknya telah membuat satu laporan kepada Suruhanjaya Komunikasi dan Multimedia Malaysia (SKMM) berhubung penyebaran kenyataan palsu berkenaan.

"Ia bagi membolehkan siasatan dan tindakan yang sewajarnya dikenakan kepada pihak yang membuat hantaran palsu dan tidak benar ini," jelas KPKM lagi. – MalaysiaGazette

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# Fake screenshot: KPKM Minister's Office reports to MCMC

**BERNAMA**

*05-09- 2024 05:08 PM*

*Pix for visual purposes - BERNAMApix*

**KUALA LUMPUR**: The Office of the Minister of Agriculture and Food Security today reported to the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) regarding a fake screenshot involving the supply of fertilisers to padi farmers.

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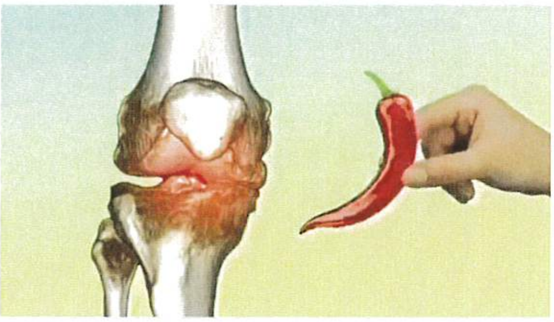

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Based on the media release that was issued, the report was made to enable an investigation and appropriate action to be taken on the parties responsible for the fake news.

"The minister's office also wants to confirm if the screenshot is fake," it said.

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"It also denies that Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Sabu (of the Agriculture and Food Security Ministry or KPKM) issued a statement that 'padi farmers were asked to be frugal in the use of fertilisers to help the government' as was viralled," it added.

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Muncul durian kampung premium pertama Jerantut

# Durian emas DAF1 pintas damak king

Oleh **ABDUL RASHID ABDUL RAHMAN**

**JERANTUT** – Durian emas berjaya didaftarkan sebagai durian kampung premium (DKP) pertama di daerah ini dengan nama DAF1, sekali gus mendahului pendaftaran damak king yang turut terkenal di daerah ini.

Keenakan durian yang ditanam di kawasan berbukit di kaki Gunung Benom itu membuatkan ia menjadi tarikan kerana kemanisannya kekal meskipun selepas buah itu habis dimakan selain baunya yang wangi.

Pemilik DAF1, Mohd. Idafi Mohd. Roseli berkata, pada masa ini terdapat kira-kira 15 batang pokok durian DAF1 dengan nombor pendaftaran D231 yang berusia kira-kira 30 tahun.

"Pokok asalnya hidup sendiri di dalam hutan dan apabila orang kampung teroka Kampung Ulu Cheka, memang pokok itu masih hidup, tetapi arwah ayah saya biakkan dengan kaedah kahwin pucuk baji dan ditanam ke kawasan ini.

"Memang sejak dahulu ia menjadi rebutan penggemar durian kerana isi kekuningan serta tebal dengan rasa lemak manis dan pahit-pahit," katanya ketika ditemuk di sini semalam.

Menurutnya, pada masa ini, setiap pokok durian DAF1 menghasilkan purata 100 hingga 150 biji setiap kali musim dengan berat melebihi dua kilogram sebiji.

Katanya, permintaan yang diterima daripada orang ramai amat menggalakkan sekali sehingga ia tidak mencukupi bagi menampung permintaan.

Sementara itu, Pegawai Pertanian Daerah Jerantut, Rafeah Rabiatun Othman berkata, DAF1 yang mempunyai 'wow' faktor berjaya didaftarkan pada awal tahun ini, sekali gus menjadi buah durian kampung pertama didaftarkan di daerah ini.

Katanya, buah tersebut telah berjaya dilakukan pencirian termasuk syarat sekurang-kurangnya mempunyai lima pokok yang berbuah dengan ciri sama.

"Pada masa ini, kami sedang giat melakukan pencirian ke atas durian damak king bagi mendaftarkan durian berkenaan sebagai durian kampung premium dalam masa terdekat," ujarnya.

