



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

檳城消費人協會 பிளாங்கு பயனீட்டாளர் சங்கம்

10 Jalan Masjid Negeri, 11600 Pulau Pinang, Malaysia
Tel: 604-8299511 Fax: 604-8298109
email: consumerofpenang@gmail.com

Websites:
www.consumer.org.my

Media Statement

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CAP: DIRECT SEEDING METHOD CAUSES MANY PROBLEMS FOR PADDY FARMERS

The direct seeding method practised by farmers in the country particularly in the Muda Agriculture Development Authority (MADA) area for the past thirty years have brought about many problems in rice cultivation, affecting the income of the farmers.

In a survey conducted by the Consumers Association of Penang (CAP), we found that the direct seeding method that has replaced the traditional method (wet rice cultivation where rice seedlings are transplanted from nursery beds to paddy fields), although saves time and labour, is detrimental to farmers due to various threats.

The direct seeding system which does not use a lot of water and only requires moist soil, indirectly causes adverse effects to paddy fields and plants by providing suitable conditions for pests to breed and feed on seeds and paddy plants that are already growing. The situation will become worse and more serious if the paddy field does not have a drainage system where seeds that are broadcasted and paddy plants that are growing would be vulnerable to flooding or become damaged due to dry soil.

For example, in the MADA area since the direct seeding system was implemented, various problems were encountered by farmers. Among the problems are threat of weedy rice, golden apple snails, wild weed, rats, diseases, worms, quaking soil, etc. resulting in farmers broadcasting the seeds repeatedly and using excessive pesticides.

Besides facing a decline in income till 70% due to the recurring problems, the use of pesticides in the paddy fields causes environmental destruction, affects farmers' health and affects freshwater fish found here that is source of protein for the population in the area.

Hence CAP urges the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry, relevant departments and agencies to pay serious attention to these problems and expedite actions to resolve the source of the problems. Unless actions are taken now, it will jeopardise the future of our paddy production and food supply.

CAP is of the opinion that the direct-seeding method should be stopped and requests the government to provide sufficient water supply and proper irrigation system for farmers to practise the more beneficial traditional system. CAP learned that more and more farmers in the MADA area are practising the traditional rice growing system and have left the direct seeding method that had been raising a lot of problems.

S. M.Mohamed Idris
President
Consumers Association of Penang