



SEEDS OF CHANGE

ELEGANT
CREATIONS

THE EVOLUTION OF MALAYSIAN AGRICULTURE

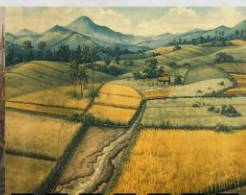
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7TH CENTURY A.D

MARITIME BEGINNINGS

The rise of the Sriwijaya Kingdom in Sumatra heralded an era of peace and prosperity across the Straits of Melaka. Early Malays emerged as adept maritime traders, exchanging tin, gold, pepper, resins, hides, and shells with India and China—laying the groundwork for a thriving agro-trade economy.

11TH CENTURY

THE RICE REVOLUTION

In Kedah, the expansion of wet rice (sawah) cultivation reshaped local landscapes and fortified regional sultanates. Agriculture became the backbone of communities, ensuring food security and fostering social cohesion.

15TH CENTURY

MELAKA: A GLOBAL CROSSROADS

The Melaka Sultanate flourished as a cosmopolitan trading port, bridging East and West. Immigrants introduced advanced tools and rice-growing techniques, enriching indigenous practices alongside traditional fishing and hunting.

17TH–18TH CENTURY

SUBSISTENCE AND SPICES

Agriculture remained largely subsistence-base, with rice farming central to Malay livelihoods. Trade revolved around forest products and spices, reflecting a period marked by simplicity and survival.

EARLY 1800s

CHINESE AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISE

Chinese settlers pioneered commercial cultivation of sugar, pepper, gambir, and tapioca, particularly in Johor and Singapore. Supported by the Sultan of Johor, these plantations blended Chinese agricultural expertise with Malay stewardship.

1840s–1860s

THE PLANTATION BOOM

Johor experienced a surge in pepper and gambir plantations, with over 1,200 sites employing 15,000 Chinese farmers. Concurrently, European firms established sugar plantations, drawing on expertise from Mauritius and Ceylon.

1870s

BRITISH COLONIAL CONTROL

The Resident System consolidated British rule, transforming agriculture through institutional reforms. Botanic Gardens in Singapore (1858) and Penang (1887) became experimental grounds for crops like coffee, tea, and rubber—ushering in scientific agriculture.

1897–1908

THE RUBBER BOOM

New land laws in 1897 incentivized rubber cultivation. By 1905, global demand—driven by the automobile industry—sparked a rubber boom, positioning Malaya as a leading exporter by 1908.

1904–1905

BIRTH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

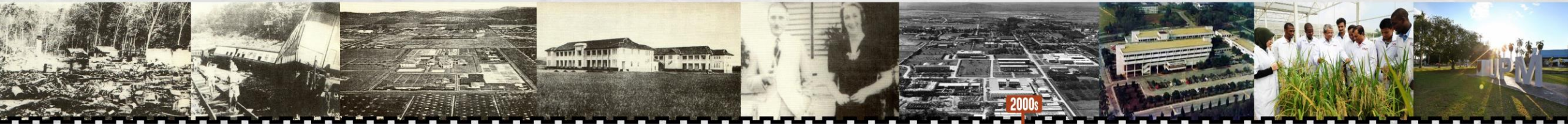
Under Dr. J.C. Willis's leadership, the Department of Agriculture was established, championing crop research, land conservation, and pest management—marking the dawn of structured agricultural governance.

1910–1925

DIVERSIFYING THE FIELDS

Large estates cultivated coconuts (copra) for export, while Malay smallholders grew rice, pepper, gambir, coconuts, and fruits—balancing commercial ambition with local resilience.

Seeds of Change: The Evolution of Malaysian Agriculture



1914–1918

WAR AND FOOD SECURITY

World War I heightened rubber demand but exposed food vulnerabilities. New policies promoted local food crops such as bananas, cassava, sugarcane, and rice—emphasizing the importance of self-sufficiency.

1931

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION BEGINS

The School of Agriculture in Serdang was inaugurated on 21 May 1931, marking the beginning of formal agricultural education in Malaya. Equipped with classrooms, laboratories, and hostels, it nurtured future agro-leaders.

1940s

CRISIS AND RECOVERY

During the Japanese Occupation (1942–1945), food shortages compelled communities to farm for survival. Post-war recovery focused on land rehabilitation and domestic food production—strengthening national resilience.

1950s

INDEPENDENCE AND RURAL TRANSFORMATION

Following Independence in 1957, agriculture became central to nation-building. The establishment of FELDA (1956) resettled rural populations onto agricultural land, cultivating rubber, rice, oil palm, and coconut—empowering communities through land ownership.

1960s

THE GREEN REVOLUTION

Malaysia embraced the Green Revolution, introducing high-yield rice varieties, fertilizers, and irrigation systems. Institutions like MARDI (1969), FELCRA, and RISDA were founded to modernize agriculture and ensure rice self-sufficiency.

1971

UNIVERSITI PERTANIAN MALAYSIA (UPM)

The founding of UPM marked a transformative milestone in agricultural education. Offering diploma and degree programs, UPM integrated research, education, and national development—emerging as a beacon of agro-innovation.

1980s

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL POLICY (NAP I)

NAP I (1984–1991) aimed to enhance productivity and diversify exports. It introduced Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Farmer Field Schools, promoting sustainable practices and regional cooperation.

1990s–2010

BIOTECHNOLOGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

NAP II & III emphasized modernization, sustainability, and food security. The National Biotechnology Policy (2005), led by UPM, advanced biofertilizers, biopesticides, and functional foods—positioning Malaysia as a biotechnology leader.

2011

SMART FARMING AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

The National Agrofood Policy (DAN 1.0 & 2.0) redefined agriculture for the 21st century. DAN 1.0 (2011–2020) focused on food security and agro-industrial modernization. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital and urban farming, while DAN 2.0 (2021–2030) champions a green bioeconomy, smart farming, and climate-resilient agriculture.

2024–2030

UPM VICE CHANCELLOR INITIATIVES

Under The Honorable Dato' Prof. Ir. Dr. Ahmad Farhan Mohd Sadullah's leadership, UPM advanced national and regional food security through transformative initiatives. In 2024, the UPM Food Security Blueprint set the course for resilience, guided by UPM's 'True North' vision—championing PUTRA: Pertanian Untuk Rakyat and integrating Planetary Health and the Sustainable Development Goals. The UPM Nexus united universities for integrated solutions, while AUN-AFS engagement strengthened Malaysia's leadership in ASEAN food security. From 2024 to 2030, UPM promoted smart farming, leveraging IoT, AI, and precision agriculture for climate-resilient productivity.