**MOHD. IDAFI menunjukkan isi DAF1 yang muncul durian kampung premium pertama bagi daerah Jerantut.**

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# Spesies ikan bandar raya 'ancam' Negeri Sembilan

Oleh **BADRUL HAFIZAN MAT ISA**
badrul.isa@mediamulia.com.my

**SEREMBAN:** Ancaman ikan asing khususnya ikan *Pleco* atau dikenali sebagai ikan bandar raya turut dihadapi negeri ini apabila Jabatan Perikanan mengesahkan sungai-sungai di sekitar kawasan Mambau, di sini terjejas dengan kehadiran spesies itu.

Ketua Cawangan Sumber Perikanan Tangkapan Jabatan Perikanan Negeri Sembilan, Doreen Wee Siew Leen berkata, Sungai Kampung Kayu Ara, Mambau khususnya terjejas dengan masalah tersebut dan dibuktikan menerusi pemantauan dilakukan bersama Komuniti Pemburu Ikan Bandaraya (KPIB), kelmarin.

Katanya, persampelan yang dibuat menggunakan jala di sungai itu baru-baru ini mendapati, sebanyak 41 ekor ikan bandar raya selain spesies ikan asing lain iaitu seekor ikan lampam Siam dan seekor tilapia hitam diperoleh dengan sekali tebar sahaja.

"Sungai ini diketahui memang sudah banyak ikan bandar raya dan kali ini disahkan lagi hasil pemantauan yang dibuat.

"Buat masa ini Sungai Kampung Kayu Ara paling banyak ikan bandar raya, di sungai-sungai lain kami ada juga menerima aduan tetapi perlu dibuat pengesahan terlebih dahulu," katanya ketika dihubungi *Utusan Malaysia* di sini.

Beliau berkata, sebagai usaha membanteras kehadiran ikan bandar raya, pihaknya bersama KPIB mengadakan Program Inventori Perikanan dan Buru Ikan Asing di Kampung Kayu Ara, bulan depan.

"Ia bukan hanya memburu ikan bandar raya tetapi ikan asing lain. Selepas itu pihak kami akan memantau di sungai-sungai lain berdasarkan aduan yang diterima," katanya.

Ikan bandar raya adalah spesies invasif yang mana tabiat pemakanan, pembiakan dan perkembangannya mengganggu habitat ikan asli di perairan tempatan.

SEBAHAGIAN ikan bandar raya yang ditangkap di Sungai Kampung Kayu Ara, Mambau, Seremban, kelmarin.

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| 6/9/2024 | KOSMO | NEGARA | 3 |

ANGGOTA tentera mengawal lembu dan kerbau yang dirampas di tebing Sungai Golok di Tanah Merah kelmarin.

# Penyeludup lembu, kerbau cabut lari tinggalkan Mykad

**TANAH MERAH** – Dua lelaki yang sedang menyeludup lembu dan kerbau lari lintang-pulang dengan meninggalkan MyKad selepas menyedari kegiatan haram mereka dikesan anggota tentera di tebing Sungai Golok di sini kelmarin.

Dua lelaki itu menyeludup sembilan haiwan ternakan tersebut di kawasan pemantauan Briged Kelapan Infantri Malaysia berdekatan sempadan Malaysia-Thailand pada pukul 6.15 petang.

Markas Divisyen Kedua Infantri Malaysia (Dua Divisyen) berkata, ketika kejadian, mereka berdua sempat melarikan diri dengan menyeberangi Sungai Golok ke negara jiran dengan meninggalkan kerbau dan lembu bernilai RM 78,705.

"Pemeriksaan di lokasi tersebut mendapati penyeludup meninggalkan motosikal dan barangan peribadi termasuk kad pengenalan (MyKad)," katanya dalam satu kenyataan semalam.

Menurut kenyataan itu, pihak tentera kemudian membuat laporan di Balai Polis Lalang Pepuyu dan kesemua haiwan tersebut diserahkan kepada Jabatan Perkhidmatan Kuarantin dan Pemeriksaan Malaysia (Maqis).

