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DISEDIAKAN OLEH:

CAWANGAN KOMUNIKASI KORPORAT (MADA)

KERATAN AKHBAR : THE STAR
TARIKH : 3 SEPTEMBER 2023
PERKARA : PERTANIAN

'Economy rice' no more

Eatery owners no longer able to absorb cost as prices soar

By CHARLES RAMENDRAN
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PETALING JAYA: Restaurant owners are looking at raising the price of their rice dishes as the cost of imported rice goes up by 36%, driven by factors including climate change and conflicts.

"We will be left with no choice but to pass the extra cost to our customers. We can expect to see the price of a plate of rice to go up by about 20sen," said Wong Choy Sim, who owns a popular Chinese restaurant in Tapah, Perak.

He said that since eatery operators would want to sustain their business, this means diners would have to face price increases.

Fediberas Nasional Bhd (Bernas) said on Friday that the price of white rice had been increased with immediate effect to RM3,200 from RM2,350 per metric tonne due to unpredictable factors such as climate change, the weakening of the foreign currency exchange rate, high operating costs and conflicts in the region.

The price hike will cost consumers 85sen more for a kilo-gramme of imported white rice.

Mohd Arsyad Azarin, the owner of Nasi Kandar Arsyad restaurant here, estimated that the price of a meal might go up by between 50sen and 80sen at least, with the rise of not just imported rice but all other ingredients.

"It is not just the price of rice that is rising but everything else such as chicken, red meat, vegetables and ingredients required for making curries. We are currently absorbing the costs, but how long can we sustain this?" he said.



Growing concern: Malaysia is not the only country facing a price hike in rice. Other key exporting countries, including Thailand and Vietnam, have also been affected.

Habib Shahnul Hameed, who owns a nasi kandar restaurant in Kelana Jaya here, said he would absorb the price increase for now to avoid putting off his customers.

But he was of the view that the situation could get serious.

"The prices of all other food items are already rising. And now, with the price of rice going up, it will make things worse for both restaurant owners and their customers," he said.

He added that the government should offer more subsidies or increase the production of rice.

Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (Fomca) president Danik N. Marimuthu proposed that the government have programmes to cultivate padi for Malaysia to be self-sufficient in its rice supply instead of

relying on imports.

The country should cease to depend on other countries for the supply of rice, he added.

Instead, he said the country should take advantage of its fertile land to grow padi.

"In the 1960s and 1970s, we were self-sufficient, but today, we rely on imports from various countries. This shows the decline is getting bad and that our food policy is not sustainable.

"The food import bill has gone up to by between RM55bil and RM60bil. If the government of the day is not addressing food security issues, then price controls and monitoring will not work," he added.

Malaysia is not the only country facing a price hike in rice. Other key exporting countries, includ-

ing Thailand and Vietnam, have seen prices going up by around 20%.

This came in the wake of India, the world's biggest shipper of the grain, banning the export of a variety of rice in July, tightening global supplies.

Traders are now expecting similar supply curbs by other exporters needing to ensure domestic food security, which has left importers scrambling to secure shipments.

Last year, India already banned exports of broken rice and imposed a duty on shipments of various grades of rice.

Indonesia's National Food Agency said the El Nino was expected to lead to a decline in domestic rice production, with an estimated drop of around 5%.

KERATAN AKHBAR : MINGGUAN MALAYSIA

TARIKH : 3 SEPTEMBER 2023

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Pengilang tambah kuota 20 peratus kepada Bernas, pemborong

Harga beras putih tempatan kekal RM2.60 sekilogram

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KUALA LUMPUR: Harga beras putih tempatan masih kekal RM2.60 sekilogram yang terendah di rantau ini ketika harga beras import terus meningkat.

Kementerian Pertanian dan Keterjaminan Makanan berkata, kerajaan pada masa sama turut melaksanakan langkah intervensi yang mana pengilang bersetuju memberi tambahan 20 peratus kuota bagi meningkatkan bekalan beras.

Katanya, pengilang padi bersetuju memberi tambahan 20 peratus kuota padi itu kepada kerajaan melalui Padiberas Nasional Berhad (Bernas) dan pemborong bumiputera.

Kementerian itu berkata, keputusan tersebut dicapai melalui sesi libat urus bersama industri pengilang padi dan pemborong beras zon utara 27 Ogos lalu di Alor Setar, Kedah.

"Kerajaan berharap dengan langkah ini, bekalan beras putih tempatan di pasaran kembali penuh dalam waktu terdekat dengan pertambahan jumlah pengeluarannya di pasaran.

"Sehingga kini, harga beras putih tempatan masih kekal pada harga kawalan RM2.60 sekilogram sejak tahun 2008 dan ia adalah harga terendah di

rantau ini," katanya dalam satu kenyataan, semalam.

