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From planting to selling

THE country is set to venture into the next phase of modern farming with the e-agriculture platform developed by Mimos.

The three-part system covers the whole eco-system of modern farming, from planting the crops to selling and delivering the products to customers.

"Hi-tech farming is not just about planting the crops, but it includes the whole commerce processes from harvesting to selling the crops," says Mimos head for micro systems and MEMs cluster Prof Masuri Othman.

"This farming eco-system is a series of technology platforms that cover the three value chain in the agriculture eco-system — upstream, midstream and downstream," he says.

Upstream is the stage where the crops are grown with the help of hi-tech farming solutions like the micro-electrical-mechanical systems (MEMS) sensors and wireless sensor network (WSN) for intelligent plantations.

"The sensors feature intel-

ligent farming methods and real-time monitoring on top of the agronomist knowledge, which means that farmers now have the total control of their crops and are able to make fast and reliable decisions," he says.

Masuri adds that Mimos is currently collaborating with Felda and Mardi to develop a complete database that will guide future management of estates and crops.

"We are working with the Felda Agricultural Services for the development of an integrated pollination readiness monitoring system, while our collaboration with Mardi focuses on the development of greenhouse management system (GMS), based on technologies for remote and accurate monitoring of microclimate, soil condition and crop

parameters in a controlled environment," he says.

At the midstream stage, Mimos has developed AgriOffice, a low-cost and integrated supply chain management back-office Web application for managing business and production process.

Besides that, it has also developed a virtual logistics hub to enable 36,000 logistics companies to service the market. The service is currently run by Bifrost Logistics Sdn Bhd, a third-party logistics provider handling all the trucking operations nationwide.

The downstream part is where the buying and selling takes place.

"This is done through a Web-based SCM platform called AgriBazaar 2.0 where farmers and buyers can trade directly online without the interference of a middleman, hence cutting the cost of products," says Masuri.

Unlike the first version of AgriBazaar which only displays agriculture products for sale, the new version offers features such as shopping cart and e-payment.

"To facilitate the various

backgrounds of our farmers, the portal is now multi-lingual. It is available in English, Malay, Mandarin and Tamil."

To make the whole process connected, AgriBazaar 2.0 is linked to AgriOffice to allow farmers and buyers to link to one or more upstream and downstream flows of products, services, information and finances.

"The whole eco-system will not only enable farmers to have better yield but it will also let them extend their market reach with the click of a mouse," says Masuri. — By IZWAN ISMAIL



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