

KPPK targets 1,000 hectares of kenaf cultivation in T'ganu by years' end

SETIU, July 18 -- The Plantation Industries and Commodities Ministry (KPPK) is targeting 1000 hectares (ha) of kenaf cultivation in Terengganu by the end of the year.

Its minister Datuk Dr Mohd Khairuddin Aman Razali said the crop was currently being grown on over 391.6 ha of land in Terengganu, and he was optimistic that the target could be achieved, as the state had more than 8,000 parcels of idle land.

"We hope to attract the interest of young university graduates to get involved in the plantation sector...a massive campaign should be carried out to encourage them to venture into kenaf cultivation.

"They should be informed that the government has also provided grant allocations in terms of working capital (worth more than RM2,000 per ha of crops)," he told reporters after presenting RM195,800 in assistance to the representatives of 249 Terengganu kenaf growers here today.

The government, through the National Kenaf and Tobacco Board (LKTN) has allocated RM968,680 for 1,357 kenaf growers in Kedah, Pahang, Kelantan, and Terengganu as an initiative under the Prihatin Rakyat Economic Stimulus Package to help those whose incomes were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mohd Khairuddin said the demand for kenaf-based downstream products such as furniture (sofas and mattresses), personal care products, and cosmetics, was also encouraging.

"...that's why we want young people to start planting kenaf immediately. In Setiu itself there is already a kenaf processing factory that uses 'non-woven thermobonding' technology in Kampung Saujana, which will facilitate optimal production-levels.

"The government will also expand the campaign to manufacture kenaf-based products to small and medium industry (SMI) entrepreneurs to meet the ever-increasing demand from consumers," he said.

Meanwhile, LKTN chairman Dr Azman Ibrahim, who is also State Agriculture, Agro-based Industry and Rural Development Committee chairman said suitable land had already been identified to cultivate kenaf.

"Kenaf is a short-term crop, so any interested entrepreneur can grow it on idle land with the permission of the owner more easily.

"We are in the process of analysing all the issues related to this idle land and trying to achieve the target of growing 1000 ha of kenaf in the next six months as KPPK has targeted," he said.

The classification of idle land in Terengganu is the land owned by individuals or companies with an area of more than one acre (0.4ha) which has not been developed for three consecutive years, however, government land is not considered idle land.

-- BERNAMA