Dalam pada itu, kementerian telah melancarkan Operasi Beras Putih (OP BPT) 16 Ogos lalu bagi memupuk pemeriksaan dan penguatkuasaan peringkat pengilang padi dan pemborong beras.

"Jika didapati ada pihak gagal memenuhi perundangan Akta Kawalan Padi dan Beras 1994 (Akta-522), kerajaan melalui kuasa Ketua Pengarah Kawalselia Padi dan Beras berhak membatalkan atau mengantung setiap lesen yang telah dikeluarkan," katanya.

Selain itu, kementerian akan mengadakan sesi dialog Belanjawan 2024 bersama pemain industri atau pihak berkepentingan di bawah subsektor padi pada 7 September ini di Taman Ekspo Pertanian Malaysia (MAEPS) Serdang.

"Ia bertujuan bagi mendapatkan input dan pandangan daripada pemain industri untuk meningkatkan pengeluaran beras tempatan," katanya.

Kelmarin, Bernas mengumumkan pelarasan harga jualan beras putih import di pintu gudangnya seluruh negara daripada RM2,350 per tan metrik kepada RM3,200 per tan metrik berkuatkuasa 1 September lalu sejajar dengan harga terkini beras putih import di



Pengilang padi telah bersetuju memberi tambahan 20 peratus kuota padi kepada kerajaan melalui Padiberas Nasional Berhad (Bernas) dan pemborong pemborong bumiputera."

pasaran antarabangsa.

Bernas dalam kenyataan memaklumkan, pihaknya mengharungi separuh tahun pertama yang sangat mencabar disebabkan ketidakpastian pelbagai faktor luaran seperti perubahan iklim, kadar pertukaran matawang asing yang semakin lemah, kos operasi yang tinggi dan konflik serantau.

Katanya, faktor-faktor itu secara kolektif telah mencetuskan kesan ketara ke atas pasaran dagangan beras global, ditambah lagi dengan kesan larangan pengeksportan beras putih yang diumumkan oleh

India baru-baru ini.

"Bernas telah menanggung kesan kenaikan harga beras import sejak beberapa tahun kebelakangan ini.

"Walaupun bagaimanapun, akibat ketidakpastian keadaan semasa dan setelah mempertimbangkan keperluan untuk memastikan operasi pertanian yang mampan dan kestabilan industri, pelarasan harga adalah perlu dan tidak dapat dielakkan buat masa ini," katanya.

Pasaran beras global termasuk beberapa negara ASEAN melonjak minggu lalu ke tahap tertinggi yang dicatatkan dalam tempoh 12 tahun, berikutan tindakan India melarang eksport beras putih bukan basmati, baru-baru ini.

Malah, harga gred beras Vietnam lima peratus pecah pada 27 Julai melonjak ke tahap yang belum pernah berlalu sebelum ini, iaitu AS\$550 - AS\$575 (RM2,500 - RM3,470) setiap tan, menandakan harga tertinggi sejak 2011.

Sementara itu, pasaran beras Thailand juga mengalami lonjakan harga yang selari apabila harga gred beras Thailand lima peratus hancur melonjak pada AS\$605-AS\$610 (RM2,74 - RM2,765) setiap tan, mencatatkan paras tertinggi dalam tempoh 11 tahun lalu.

KERATAN AKHBAR : SINAR AHAD
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SELESAI MASALAH BEKALAN BERAS

- Tinjauan Sinar Ahad mendapati orang ramai gusar susulan kekurangan bekalan beras putih tempatan yang harganya lebih murah kerana dikawal kerajaan, apatah lagi beras import kini semakin mahal sehingga mencecah RM38 bagi kampak 10 kilogram.
- Kementerian Pertanian dan Keterjaminan Makanan sudah mengarahkan pengilang padi dan pemborong beras meningkatkan bekalan beras putih tempatan sebanyak 20 peratus menerusi Program Khas Beras Putih Tempatan, sebagai langkah intervensi memulihkan bekalan itu di pasaran.
- Bernas mengesahkan harga beras putih import meningkat 36 peratus lalu dan RM2,350 kepada RM3,200 satu tan metrik berkuat kuasa Jumaat lalu.

MUKA 2 & 4

A photograph showing two hands held palm-up, each filled with a generous amount of white, long-grain rice. The rice is piled in the center of each hand, and the background is a plain, light-colored surface.

KERATAN AKHBAR : SINAR AHAD

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Tambah bekalan beras 20 peratus

Kerajaan arah pengilang padi, pemborong beras bantu pulih bekalan di pasaran

PUTRAJAYA

Pengilang padi dan pemborong beras diminta untuk meningkatkan bekalan beras putih tempatan (BPT) sebanyak 20 peratus menerusi Program Khas Beras Putih Tempatan, sebagai langkah intervensi memulihkan bekalan itu di pasaran.

