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## Produce new crop varieties with higher yield

**SEREMBAN:** The Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Ministry has taken various measures to ensure sufficient food supply in the country.

Its Deputy Minister, Datuk Rohani Abdul Karim, said they included producing new crop varieties with higher yield and were more resistant to crop diseases.

Another approach was to identify new crops which could provide new source of food or for use by other industries to replace the existing source of food and energy, she told reporters after opening the national conference on new crops and bio-resources here yesterday.

She said research institutions, including the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI), were focusing on various sectors in the search for new crops, including for food, health care like herbal plants, source of energy, like jatropha, and for other industrial use, like making of colouring, for landscaping, biopesticide and for environmental conservation.

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“Efforts to introduce new crops and increase crop yield will open new opportunities for production of agriculture commodities to help reduce import and with export potential,” she added.

Rohani said resolutions passed at the conference, which is organised by MARDI, the Agriculture Department, the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) and Tropical Fruit Network (TFNet), would be made the basis for planning of agriculture development under the Tenth Malaysia Plan.

In another development, she urged journalists in the print and electronic media to produce more articles on agriculture, including farming, livestock breeding and fishing.

She also suggested the media organisations to each set up an agro-journalism desk so that more focus could be given to agriculture coverage.

“I’ll arrange for a meeting with the editors of the print and electronic media to discuss this,” she added.-  
Bernama