

Headline **Intelligent plantations to grow**
Date **17. Feb 2009** Language **ENGLISH**
Media Title **The Star** Page No **12**
Section **Star In-Tech** Article Size **99** cm2
Circulation **293375** Frequency **Daily**
Readership **1026812** Color **Black/White**
AdValue **1799.41**



Intelligent plantations to grow

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KUALA LUMPUR: Federal Land Development Authority Agricultural Services Sdn Bhd (FAS) and applied-research body Mimos are hoping to create "intelligent plantations."

Datuk Abdul Wahab Abdullah, president of Mimos, said this would be done with the help of micro-electro mechanical system (mems) sensors, as well as semantic, wireless and grid-computing technologies.

Mimos claims these applications will enhance the productivity of Felda's palm oil plantations through the accurate monitoring of soil conditions and crop requirements.

"Mems sensors will collect field data and relay the

information automatically to crop databases," Wahab said. This will eliminate lots of manual labour, such as constant soil sampling.

Mems is a technology that combines computers with minute mechanical devices, such as sensors and valves.

FAS and Mimos have been conducting trials since last September at a 100ha plantation in Sungai Tekam, Pahang.

Neither FAS or Mimos could say when all 740,000ha of Felda plantations nationwide would be adopting these technologies because the initiative is still in the early stages.

FAS, is a subsidiary of Felda Holdings Bhd, and provides agricultural services to Felda Holdings. Felda is Malaysia's largest plantation operator.