Kementerian Pertanian dan Keterjaminan Makanan (KPKM) dalam kenyataan pada Sabtu memaklumkan hasrat tersebut telah dipersetujui pengilang padi dan pemborong beras dalam satu sesi libat urus pada 27 Ogos lepas, di Alor Setar, Kedah.

"Melalui Program Khas BPT ini, pihak Padiberas Nasional Bhd (Bernas) akan memberikan kuota tambahan tersebut kepada pemborong-pemborong bumiputera untuk menambah bekalan BPT negara," menurut kenyataan itu.

Menurut KPKM, harga BPT masih kekal pada harga kawalan iaitu RM2.60 sekilogram sejak 2008 dan ia merupakan harga terendah di rantau ini.

Ia diikuti Thailand yang menjual komoditi itu pada harga RM2.70 sekilogram dan Kemboja RM3.20 sekilogram.



KPKM telah meminta pengilang padi dan pemborong beras menambah bekalan beras putih tempatan sebanyak 20 peratus lagi.



Menurut KPKM, Sesi Dialog Belanjawan 2024 KPKM bersama pemain industri dan pihak berkepentingan di bawah sub-sektor padi akan diadakan di Taman Ekspo Pertanian Malaysia Serdang (MAEPS), pada 7 September ini.

Sesi tersebut bertujuan mendapatkan input dan pandangan daripada pemain industri mengenai kaedah meningkatkan pengeluaran BPT.

Dari segi pemantauan terhadap komoditi itu, KPKM memaklumkan ia dijalankan secara berterusan menerusi Op Jamin yang diperkenalkan pada 1 Julai lepas, dengan kerjasama Kawalselia Padi dan Beras serta Bahagian Penguat Kuasa Kementerian Perdagangan Dalam Negeri dan Kos Sara Hidup.

Kementerian itu turut melancarkan Operasi Beras Putih (Op BPT) pada 16 Ogos lepas yang menumpukan pada pemeriksaan dan penguatkuasaan di peringkat pengilang padi dan pemborong beras.

Menurut KPKM, sebarang kesalahan di bawah Akta Kawalan Padi dan Beras 1994 (Akta 522), boleh menyebabkan lesen pihak terbabit dibatal atau digantung menerusi kuasa Ketua Pengarah Kawalselia Padi dan Beras.

Bernas sebelum ini menyelaraskan harga jualan beras putih import seluruh negara daripada RM2,350 satu tan kepada RM3,200 satu tan berkuat kuasa Jumaat lalu.

Bernas dalam satu kenyataan berkata, langkah pelarasan itu juga sejajar dengan harga terkini beras putih import di pasaran antarabangsa.

KERATAN AKHBAR : SINAR AHAD
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Harga naik, jualan Rahmah membantu

KOTA BHARU - Penduduk Program Perumahan Rakyat (PPR) di sini tidak melepaskan peluang membeli beras dan barangan harian pada Jualan Rahmah Kasih Sayang sempena Sambutan Bulan Kebangsaan pada Sabtu.

Beberapa penduduk yang ditemui di Dewan PPR itu berkata, peluang berkenaan diambil selepas mengetahui kenaikan harga beras.



NADIATASYA

Seorang penduduk, Nadiatasya Sasaniddin, 35, berkata, harga asal beras import hampir 10 kilogram (kg) yang biasa dibelinya ialah RM32 tetapi dijual pada harga RM24.

"Memang berbaloi kerana saya membeli untuk sepuluh ahli keluarga termasuk ibu yang tinggal bersama," katanya kepada *Sinar Ahad*.

Nadiatasya memberitahu, biasanya 10kg beras akan habis dalam tempoh seminggu.

Selain membeli dua beg beras, ibu kepada dua anak itu turut membeli barangan kegunaan rumah termasuk susu, minyak dan sabun.

"Saya memang akan pergi ke lokasi jualan Rahmah kerana harga yang ditawarkan membolehkan kami sekeluarga berjimat," katanya.

Sementara itu, suri rumah, Nurul Aini Mat Amin, 36, memberitahu dia ada mendengar tentang kenaikan harga beras tetapi tidak mampu membeli dalam kuantiti yang banyak.

Nurul Aini juga mengakui tidak memilih jenama dan membeli seadanya mengikut kemampuan.

"Saya ada mendengar harga beras naik tetapi tetap membeli mengikut keperluan dengan kos yang termampu sahaja," katanya.

Bagi kerani sebuah syarikat swasta, Wan Rosmawati Wan Said, 39, beras yang dijual ketika jualan Rahmah juga berkualiti dan murah.

