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# Padi farmers enjoying higher yield

By JUNAID IBRAHIM  
junaid.ibrahim@thestar.com.my

**SEKINCHAN:** Padi farmers who used the locally-developed NMR152 seed are enjoying a higher yield between 20% and 60% since its introduction, says Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Chang Lih Kang.

The padi seed that was launched in 2021 has proven to be more resilient against extreme weather which includes drought and flood, he said.

He said the seed has become popular among farmers as it could help in reducing cost while producing higher yields.

"The NMR152 variety was developed by the Malaysian Nuclear Agency and it is more resilient against extreme weather.

"The seed has been more popular due to its higher productivity," he told reporters after visiting an NMR152 yielding site at HMN Sdn Bhd here yesterday.

Chang said his ministry would be discussing several issues with the Agriculture and Food Security Ministry, especially matters related to the new seed (NMR152) quota for farmers.

He said that currently, on average, the usage of the seeds distributed to padi farmers nationwide ranged between 10% to 20%.

"We aim to reach even greater numbers, probably at 30%."

In Selangor, he said about 24% of padi farmers have been using the NMR152 seed.

He also said that his ministry would be in talks with the Agriculture and Food Security Ministry to organise sandbox projects to expedite the development of NMR152 and increase its distribution.

"This is an important effort to be made in order to mitigate food security issues in Malaysia,"



**Better care, better yield:** A view of a padi field in Sekinchan. — FAIHAN GHANI/The Star

he added.

HMN Sdn Bhd managing director Datuk Mansor Mohd Nor said the average padi fields in Selangor are about 18,000ha.

"Out of the total, about 3,000ha to 4,000ha are using the seed. On average, farmers can yield an extra eight to 10 tonnes of the crop," he said.

Nuclear Malaysia senior research officer Dr Sobri Hussein said the higher yield can be achieved with padi field care and management.

"The higher yield could be

achieved if there is proper care and management that included soil types," he said.

In LANGKAWI, Muda Agricultural Development Authority (Mada) chairman Datuk Dr Ismail Salleh said Kedah's padi fields were unaffected by the El Nino phenomenon.

"So far, half of the crops have already been harvested. El Nino can affect padi at two stages – the first 60 days of planting and the pollination stage," he said.

He said the hot weather is expected to last till June, when the

new planting stage takes place.

As such, Ismail said the state had taken steps to ensure enough water supply by way of irrigation. He said that the dry spell was not expected to affect the next planting stage.

"Mada has initiated rotational irrigation tailored to the specific needs of rice cultivation in each region based on the crop phases.

"We have advised farmers to use water prudently and minimise wastage to promote sustainable agricultural practices," he said.

DISEDIAKAN  
OLEH

PN NOR SURIANI BINTI MOHD ZIN (S44), BPM