Kes disiasat oleh Jabatan Kastam Diraja Malaysia, Kompleks Imigresen, Kastam, Kuarantin dan Keselamatan (ICQS) Bukit Bunga.

Mengikut rekod, terdapat tiga kes rampasan melibatkan haiwan ternakan oleh tentera sepanjang tahun ini melibatkan 69 ekor lembu pada 16 Jun, 17 ekor lembu (19 Ogos) dan yang terbaharu kelmarin.

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# Tiada air: Tiga musim tidak tanam padi, pesawah hilang punca rezeki

Oleh **ROSMIZAN RESDI**
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**KOTA BHARU:** Petani di Kampung But, Ketereh di sini mendakwa terpaksa menggunakan wang tabungan untuk meneruskan kelangsungan hidup selepas tidak dapat mengusahakan tanaman padi ekoran masalah bekalan air.

Dakwa mereka, keadaan itu menyebabkan mereka mengalami kerugian teruk dalam tempoh tiga musim berturut-turut kerana kehilangan sumber pendapatan.

Seorang pesawah, Aswari Nawi, 39, berkata, ketika ini dia bergantung sepenuhnya kepada wang tabungan setelah tiga musim kehilangan sumber pendapatan akibat masalah ketiadaan air.

Menurutnya, bagi menggelak keadaan menjadi lebih parah dia terpaksa berjimat cermat bagi memastikan kewangannya diurus dengan baik.

"Keadaan ini sangat terkesan buat kami sebagai pesawah kerana ini adalah satu-satunya mata pencarian kami," katanya.

Tinjauan *Utusan Malaysia* rata-rata pesawah mengeluh dan tersepit sama ada mahu atau tidak mengambil risiko mengusahakan sawah padi susulan perit dengan ketiadaan sumber bekalan air ketika ini.

Dakwa mereka, masalah itu akan berterusan selagi Lembaga Kemajuan Pertanian Kemubu (KADA) tidak mampu menyelesaikan masalah bekalan air.

Sementara itu, seorang lagi petani Tamlikhan Mohd. Resdi, 39, memberitahu, sudah tiga musim berturut-turut dia tidak dapat mengusahakan tanaman padi akibat masalah tersebut.

Katanya, situasi itu menyebabkan dia dan rakan-rakan petani lain sudah kehabisan modal pusingan untuk menanam padi.

"Besar harapan saya agar masalah air ini segera diselesaikan, jika tidak kami akan terus berdepan dengan kerugian sekali gus boleh menjejaskan sumber makanan negara.

"Sekiranya kami ambil keputusan untuk meneruskan kerja-kerja tanaman padi musim ini, berkemungkinan besar lebih banyak kerugian terpaksa ditanggung kerana musim tengkujuh semakin menghampiri," ujarnya.

**SEBAHAGIAN petani menunjukkan kawasan sawah yang kering kontang akibat masalah tiada air di Kampung But, Ketereh semalam. - UTUSAN/ROSMIZAN**

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# e-Tani jadi ejen perubahan pembangunan pertanian Sarawak

KOTA SAMARAHAN, 5 Sept: Platform e-Tani di bawah Jabatan Pertanian Sarawak bakal menjadi ejen perubahan bagi pembangunan pertanian negeri, kata Menteri Industri Makanan, Komoditi dan Pembangunan Wilayah Sarawak Dato Sri Dr Stephen Rundi Utom.

Beliau berkata e-Tani ialah sistem dalam talian komprehensif yang direka untuk merevolusikan cara petani menerima bantuan dan mengurus sumber mereka, di samping menjadi sistem dalam talian yang membolehkan petani mendaftar dan membuat profil.

"Platform ini membantu menjejaki aktiviti mereka, mengenal pasti perniagaan utama mereka, dan memahami keperluan khusus mereka," katanya kepada pemberita selepas lawatan kerja ke bangunan baharu Pertubuhan Peladang Sarawak (PPNS) di sini, hari ini.

Dr Rundi berkata melalui platform itu, kerajaan boleh menyediakan petani dengan peruntukan sumber yang cekap berdasarkan keperluan mereka.

"Dengan menjejaki jenis pertanian dan keperluan khusus setiap petani melalui profil e-Tani mereka, sistem ini boleh memperuntukkan sumber dan bantuan dengan lebih cekap.