Katanya, jualan itu merupakan peluang untuk orang ramai mengurangkan perbelanjaan kerana mungkin ada keperluan lain yang lebih penting.

"Saya tidak melepaskan peluang untuk pergi membeli jika ada jualan Rahmah di sekitar bandar ini kerana ada barangan yang lebih murah berbanding pasar raya dan boleh berjimat," katanya.

KERATAN AKHBAR : SINAR AHAD
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Banyakkan tanam padi, bukan bina rumah - CAP

GEORGETOWN - Kerajaan digesa menyokong dan memberi insentif kepada petani di seluruh negara untuk menanam lebih banyak padi berbanding tanaman lain.

Pegawai Pendidikan dan Pegawai Semula Jadi Pertanian Asli, Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang (CAP), NV Subbarow berkata, tanah yang tidak digunakan ketika ini harus dimanfaatkan untuk penanaman padi dan bukannya membina perumahan baharu.

"Tanah yang ada harus digunakan untuk menanam padi daripada digunakan untuk membina rumah memandangkan projek perumahan baharu yang ada se-



SUBBAROW

karang pun tidak dibeli dan dibiarkan kosong sehingga bertahun-tahun.

"Oleh itu, dengan teknologi yang ada, kita memohon kerajaan supaya menukarkan tanah terbiar ini kepada sawah padi," katanya dalam satu kenyataan pada Sabtu.

Kata beliau, Kementerian Pertanian dan Keterjaminan Makanan (KPKM) mesti memainkan peranan aktif dalam mendidik lebih ramai belia untuk menceburkan diri dalam industri penanaman padi.

"Kementerian mempunyai banyak peranan penting antaranya menggalakkan belia menanam padi. Mereka perlu diberi

insentif. Kementerian juga harus berusaha menganjurkan bengkel khas bagi menerangkan cara menanam padi selain pentingnya padi kepada rakyat.

"Kementerian turut berperanan memujuk semula petani yang dahulunya menanam padi dan kini beralih ke tanaman lain supaya kembali menanam padi. Ia akan merancakkan lagi industri padi negara," ujarnya.

Menurut Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia, negara mengeluarkan 1.67 juta tan beras pada 2021 dan mengimport 1.06 juta tan.

Keluasan tanaman padi di seluruh negara adalah kira-kira 700,000 hektar sahaja berbanding 10 juta hektar dan 7.5 juta hektar di Thailand dan Vietnam.

Secara purata, setiap rakyat Malaysia memakan 79 kilogram beras setahun.

KERATAN AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN AHAD

TARIKH : 3 SEPTEMBER 2023

PERKARA : PERTANIAN

Beras import makin mahal, bekalan beras tempatan kurang

- Harga runcit beras import dijangka naik sehingga RM7 bagi kimpit 10kg berikutan penyesuaian harga baharu di seluruh negara yang diumumkan BERNAS kelmarin.

- Negara juga berdepan kekurangan bekalan beras Super Spesial Tempatan 5 peratus (SST5) sejak tiga bulan lalu yang harganya dikawal kerajaan.

- Kerajaan arahkan pengilang padi tingkatkan pengeluaran 20 peratus, menerusi Program Khas Beras Putih Tempatan sebagai langkah intervensi memulihkan bekalan.

Oleh Noor Atiqah Sulaiman dan Baharom Bakar → Nasional 3



Harga beras import dijangka naik

Penyelarasan baharu dijadikan kampak 10kg naik sehingga RM7

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Kuala Lumpur: Harga beras import dalam pasaran runcit tempatan dijangka meningkat sehingga RM7 sekampit bagi pembungkusan 10 kilogram (kg), berikutan penyelarasan harga baharu di seluruh negara yang diumumkan kelmarin.

Presiden Persatuan Peruncit Bumiputera (BRPO), Datuk Ameer Ali Mydin, menyifatkan kadar peningkatan itu agak tinggi iaitu kira-kira 30 peratus daripada harga semasa barangan harian.

Beliau berkata, harga itu terpacu dinaikkan kerana ia berkait masalah yang selang di alami secara global, namun kerajaan seharusnya menyediakan beberapa langkah bagi mengekang ia terus dinaikkan dari semasa ke semasa.

"Kita memang sedia maklum dengan pengumuman bahawa harga beras import akan dinaikkan, maknanya kita sebagai penjual, sudah diberitahu mengenai harga baru iaitu 70 sen bagi setiap kilogram atau RM7 bagi 10kg beras."

"Bagaimanapun, perkara itu hanya dimaklumkan menerusi Padberas Nasional Bhd (BERNAS), kerajaan atau menteri berkaitan tidak ada pun mengesahkan sekarang beritanya mengapa harga beras import itu terpacu dinaikkan."

