

8.0 CURRENT AGRICULTURAL TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT USED

a) Mechanisation

The mechanical agricultural implement market is expected to grow by 25% per annum in coming years, reflecting the country's increasing move towards mechanisation. In the past, the abundant supply of labour has slowed down the mechanisation process. However, Howard Alatpertanian Sdn Bhd Managing Director, Anker Nielson believes that the market will be quite substantial in five to ten years time.

Howard Alatpertanian is the largest agricultural implement manufacturer in South East Asia. It is a joint venture between the Thrige Agro Group of Denmark (51%) and the National Farmers Association (49%) of Malaysia. It has about a 60% share of the local market. The company has more than 20 different mechanised farm implements in its range. The products include rotavators (used for soil preparation), rotaslasher, (used for clearing undergrowth) and trunk mulchers (used to pulverise oil palm trunks for replanting purposes). Most of the implements are locally manufactured and designed to fit Malaysian conditions. Three years ago the company also introduced a locally designed and manufactured rough terrain tractor called Serbatrek. The tractor is specially designed for use in oil palm plantations. Together with the Unilever group, the company had improved the performance of the tractor and introduced the second generation Serbatrek. Currently the company is working with Mardi to modify the tractor so that a harvester for use in padi fields could be fitted.

b) Livestock Vaccine

A French-Malaysian firm plans to set up a bio-technology plant in the country to produce livestock vaccines for both the domestic and overseas markets. The plant expected to cost about M\$10 million will be the first bio-technology plant in the country. The company will also be the first exporter of locally produced animal vaccines to countries in South East Asia and China. It is expected to export about 20% of its products in the first year and this will be increased by 10% annually. The plant will be producing new vaccines to prevent poultry and other livestock diseases in the region.

The company a joint-venture between French based Rhone-Poulinc Malaysia and Permodalan Kelantan Bhd is presently waiting for the Government's approval to start production. It has shortlisted Johore and Klang Valley for plant location. (Business Times 6th June 1989)