"Ini membantu mengelakkan situasi yang menyebabkan bekalan seperti baja diberikan kepada mereka yang tidak memerlukannya, sekali gus meminimumkan pembaziran," katanya.

Beliau berkata platform itu menyediakan maklumat tentang tempat untuk mencari produk berkualiti terbaik dan cara mendapatkan barangan terbaik, membantu petani memahami pengkhususan produk serantau.

Sementara itu, PPNS dalam kenyataan berkata bangunan baharunya yang terletak di sini akan dibuka secara rasmi oleh Premier Sarawak Tan Sri Abang Johari Tun Openg pada 22 Sept.

Bangunan yang dibina dengan kos kira-kira RM20 juta itu terdiri daripada pejabat utama, bilik mesyuarat, e-Kedai Peladang, dewan majlis, galeri jualan, pusat perniagaan, halaman pembenihan, Kiosk Input Agri, pasar tani dan kemudahan lain.

Pembangunan di bawah Fasa Dua dijangka bermula tahun depan yang akan merangkumi gudang untuk input dan pengangkutan pertanian, bilik sejuk untuk produk pertanian,

kawasan kemudahan eksport untuk pelepasan kastam, dan kawasan lapang untuk dataran perayaan. – TVS

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# Dr Rundi: New farmers organisation complex in Kota Samarahan expected to be game changer

BY DESIREE DAVID ON SEPTEMBER 5, 2024, THURSDAY AT 5:10 PM SARAWAK

*For the freshest news, join The Borneo Post's Telegram Channel and The Borneo Post on Newswav.*

*Dr Rundi speaks to the media after his work visit to the new PPNS complex. – Photo by Chimon Upon*

KOTA SAMARAHAN (Sept 5): The newly built Sarawak State Farmers Organisation (PPNS) complex is anticipated to be a game changer for local farmers, offering improved facilities to help them tap into more profitable markets, said Dato Sri Dr Stephen Rundi Utom.

According to the Minister of Food Industries, Commodities and Regional Development (M-Ficord), the new facilities will equip farmers with the necessary guidance on sales management and help them expand their market reach.

He said Sarawak has over 9,600 products and more farmers are encouraged to market their products through the platforms given by PPNS.

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"PPNS cannot reject any farmer. We have to look at the potential of each farmer and advise them which products have the best marketability.

"Sometimes, some of these products require consistent supply as some of them are seasonal or available year-round.

"Durian and other fruits are seasonal, but once we have these seasonal fruits, we must go downstream and process them so the sale will be continued," said Dr Rundi during a media briefing after his work visit to the new PPNS complex here today.

Speaking on the new PPNS complex, Dr Rundi said it will function as a one-stop centre for agricultural retail and downstream activities.

He emphasised that the ministry's objective is to provide those in Sarawak's agricultural sector with access to a comprehensive supply chain, covering everything from production to retail.

Covering around 5.84 acres, the facility is scheduled to be officially inaugurated by Premier Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Abang Johari Tun Openg on Sept 25.

PPNS also plans to build a warehouse for agricultural input and transportation, cold rooms for farmers' products, and an export facility area for customs clearance.

Among the new building's facilities are Peladang e-Shop, a hall, a business centre, a seedling courtyard, agri-input kiosks, a farmers market, a sales gallery, a cafeteria and a prayer room.

By 2025, the centre will also feature an open space for festivals and events.

Meanwhile, Dr Rundi also revealed that 22 vendors from Sarawak will participate in the Malaysian Agriculture, Horticulture and Agro Tourism (Maha) 2024 exhibition.

M-Ficord deputy permanent-secretary Sayed Ismail Nasiruddin Wan Hashim said the signature products that will be brought to the exhibition would be gula apong, tilapia and terubok, kolon mee and laksa.

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# From ploughs to **propellers**

Enterprising youths see a promising future in offering drone services that help transform farming practices in parts of Selangor. However, they fear regulations and costly licences may clip ambitions to scale greater heights. **>2&3**

**New tech takes off:** Shahmi Farhan Ridzuwan readying his drone to spray fertiliser on a padi field in Tanjung Karang, Selangor. — GRACE CHEN/The Star

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A drone being used to spray biofertiliser over a padi field in Tanjung Karang, Selangor.