"Sepatutnya, mereka kena bertanggung kepada rakyat kerana

ini adalah isu mustahak. Beritahu apa yang berlaku dan seterusnya mengemukakan insidiv yang diambil kerajaan bagi mengekang permasalahan ini," katanya kepada BH, semalam.

BERNAS dalam kenyataannya, mengumumkan penyelarasan harga jualan beras putih import daripada RM2,300 kepada RM3,200 satu tan yang berkuat kuasa di seluruh negara mulai kelmarin, sejajar harga terkini di pasaran antarabangsa.

Ketika mengumumkan kenaikan harga itu, BERNAS berkata, syarikat itu mengharungi sepeh tahun pertama yang sangat mencabar disebabkan ketidakstabilan pelbagai faktor luaran seperti perubahan iklim, kadar pertukaran mata wang asing yang semakin lemah, kos operasi yang tinggi dan konflik serantau.

Faktor itu secara kolektif mencetuskan kesan letara ke atas pasaran dagangan beras global, ditambah pula larangan eksport beras putih yang diumumkan India baru-baru ini.

Ameer yang juga Pengerah Urusan Mydin, mendakwa selain berdepan kenaikan harga beras import, negara juga sedang berdepan kekurangan bekalan beras Super Special Tempatan 5 peratus (SST5) sejak tiga bulan lalu yang harganya di kawal kerajaan.

Beliau mendakwa, isu kekurangan bekalan itu sudah dimaklumkan kepada kerajaan, namun sehingga kini tiada penyelesaian yang dibekalkan.

"Antara cadangan saya adalah meminta supaya Menteri Pertanian dan Keterjaminan Makanan (Datuk Seri Mohamad Sabu) be-



Kerajaan seharusnya menyediakan beberapa langkah bagi mengekang kenaikan harga beras import dari semasa ke semasa. (Foto: ihsan)

kerjasama dengan BERNAS serta berterus terang berapa peratus beras tempatan yang berada di pasaran kini.

"Kalau peruncit besar macam saya pun tak dapat bekalan, peruncit kecil lagi-lah tak ada, kerana ini sudah berlarutan di antara tiga hingga enam bulan. Kami tak dapat bekalan mencukupi dan beras yang kuno ada di pasaran itu pergi ke mana?"

"Kita sedia maklum 50 peratus daripada beras di negara ini adalah beras tempatan tetapi hakikatnya kita (peruncit) tidak terima bekalan itu. Kita hanya ingin memastikan bahawa beras tempatan itu ada di pasaran atau sebenarnya pemborong kilang yang menyelahgunakan seperti didakwa mencampur beras tempatan ini dan menjualnya pada harga import," katanya.

Ameer berkata, selama ini rangkaian pasar raya Mydin menjual di antara 1,000 hingga 2,000 kampak beras sehari, namun bekalan yang diterimanya sejak tiga bulan lalu sekitar 50 hingga 100 kampak.

"Kalau kedai runcit kecil, ada yang tak dapat walaupun sebungkus. Dulu kalau ada kekurangan beras, kita dapat juga dalam 600 hingga 700 kampak, tetapi kini hanya terima dalam 50 kampak dan kejadian ini seperti ada yang tidak kena."

"Malah sehingga kini tiada maklumat yang jelas diterima daripada Kementerian, Menteri atau Kementerian sepatutnya jelaskan kepada kita dalam sehari berapa tan beras yang ada serta senarai daripada pengilang atau pemborong beras itu dihantar ke ladang mana."

"Jika serani itu ada dan ia memang sampai kepada peruncit ini, kita tidak mempunyai masalah kerana tidak cuba ini tidak sama dengan tidak ada langsung," katanya.

Permintaan meningkat

Sementara itu, Ketua Pegawai Operasi Al-Amin Barokah Sdn Bhd, pengilang dan pengeluar be-

ras tempatan di Terengganu, Mohd Khairul Nizam Mohd Rozali, berkata, kenaikan harga beras import dijangka meningkatkan permintaan bekalan tempatan lebih 60 peratus.

Beliau berkata, sejak Julai lalu, pihaknya mengabazkan 60 tan beras dan jumlah itu akan ditingkatkan sebanyak 68 peratus lagi susulan peningkatan permintaan yang diterima.

"Beras tempatan yang kami keluarkan tuai dihasilkan bagi memenuhi permintaan syarikat pengedar di beberapa negeri lain. Kita akan mengedarkan 60 tan beras untuk pasaran tempatan dan 30 tan bagi luar Terengganu," katanya ketika ditemui di Kampong Cabang Tiga di sini, semalam.

Sementara itu, tinjauan di Kuala Terengganu mendapati harga beras putih import dijual RM15.90 setiap lima kilogram dan RM3.18 bagi sekampit 10kg.

