

**THE STAR**

## All ECER states to have dairy valleys within 5 years



Chief executive officer Datuk Baidzawi Che Mat said ECER's Dairy Valley expansion project, which will kick off next year, is expected to help the country achieve a 100% self-sufficiency level for fresh milk by 2025.

KUANTAN: The East Coast Economic Region (ECER) Development Council (ECERDC) plans to establish "dairy valleys" in all ECER states in the next five years under the 12th Malaysia Plan framework.

Chief executive officer Datuk Baidzawi Che Mat said ECER's Dairy Valley expansion project, which will kick off next year, is expected to help the country achieve a 100% self-sufficiency level for fresh milk by 2025.

This is also in line with the government's goal to reduce dependency on imported milk, he said.

"The Dairy Valley project, which started in Muadzam Shah (Pahang), is in line with the government's food security agenda. So this is the right sector that we are in.

“The Muadzam Shah Cattle Research and Innovation Centre is a successful public-private project, so we will replicate it (throughout ECER),” he told Bernama recently.

Baidzawi said the council aims to make ECER an integrated dairy hub.

The Jemaluang Dairy Valley project, currently being implemented in Mersing, Johor, is expected to be completed by next January and contribute 5.1 million litres of milk annually.

The council is also exploring potential locations in Setiu, Terengganu; Raub, Pahang; dan Lojing, Kelantan, for a combined annual capacity of 13.4 million litres, he said.

He also said the ECER dairy project, when fully operational, will be able to produce 24.6 million litres per annum, or 40% of the country’s fresh milk production capacity.

Besides the fresh milk project, Baidzawi said the council also aims to nurture and develop livestock-related sectors along the east coast. This includes animal feed and agro-tourism.

“The council has plans for agro-food projects that it would like to implement under the 12th Malaysia Plan.

“There are many benefits to be had from agriculture including creating employment opportunities and a new source of wealth,” he said.

He said ECERDC is supportive of initiatives to develop a sustainable food supply through the implementation of the agrofood project@ECER project in order to reduce the country’s dependence on food imports.

The council is also planning to implement other agriculture projects that have high demand like coconut cultivation, animal feed and the commercial cultivation of chillies and tomatoes.

He said the development of commercial agriculture will raise the country’s self-sufficiency level by as much as 8% and open up new income opportunities for the local community.