# Demand soars for drone operators

## Service helps Selangor padi farmers, plantation workers to complete big tasks faster

Story and photos by GRACE CHEN
gracechen@thestar.com.my

UPON graduating from Universiti Islam Selangor in 2019, Shahmi Farhan Ridzuwan sought work.

Shahmi, who hails from the *padi*-growing region of north-west Selangor, wasted no time in between interviews.

He helped at a friend's burger stall and took part-time jobs at paddy fields to cut grass and clean ditches.

Life for the business degree graduate changed after he was offered the chance to become a drone operator with Koperasi Wawasan Tani Simpang Lima Sungai Besar Bhd (KWTSL).

The government cooperative was formed under the agricultural sector during the Economic Transformation Programme in 2012.

### Drone training, business

Shahmi said he learned to fly drones that could dispense sprays for plant nourishment, soil treatment or pest control.

"We started with theory lessons at the Sungai Burung Agricultural Department.

"There was even a simulator. Participants with the highest scores were given prizes," he said.

With a RM42,000 loan from his mother, he bought his own drone and offered his service to paddy farmers.

Now at 31, he makes close to RM6,000 a month providing service at these fields in Sabak Bernam, Selangor.

His clients are mostly in Bagan Terap, Sungai Besar as well as Kampung Seri Tiram Jaya and Sawah Sempadan in Tanjung Karang.

But his most unforgettable task involved dispersing pesticide to combat fly infestations in Bagan Terap and Sungai Tengi in Kuala Kubu Baru two years ago.

"Due to nearby chicken farms, the fly infestation in the residential area got so bad that the people found it hard to even eat. While they were eating, no fewer than six flies would settle on their hands," he said.

Mohd Naim shows a modified device with a turbo system for a drone using a shower head to deliver a high-pressure spray.

On an average day, Shahmi's drone is able to cover up to 21.78ha.

By rough estimates, the time required for his drone work to cover each hectare is no more than 10 minutes, but this also depends on whether manual or automatic modes are used.

"In fields where there are structures such as farmhouses, the drone will be operated manually so that pesticide don't end up on roofs, which will be a loss.

"Automatic mode is used over open fields. (Boundary) Points can be set on the controller and the machine will fly on its own," he said.

The wind factor is also crucial when operating a drone.

This includes knowing the wind's direction at all times to prevent the drone from colliding with utility poles or trees.

"It is also to ensure the drone's spray load does not end up in neighbouring fields.

"In the worst-case scenario, misjudging the wind direction can result in poisons like insecticide or pesticide being blown into your face," said Shahmi.

### Looking to the skies

Mohd Maksom Ramli, 61, and Sulaiman Chik, 70, both former KWTSL chairmen, recalled when drones first made an appearance in Sungai Besar.

Mohd Maksom said it was 2013, a year after the formation of the cooperative. Older *padi* farmers, he said, questioned its efficacy.

"Being used to the traditional way of carrying a heavy knapsack sprayer to apply pesticide and fertiliser, they could not accept that the task could be done just by pressing buttons while standing beside the road.

"They changed their minds after one season (approximately 120 days) when they saw the results," he said.

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Sulaiman says he saw the potential of using remotely controlled flying robots for agriculture after watching a demonstration.

Mohd Maksom says older farmers were at first sceptical but changed their minds after seeing the results of drone use.

Supramaniam says drone use has made agricultural work less laborious.

(Above) Readings on the console of a spraying drone being used on a plantation.

(Left) Shahmi filling his drone, which has a 60-litre capacity, with liquid fertiliser.

In 2017, KWTSL invested RM68,000 to buy two 15-litre capacity drones.

The cooperative also got a RM75,000 drone from the Selangor Economic Planning Unit in 2021.

Sulaiman said drone use had resolved labour shortage faced by farmers.

In 2014, farmers had to collectively pay as much as RM1mil for foreign labour to work on 547ha of paddy fields under the cooperative.