Seorang peniaga, Muhammad Nor Firdaus, berkata harga beras putih import dijangka meningkat sehingga 35 peratus pertengahan bulan ini.



Ameer Ali Mydin

KERATAN AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN AHAD

TARIKH : 3 SEPTEMBER 2023

PERKARA : PERTANIAN

Pengilang diarah tingkat pengeluaran 20 peratus

Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Pertanian dan Keterjaminan Makanan (KPKM) mengarahkan pengilang padi atau pengeluar beras meningkatkan pengeluaran sebanyak 20 peratus, menerusi Program Khas Beras Putih Tempatan sebagai langkah intervensi memulihkan bekalan dalam pasaran.

Dalam kenyataannya, KPKM berkata, pengilang sudah menyetujui persetujuan memberikan kuota tambahan bekalan Beras Putih Tempatan (BPT) itu kepada kerajaan menerusi Padiberas Nasional Bhd (BERNAS).

"Melalui program khas itu juga, BERNAS akan memberikan kuota tambahan berkenaan kepada pemborong Bumiputera un-

tuk menambah bekalan BPT negara.

"KPKM berharap menerusi langkah intervensi ini, bekalan BPT akan kembali pulih dalam waktu terdekat dengan pertambahan pengeluarannya di pasaran.

"Sehingga kini, harga BPT masih kekal pada harga kawalan RM2.60/kilogram sejak 2008 dan ia adalah harga terendah di rantau ini," katanya.

Kelmarin, BERNAS dalam kenyataannya, mengumumkan penyetarasan harga jualan beras putih import di seluruh negara daripada RM2.350 kepada RM3.200 bagi satu tan berkuat kuasa serta merta.

Pada masa sama, KPKM ber-

kata, pemantauan dibuat secara berterusan dengan kerjasama Kawalselia Padi dan Beras (KPB) dan penguat kuasa Kementerian Perdagangan Dalam Negeri dan Kos Sara Hidup (KPDN) melalui Operasi Jamin (OP JAMIN).

"KPKM turut melancarkan Operasi Beras Putih (OP BPT) sejak 16 Ogos lalu bagi menumpukan pemeriksaan dan penguatkuasaan di peringkat pengilang padi dan pemborong beras seluruh negara.

"Sekiranya ada pihak gagal mematuhi perundangan Akta Kawalan Padi dan Beras 1994, KPKM melalui kuasa Ketua Pengarah Kawalselia Padi dan Beras berhak membatalkan atau menggan-

tung setiap lesen yang dikeluarkan," katanya.

Sementara itu, Menteri, Datuk Seri Mohamad Sabu, berkata pihaknya akan mengadakan perbincangan dengan Kerajaan India supaya memberikan pengecualian kepada negara ini berhubung eksport beras.

Beliau berkata, pihaknya peka keputusan dibuat India baru-baru ini yang melarang barangan makanan itu dieksport ke luar.

Katanya, ketika ini Malaysia tidak bergantung sepenuhnya kepada India dalam pengimportan beras kerana turut mempunyai negara sumber lain.

"Pada masa ini, kita ada sumber lain seperti Thailand dan Vietnam, manakala BERNAS

memberi jaminan akan memasokkan bekalan beras putih import mencukupi untuk keperluan negara," katanya kepada *BH*, semalam.

Sebelum ini, India mengumumkan mengenai larangan eksport beras dari negara itu sebagai langkah mengelak lonjakan harga bekalan domestik.

Pada 20 Julai tahun lalu, India mengharamkan eksport beras putih bukan Basmati, sebelum larangan itu diperluaskan kepada beras hancur mulai September.

Mulai 27 Ogos tahun ini, larangan itu dilanjutkan dengan sekatan eksport lebih ketat berbanding ketika diumumkan sebelum ini.

THE PROBLEM WITH LOCAL PADI

Expert: Malaysia has only 50 varieties of rice, with most being high-yielding but not tolerant of environmental stress

BY NIAZ HAZI
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RICE, which is a staple food for much of Malaysia's 33 million people, is grown in a number of states. However, the country consumes almost 30 per cent of its rice needs. Researchers are concerned about the slow growth in padi yields.

Experts from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) are working on new rice varieties that can tolerate different biotic and abiotic stresses, with the aim of achieving a self-sufficiency level (SFL) of 75 per cent.

In contrast, Malaysia has only 50 varieties of padi, with most being high-yielding but not tolerant of environmental stress.

"Yield will be varied because it depends a lot on the soil condition and field management."

"Farmers may get angry or annoyed by providing them with seeds because they might have been provided eight tonnes per hectare but they yield only three tonnes."

