

# Farming losses could exceed RM140m

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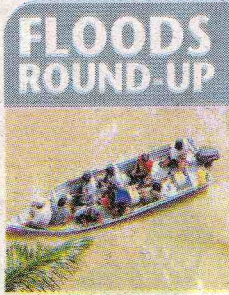
**MARANG:** Early estimates showed that the agriculture sector suffered losses of about RM140 million due to the recent floods in Johor.

The figure could be higher as the actual damage assessment is still ongoing.

Of the amount estimated so far, nearly half were losses incurred by those directly involved in the sector, including in farming, aquaculture and breeding of livestock.

The damage to agriculture infrastructure is estimated at RM70 million.

"These are early estimates.



We expect the figure to be higher because there are still areas inundated by the floods," said Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin yesterday.

He said the government had

approved RM7.4 million to be immediately distributed to the affected farmers to enable them to revive their crops.

"We want them to get back on their feet as soon as possible," he said after visiting the "Bumi Hijau" project at Kampung Medan Jaya.

The participants of the project had received commendations from the state government for their commitment in turning the village from a middle-class housing area into a farming community.

After a tour of the village, Muhyiddin suggested that similar projects should be held in other middle-class housing areas as it could help the par-

ticipants save on their expenditures and they could also sell the surplus.

"It will be a good idea if the residents could organise a weekly market to sell the extra produce," he said.

On a wider scale, he said, the involvement of 500,000 families in such a venture could help slash the agriculture import budget by about RM500 million.

On graduate farmers, Muhyiddin said the programme launched two years ago was showing results, and he was happy that some of the participants had inspired the locals to get involved in agricultural activities.