

Media Release – 24 May 2011

Press Conference on the Soft Launch of the Good Agricultural Practices Demonstration Project, Cameron Highlands (2011 to 2013)

The Kempen APB (Amalan Pertanian Baik) Pemangkin Pertanian Mampam was launched on 25 October 2010 in the Cameron Highlands by Yang Berhormat Tuan Chua Tee Yong, Timbalan Menteri Pertanian Dan Industri Asas Tani.

It is a *industry-led project* where the industry stakeholders share responsibilities with the Government in promoting and implementing good agricultural practice among farmers. The project is to be implemented in Cameron Highlands over 3 years periods from 2011 until 2013, which will be lead by the key stakeholders namely Malaysian CropLife & Public Health (MCPA) and the Cameron Highlands Vegetable Growers Association. The Ministry of Agriculture and Agrobased Industry through the Department of Agriculture will provide necessary support in facilitating the implementation of the project in terms of providing advisory services to the farmers and SALM certification.

MCPA is a national association representing the plant science and public health industries of Malaysia. MCPA promotes the benefits of crop protection and biotechnology products, their importance to sustainable agriculture and food production, and their responsible use through stewardship activities.

MCPA complements very well with the role of the Department of Agriculture which includes working to promote modern farming to enable farmers to achieve higher quality produce which complies with national and internal food safety standards. Such agricultural produce can qualify for the “**Malaysia’s Best**” branding which represents the seal of approval from the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based-Industry for food safety and quality.



The branding serves as a quality assurance for domestic and foreign consumers on Malaysia's agricultural products. The brand name and seal enhances the image of the country's agricultural products, which in turn enhances demand in the global market.

The *Malaysia's Best* branding is issued by the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA) for agricultural produce that follow the highest safety and quality standards set by the Authority. Farmers participating in the *Malaysia's Best* program should have the Farm Accreditation Scheme of Malaysia aka Skim Amalan Ladang Baik Malaysia (**SALM**).

Therefore the first step to be taken in the GAP Demonstration Project is to educate and train farmers to achieve GAP standards and qualify for SALM accreditation. We foresee that this task will take time and thus the time line for the GAP Demonstration Project is set for 3 years (2011 to 2013). This project is undertaken with the full cooperation of the **Cameron Highlands Vegetable Growers Association**.

Farmers in Cameron Highlands grow mainly vegetables, some of which are exported. In recent years vegetable farming in Cameron Highlands is allegedly characterized by the rampant use of illegal pesticides and the over use of pesticides which result in high pesticide residues in the vegetables harvested. There is also no infrastructure to allow farmers proper disposal of farm wastes including used pesticide containers. These materials are usually haphazardly discarded polluting the environment including water ways.

The GAP Demonstration Project with the cooperation of the participating farmers will address these and other associated issues – to provide the necessary training for farmers to identify what is an illegal pesticide and what is a genuine product approved and registered by the Pesticides Board, Department of Agriculture. The extension officers from Government agencies, particularly the Department of Agriculture, will provide the farmers with the necessary information and training to help them move towards GAP standards. They will advise farmers on how to comply with the requirements specified in SALM.

The Malaysian CropLife & Public Health Association (MCPA) will deploy its experts to train farmers to use pesticides responsibly, safely and judiciously.



The areas selected for this GAP Demonstration Project are Bertam Valley, Brinchang and Kampong Raja in the Cameron Highlands. Each area has different elevation and different crop mixes.

The GAP Demonstration Project will also address environmental issues like the disposal of used pesticide containers and farm waste. MCPA, working with the Regional Environmental Awareness Cameron Highlands (REACH) and DoA, will encourage farmers to triple rinse used pesticide containers and deposit them in any one of the six collection centres manned by REACH for recycling. MCPA will liaise with farmers to dispose farm wastes to buyers or farms who needed the wastes for composting.

The objectives of the GAP Demonstration Project are simple, they are:

- To demonstrate that farmers can be trained to achieve GAP standards; and
- To demonstrate that training programs can be developed to train farmers to achieve GAP standards anywhere in Malaysia and in the region.

The roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders of this project can be summarised as follows:

- The Department of Agriculture shall provide extension services to participating farmers to enable them to understand GAP and improve their farming practices to achieve SALM certification. The Department of Agriculture shall, after the appropriate audit and at its discretion, award farms with SALM certificates should they fulfil all the GAP requirements specified.
- The Malaysian CropLife & Public Health Association shall recruit farmers with the help of the Cameron Highlands Vegetable Growers Association, organize training, and, in consultation with DoA, provide guidance to farmers to understand GAP and work to achieve GAP standards.

Farmers' field days will be organized by the Cameron Highlands Vegetable Growers Association in cooperation with the other stakeholders to cascade the progress of the project to farmers and agricultural extension officers. DoA will organize training seminars and workshops to enable its officers to learn the "best practices" and adopt them for use in their respective home bases. MCPA may organize talks to farmers by GAP experts from overseas.



The success of this project will see the expansion of GAP practices beyond the project areas – hopefully to the whole of Cameron Highlands and other areas in Malaysia, and even to other countries in the ASEAN region.

This project will contribute directly to the enhancement of food safety and the strengthening of our national food security.