"What they do not realize is that there are many factors behind padi yield," she told the New Sunday Times.

"Since more padi fields are near coastal areas, a lot of rain water flooded padi fields."

"If we don't take this approach by developing saline-resistant padi, sooner or later we will have a big problem on our hands," Kalamiah said.

She said the country's current varieties would not tolerate salt.



Malaysia continues to import about 30 per cent of its rice needs. NIAZ HAZI

She added that developing good padi could come from research on resistance and breeding, as well as improving agricultural practices.

"The SFL was at 70 per cent a couple of years back, but due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it dropped to the mid-60s. We need to jumpstart this again, but to increase the figures by one per cent takes years."

"We can provide resistant varieties but if the agricultural practices are weak, our efforts would go to waste."

SALINE-RESISTANT PADI

Among the new padi lines being studied and developed are those that can handle environmental stresses such as drought, submergence, salinity and disease.

The team of UKM researchers started a saline-resistant padi project in 2017 as a response to the increasing amount of rainfall and the rise in sea level.

"Since more padi fields are near coastal areas, a lot of rain water flooded padi fields."

"If we don't take this approach by developing saline-resistant padi, sooner or later we will have a big problem on our hands," Kalamiah said.

She said the country's current

varieties would not tolerate salt. "We need to be prepared for what's to come. With climate change and extreme weather changes, what we predicted five years ago may no longer apply in the next five years, so we must be proactive in our research."

DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Fellow UKM lecturer Dr Nuraisyah Abdul Aziz Shamsudin, who is part of the team researching saline-resistant padi, said the challenge of developing new and highly-tolerant padi varieties was huge.

"It takes about 10 years to develop new inbred lines of padi compared with hybrid seeds."

"This is because the breeding process takes three to four years. Once the inbred line is stable, it takes another three to seven years for on-site trials and certification, before it can be released."

Nuraisyah hoped the new saline-resistant padi variety would be launched in two years' time.

"Breeding is just one aspect of developing a variety. After that, it is to develop the final line, and then conduct field trials under real conditions before registering the variety."

"We have a 10-year timeline for this project. We should start seeing some solid results by 2025."

The other big obstacle for the researchers was a lack of funding, said Kalamiah.

She said it was vital for the government to direct funds towards important research to ensure national food security and stability.

"Compared with neighbouring countries, we have no saline-resistant padi varieties."

"We must work in synergy with other structures, such as the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI), so they (padi researchers) are not given the burden to conduct research by themselves."

"They are universities that are able to do research and come up with results, so the government needs to look into supporting research in these academic institutions and not just focus on one entity to provide all the answers for the country."

BEST PRACTICE ADOPTION

Meanwhile, Nuraisyah said Malaysia should look into the best practices of other countries, and adapt their technologies and padi varieties here.

She said that as Bangladesh suffered from flooding concerns,

in the country had to develop submergence-tolerant padi varieties as fields are submerged for three months during the rainy season.

Even the country's agricultural practices were modified, she said, adding that Bangladesh had a dual farming system with saline water entering their fields.

"The country's farmers plant padi and also rear fish or shrimp in the padi fields, so in certain areas they have two sources of income."

"The waste from the fish or shrimp can act as natural fertilizer for their fields. This can be adopted into our systems here," Nuraisyah added.

Kalamiah, meanwhile, said introducing such farming techniques would not only improve income but also reduce dependency on chemical inputs.

However, she said that apart from conducting research on new padi lines, there must be knowledge and technology transfers to farmers.

"We cannot sit in our ivory towers with this knowledge and not have it translated to the farmers."

"This needs good collaboration with the Agriculture and Food Security Ministry, which must work alongside us to do this."



Professor Dr Nuraisyah Abdul Aziz Shamsudin




Dr Nuraisyah Abdul Aziz Shamsudin

KERATAN AKHBAR : NEW SUNDAY TIMES

TARIKH : 3 SEPTEMBER 2023

PERKARA : PERTANIAN



PIC BY NIK ABDULLAH NIK OHAR

'WHERE'S THE LOCAL RICE?'

AN increase in the price of imported white rice from Sept 1 will push up the demand for the already short-in-supply local variety and pile the pressure on B40 families, says a retailers' group. It wants the government to find out 'where the local rice has gone to'.

■ **Malaysia must develop more varieties of padi, including those that are tolerant of environmental stress, says expert**

» **REPORTS BY DAWN CHAN & HANA NAZ HARUN ON PAGES 4 & 5**

KERATAN AKHBAR : NEW SUNDAY TIMES

TARIKH : 3 SEPTEMBER 2023

PERKARA : PERTANIAN

Increase white rice supply, padi millers and rice wholesalers told

PUTRAJAYA: Padi millers and rice wholesalers have been asked to increase the supply of local white rice (BPT) by 20 per cent through the Local White Rice Special Programme to restore supply in the market, the Agriculture and Food Security Ministry said.

