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Wireless sensor to boost crop yield

KUALA LUMPUR: Local farmers will now be able to increase the yield and quality of their agriculture produce with the latest wireless sensor technology developed by Mimos Bhd, known as MEMS wireless sensor.

The wireless sensor, which resembles a pen-shaped probe and designed to be planted in the soil, is expected to be priced under RM100 a unit compared with the present technology which costs around RM2,000-RM3,000 a unit.

The head of Mimos' Micro-Nano Cluster & Micro Electro Mechanical System (MEMS) Centre, Prof Dr Masuri Othman, said the device is capable of measuring moisture, humidity, temperature, acidity, nitrate, phosphate and potassium in the soil.

The wireless sensor is a hybrid technology that combines sensing device, tacit knowledge, geographic information system, weather forecasting, decision support system and feedback control, he said in an interview here recently.

Masuri said the sensor is designed to bridge the socio-economic gap in the country and help eradicate poverty among farmers as well as provide empowering technology to the community in line with the Government's effort to intensify the agriculture sector as the third engine of growth as outlined in the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

He noted that the Government is now committed to advance traditional agriculture to modern farming in order to improve farmers' incomes as a result of better crops.

"Our aim is to increase the income of farmers with a low cost small-sized device which only require low power consumption and has high performance in reliability and durability," he explained.

Masuri said the MEMS-based solution will empower farmers with precision agriculture methods, and this will enable them to venture into higher-value and premium crops which will ultimately increase yield and quality of Malaysia's agriculture produce.

"It is targeted at farmers with big plantations and rural areas to enable them to control soil moisture and also monitor chemicals in water accurately," he added.

Besides increased farm production yield and better planting management, Masuri said, the sensor will also help farmers lessen the impact of weather on farming as the device will be able to alert farmers on climate change. — Bernama