



**TRANSCRIPT TO THE INDEPENDENT
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PLEASE PROVIDE A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE ORGANIZATION YOU ARE LEADING, IN TERMS OF:

YOUR FOCUS

I believed that FOA's focus would be to introduce programs which could lift the income level of farmers and at the same time to pursue capacity building efforts within FOA, in light of the changing economic scenario. This is definitely a very daunting task since it relates to efforts at changing mindsets and tied to established norms and procedures.

ROLE UNDER THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Our role is really to look after the well-being of small-holder farmers in Malaysia. One of our major concerns is to improve the quality of life of the farmers household through various programs sponsored by the government. The role of FOA is in human capital development through its 291 Area Farmers Organization (AFOs) located nationwide, it renders assistance to farmers in optimizing all forms of assistance and help that the government has made available. It is also FOA's role to ensure that projects on the ground be sustained throughout project life cycle period.

INSTILLING INNOVATION IN THE INDUSTRY

Having more than half a million farmer members under FOA's jurisdiction indicate that there is a need for innovation to play its role in improving the farming sector. Being innovative in products and services, enhancing existing processes, introducing new approaches in marketing/distribution of products (internet) and improving the farmers organization through management innovation would be the prime concern for FOA.

TRANSFORMING 'FARMING' INTO A YOUTH ORIENTED, HIGH INCOME, SECTOR

For an organization, one of the critical steps in achieving innovation is developing the creative problem-solving skills of its human resources – its managers, professionals, and other employees. I believe that these requirements are also needed to transform the sector into a dynamic and youth oriented, high income sector. Accordingly, FOA will encourage as many young professionals as possible to enter the sector in the near future as entrepreneur farmers and as farmer leaders in the management of area farmers organization. By having such group of young members, will definitely help to innovate and create new ways and approaches towards achieving high productivity at lower production costs.

CHALLENGES FACES AND THOSE ANTICIPATED

The challenges are many and may come externally or from within the farming sector. On the food production side, FOA feels that the government is around to ensure that there is a balance between being self sustaining for certain food items (rice for example, for security reasons) and going for a logical import-export approach. As far as the FOA is concern, we will try to ensure that our farmer members (particularly in the paddy/rice sector) do not face too much problem in producing paddy at a profitable level. The rising prices of agricultural inputs, however, do not augur well with our efforts to ease the situation. The scenario in Malaysia is rather similar to other developing countries, which is experiencing a decline in the farming population. But the government has already put in place several measures such as emphasizing efficiency and productivity in all farming activities. Another concern is the quality of delivery of services rendered by government related entities such as FOA and its AFOs. The AFOs, actually functions as a platform, bridging the delivery of services provided by the government to the farmers. It is therefore, pertinent to ensure that the level of service delivery by the AFOs be improved on a continuous basis.

PLEASE COMMENT ON HOW YOU INTEND TO TRANSFORM THE MALAYSIAN FARMING INTO A COMPETITIVE SEGMENT.

I think that R& D and Total Quality Management (TQM) are two powerful tools that could assist the transformation of farming in Malaysia. New clones, techniques and processes, bio-technology are much needed in for the sector to be a significant contributor to the economy. But it also the quality of human resources albeit knowledge workers within the farming sector that will be a determining factor in ensuring success.

AS THE DG, WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THE FOA/LPP, UNDER YOUR LEADERSHIP, IN THE FUTURE.

I wish that FOA/LPP remain relevant and functional, firstly to its members (the target group), and to the government (as stakeholders), be adaptive to the changing times and continue to operate within a culture of continuous improvement in products development, its delivery processes and be the body responsible for the socio-economic development of small-holder farmers in Malaysia.

FINAL MESSAGE TO THE EUROPEAN AND BRITISH READERS OF THE INDEPENDENT.

I hope that readers of the Independent will now be more aware of the role of the FOA/LPP in Malaysia and how FOA will perform its role of mobilizing the small-holder farmers in this country to be a significant contributor to the economy.

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