The ministry said the request had been agreed upon by padi millers and rice wholesalers in a joint engagement session with the North Zone Rice Manufacturers and Rice Wholesalers Industry on Aug 27 in Alor Star, Kedah.

"Through this programme, Padiberas Nasional Bhd (Bernas) will give the additional quota to Bumiputera wholesalers to increase the country's BPT supply," it said.

The ministry added that the price of BPT had remained at the controlled price of RM2.60 per kg since 2008 and it was the lowest price in the region.

Thailand sells the commodity at a price of RM2.70 per kg. In Cambodia, it is priced at RM3.20 per kg.

The ministry said a 2024 Budget dialogue session with industry players and stakeholders under the rice subsector would be held at the Serdang Malaysia Agricultural Expo Park in Serdang, Selangor, on Thursday.

The session aimed to get input and views from industry players on methods to increase BPT production, it said.

In terms of monitoring the commodity, the ministry said it was carried out through Op Jamin, introduced on July 1, with the cooperation of the Padi and Rice Authority and the Enforcement Division of the Domestic Trade and Cost of Living Ministry.

The ministry said it launched Op BPT on Aug 16, which focuses on inspection and enforcement of padi millers and rice wholesalers in country.

It added that padi millers and rice wholesalers who violated the Padi and Rice Control Act 1994 (Act 522) would get their licences cancelled or suspended.

Bernamea



The Agriculture and Food Security Ministry says local white rice has remained at the controlled price of RM2.60 per kg since 2008. FILE PIC

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Bumiputera Retailers Organisation president Datuk Ameer Ali Mydin (inset) says Malaysia must boost its rice production as it is falling behind that of other countries. FILE PIC

36pc PRICE INCREASE

IMPORTED WHITE RICE TO COST MORE

Extra RM21 for each family every month, says Bumiputera Retailers Organisation

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MALAYSIANS may need to fork out an extra RM21 a month on imported white rice.

This follows Padiberas Nasional Bhd's (Bernas) 36 per cent price increase from RM2,350 per metric tonne to RM3,200 for the product from Friday last week.

Bumiputera Retailers Organisation president Datuk Ameer Ali Mydin said the rise meant a RM7 price hike for a 10kg bag of rice.

He based his calculations on a family of five.

"My assumption is they eat rice twice a day and that comes to 10 plates a day.

"A kilogramme of rice produces 10 plates and that becomes 70 sen a day, totalling RM21 a month.

"It is not a small amount if you earn a monthly income of RM2,500. That is about 0.9 per cent and is substantial."

Ameer Ali said the government had to do more to alleviate the hardship of Bottom 40 house-

holds.

"Will the government give financial aid to the less fortunate to help with the price increase?" he told the *New Sunday Times*.

On Friday, Bernas said the price adjustment for imported white rice across its warehouse was in line with the global pricing of the commodity.

It said that in the first half of this year, the company had endured unpredictable factors, like climate change and weakening foreign exchange rates, which was compounded by India's white rice export ban.

On July 20, India, which is responsible for 40 per cent of the world's rice exports, banned the export of non-basmati white rice to ease rising domestic prices and food inflation.

Ameer Ali said following Bernas' announcement, there had been nothing from the government or the Agriculture and Food Security Ministry on the price increase, given that rice is a staple food for Malaysians.

Bernas, he said, had justified the increase but the government should've communicated its plans to the people.

"While we understand this (price increase for imported rice) is a global phenomenon, we want to know what the government is doing to address the issue."

Ameer Ali, who is Mydin Mohamed Holdings Bhd managing director, said the increase had exacerbated the demand for SSTS (local) rice.

However, he said the supply of SSTS had been negligible at supermarkets and hypermarkets over the past two to three months.

He said there was more imported white rice being sold than SSTS, adding that at the Mydin Hypermarket, it was being supplied with only 50 bags of 10 and five kg of the rice when it should ideally be 1,000 bags.

"We want the government to clarify where the local rice has gone to.

"Is it true that we hear that rice millers are repacking it into imported rice and selling it at high prices?"

"They are making money out of it and are depriving locals of SSTS rice.

"I have brought this up at meetings with the government on the shortage of rice issue."

He said to resolve the matter, Malaysia had to boost its rice production as it was falling behind that of other countries, despite having vast and fertile land, as well as resources.

He said countries like India could produce and export 40 per cent of its rice, despite being smaller than China and Russia.

"We need a massive scheme under the Federal Land Development Authority to make it a success. We cannot depend on small-time farmers to produce it.

"We need an industrial revolution in planting where we get the big players, either local or international, to do it."