

2010

April

Replanting and Rehabilitation of Coconut under Smallholders*

ABD RAZAK HUSEN, CHE HASMAH HASSAN AND MOHAMAD IDRUS AB HAMID

Department of Agriculture, Aras 17, Lot 4G2, Presint 4, Pusat Pentadbiran Kerajaan Persekutuan, 62632 Putrajaya, Malaysia

The coconut industry in Malaysia has recently received a new interest among agriculture policy makers in the country. It is no longer labeled as a sunset industry - instead, it has been identified as the fourth strategic crop after oil palm, rubber and paddy. Currently, it is considered as one of a new emerging industrial crop that could bring a significant impact on the country's economy. With the new emphasis given, the industry is allocated with a significant amount of funds in the year 2009, which is RM 29 million, in order to uplift and rejuvenate the whole industry again. Cognizant of the various issues and challenges which need to be responsibly addressed, the Department of Agriculture (DOA) implemented three essential programs, which are namely; i) Coconut Seedling Development Program, ii) Coconut Replanting Development Program, iii) Coconut Rehabilitation Development Program. These programs essentially emphasize on strategies to enhance the productivity of the smallholders and improving the quality of their produce in order to increase their income from RM400/ha/month to RM1 000/ha/month and to ensure sufficient supply of coconuts for local consumption and down-stream activities.

The establishment of two new seed gardens to increase the production of hybrid seedlings (MATAG) at the Pagoh Agriculture Station, Johor and the Lekir Agriculture Station, Perak with a total area of 40 ha in the year 2008-2009 is well underway. Meanwhile, another 18 ha of new seed garden at Hulu Paka Agriculture Station, Terengganu and 7 ha at Teluk Bharu Agriculture Station, Perak will be newly established to increase the production of aromatic coconut (Pandan) seedlings. Under the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010), the Department of Agriculture targets to produce 215 000 MATAG seedlings and 295 000 Pandan seedlings. By the end of the Tenth Malaysia Plan, the Seedling Production Development Program is expected to produce 150 000 MATAG seedlings yearly to meet the demand of the scarce planting material.

Beginning 2009, the government granted a new incentive scheme to the smallholders who participated in the Coconut Replanting and Rehabilitation Development Program. A substantial grant, totalling RM20 000/ha for four years of planting establishment is approved for the Replanting Development Program, whilst for the Coconut Rehabilitation Development Program the new rate is RM5 500 for three consecutive years of implementation. The total area targeted to be developed under the Ninth Malaysia Plan for the Coconut Replanting and Rehabilitation Development Program, is 3 600 ha and 800 ha, respectively.

Keywords: Coconut, replanting, rehabilitation, smallholders, Malaysia

