

Felcra to start deploying drones for padi cultivation soon

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According to MATA Aerotech, the padi cultivation using drone technology will replace manual spraying by workers which will take a much longer time. — Reuters pic

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 9 — Felcra Berhad (Felcra) will be the pioneer model of smart agriculture when it carries out padi planting spraying at the padi estate in Felcra Seberang Perak at the end of this month.

The technology will be implemented by MATA Aerotech which was appointed to set up the mechanism in line with Felcra's aspiration to improve the organisation's achievement as well as enhancing the quality of life for more than 100,000 farmers nationwide under its scheme.

MATA Aerotech in a statement today announced that the appointment followed the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between Felcra and MATA Aerotech on July 22.

"Through this cooperation, MATA Aerotech will be using drone technology to spray padi seeds over a 1,557 hectares of padi estate or more than 45 per cent of the overall estate of Felcra Seberang Perak.

“With this, Felcra Seberang Perak will be the first and largest padi estate in Malaysia, to create history in using drone technology on large scale for padi cultivation,” the statement said.

According to MATA Aerotech, the padi cultivation using drone technology will replace manual spraying by workers which will take a much longer time.

This would enable manpower to be deployed in other productive activities.

Apart from that, agriculture spraying using drone is more even and it can reduce wastage and lower exposure of workers and the environment to the spray substance.

According to the company, MATA Aerotech and Felcra will be using drone technology and Artificial Intelligence (A.I) to analyse data to monitor growth and health of padi crops.

“Quick and accurate data analysis will assist Felcra to improve management and operation of padi estates.

“Data analysis is the first move towards precision agriculture involving targeted spraying on areas with problem or infected by disease,” it said.

Besides that, the cooperation included the implementation of “Aviator Training Programme” (ATP) to train youths from Felcra community as drone technology operators.

The first ATP will be starting this month in Felcra Seberang Perak involving nine trainees.

The three-month training programme covers classroom lessons and on-the-job practical training.

“The trainees undergoing the programme will also have the chance of being absorbed as drone technology operators with MATA Aerotech,” said the statement. — Bernama