

Setting up of advisory panel to boost agri sector: Rahim

KOTA KINABALU: Minister of Agriculture and Food Industries, Datuk Abdul Rahim Ismail is confident that the setting up of the Food Industry Development Advisory Panel would help further develop the agriculture industry in the state.

Rahim said this would in particular boost the food sector which is the focus of the government so that it could contribute towards

the state's economy.

He said that the panel headed by experts in various fields related to agriculture would increase the viability of the industry and generate agro-based economy in Sabah.

"We want to explore the sector further by introducing new high quality padi hybrids and tropical fruits through scientific approaches," he said.

He went on to say that the panel would also be instrumental in establishing an efficient working network to develop the industry.

According to him, the network set up a year ago consisted of experts from the public and private higher institutions of learning as well as those who had once served in the ministry and department.

In the aquaculture and seaweed

sectors, for example, the ministry has advisors from Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) who are in collaboration with scientists from Japan and Korea to carry out research and development.

The joint-effort seeks new ways to improve the processing, streaming and value-added products of seaweed as well as the potentials of deep sea fishing.

There will be more of such pro-

jects he assured ranging from cultivation and livestock farming to food production.

All that was needed now was to pool experts in the country to exploit the potentials of the agriculture industry in Sabah.

He said the government was not only intent on opening new areas but more on developing idle land for padi cultivation and livestock farming. — *Kamaruddin Liusin*