

Cultivated meat technology in line with govt policy goals - Arthur



Deputy Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation Datuk Arthur Joseph Kurup (centre) poses with Malaysian Bioeconomy Development Corporation Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mohd Khairul Fidzal Abdul Razak (left) and Cell AgriTechGroup of Companies Founder and Manufacturing Vice President Jason Ng (right) after officiating the Cultivated Meat Conference at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Center today.



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KUALA LUMPUR, March 16 (Bernama) – Biotechnology, particularly cultivated meat technology, is in line with the goals of the National Biotechnology Policy (NBP) 2.0 and the National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (DSTIN) 2021-2030, said Deputy Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) Datuk Arthur Joseph Kurup.

Arthur said the NBP 2.0 and the DSTIN 2021-2030 aims to make Malaysia a bio-innovation nation for wealth creation and cultivated meat technology could create new job opportunities, generate revenue for local industries and stimulate innovation in biotechnology and bio-based sectors.

"Cell-based technology for cultivated meat is a key component of biotechnology, as outlined in the NBP 2.0 launched by MOSTI in September 2022. This is also in line with the DSTIN 2021-2030 plan to transform Malaysia into a high-technology country by 2030.

"These policies recognise the importance of biotechnology in addressing national challenges, particularly in food security, health management, and climate change," he said in his keynote speech at the opening of the inaugural Malaysia Cultivated Meat Conference here today.

He said NBP 2.0 also emphasises sustainable development in Malaysia and cultivated meat technology can help achieve this by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, land use and water consumption associated with traditional livestock farming, leading to a more sustainable and efficient food system in the country.

Arthur said the two policies also encourage the development of innovative biotechnology solutions to improve societal well-being, and cultivated meat technology can do this by producing safer, more nutritious and hormone- and antibiotic-free meat in a controlled environment.

He said research and markets estimated that the cultivated meat market, valued at RM791.87 million (US\$176.48 million) in 2022, will increase to RM1.443 billion (US\$321.71 million) in 2027, with a compound annual growth rate of 12.76 per cent.

Admittedly, Arthur said some of the major hurdles in cultivated meat include the high cost of production, the lack of regulatory frameworks to ensure its safety and efficacy in clinical applications, as well as technical challenges related to scaling up the production process and achieving consistent results across different batches.

The fact is, Arthur said cultivated meat technology is still in the early stages of research and development in Malaysia.

"In light of this, MOSTI, Bioeconomy Corporation and other agencies play a significant role in supporting and providing infrastructure, as well as developing the ecosystem such as financing, talent as well as research and development to ensure the growth of cultivated meat technology in this country," he said.

Malaysia Cultivated Meat Conference organiser, Cell AgriTech, is catalysing the beginning of cell line and molecular technology in Malaysia by launching cultivated meat production in Batu Kawan, Penang by end of 2024 with a RM20 million internally-generated investment.

Meanwhile, co-organiser, Bioeconomy Corporation, a leading economic development agency for the biotechnology and bio-based industries in Malaysia has been facilitating and nurturing Cell AgriTech under the Bio-based Accelerator programme (BBA).

BBA assists local startups, micro-businesses, and large companies in the bio-based industry by helping them incorporate science, technology, and automation.

Established in 2005, Bioeconomy Corporation is owned by the Minister of Finance Incorporated and Federal Lands Commissioner and is under the purview of MOSTI.