"Back then, foremost on my mind was how to reduce this dependency.

"Coincidentally, at around the same time, some engineering students from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) were conducting a demonstration at Sawah Sempadan in Tanjung Karang, Kuala Selangor.

"So I got UPM to carry out a similar demonstration at Sungai Panjang.

"After watching the demonstration, I could see the potential for this technological edge," said Sulaiman.

To address the issue of manpower shortages, the cooperative started offering drone services to farmers for about RM50 per lot, paying village youths to do the job.

"In the beginning, we sought assistance from UPM and subsequently a private drone company to get the job done.

"Halfway through, we were approached by an agricultural solutions company from Kedah.

"Besides selling us the machines, it provided after-sales services in the form of training classes for customers.

"The spillover effect from this was the creation of new jobs for the village youths as drone operators," said Sulaiman.

## Banking on new technology

Among the village youths who adopted the new technology were Sulaiman's sons.

Mohd Naim Shah Sulaiman, 36, is now part of a family-owned enterprise in Simpang Lima that sells pesticides, does drone repairs and crop dusting as well as provides training for agricultural drone operators.

Mohd Naim said the demand for drone use had prompted his four brothers and him to go into business in 2020.

"We started while the movement control order (MCO) was still in force.

"This was a time when there was an acute shortage in foreign labour.

"Incidences of pest attacks and diseases were also high, to the extent that KWTSL's drone unit was unable to cope with the high demand.

"So, we applied for a loan from AgroBank and we bought four agricultural drones," he said.

Today, the family business has seven drones, including a unit from the Selangor Economic Planning Unit.

"During its period of service with KWTSL from September 2021 to January 2022, the drone crashed multiple times, requiring expensive repairs.

"To offset the cost, KWTSL handed the drone to our company to be used on a commission basis," said Mohd Naim.

To achieve better efficiency, a "turbo nozzle" was affixed to its arms. The nozzle is a shower head outfitted with a motor to deliver higher pressure output, in order to achieve better spray coverage.

The company was also appointed as sales representative for Selangor by the agricultural drones distributor.

There are now about 50 drone operators who are doing this full-time.

While demand for their services remained high, Mohd Naim said there was growing concern over directives from the Civil Aviation Authority for drone operators to conform to regulatory requirements.

"The RM3,500 fee to obtain the competency certificate for remote pilots is too expensive.

"The manual is written entirely in English. Many operators in our village have limited proficiency in the language. As such, it would be helpful if the manual for the certificate of competency for remote pilots could be translated into Malay," he said.

Plantation sector veteran Supramaniam Ramasamy, 66, said the earliest use of agricultural drones could be traced back to 1987 in the United States of America when they were used to take photos.

In 2006, drones were used to spray pesticides and by 2010, their usage for this function had become widespread.

"We have used drones for several functions such as fertilising, applying pesticide, seeding and precision mapping, whereby we fly these robots over an area to chart its topography," said Supramaniam, managing director of a company that specialises in plantation management, development and advisory.

A graduate of Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (now Universiti Putra Malaysia) and the University of Chicago in the US, he has over 40 years of experience in the plantation sector for palm oil, rubber, cocoa, almond and coffee.

"With drones, we are able to see if an area is hilly, if water logging is occurring at low-lying zones or if there is a river flowing through," he said.

"We can also see the types of vegetation growing there, whether it is grassland or a degraded forest.

"All this information is useful for planning and decision making," he elaborated.

He also utilises the technology for crop monitoring, where a drone is flown over plants to map foliage colour.

For example, if the colour is yellow, it may mean nitrogen levels are low, and if there is crinkling, it may indicate boron deficiency.

Supramaniam said drone use had made agricultural work less laborious.

Tasks that had in the past required a fair amount of physical strength, could now be done with more ease.

But Supramaniam has observed that despite the advantages, drones are still not widely used in Malaysia.

"There are various reasons for this, including the cost of purchasing a drone and the skill needed to fly one.

"Company policy also matters. Some companies are more comfortable with hiring workers.

"In a nutshell, the uptake on drone use is still slow.

"Compared to Australia and Europe, we still have a long way to go," he concluded.