



Muda Agricultural Development Authority chairman **Datuk Othman Aziz** (left) with the agency's employees during the handing-over ceremony at Mada's headquarters in Alor Star yesterday. Pic by Amran Hamid

## Mada seeks RM20m to upgrade roads, drains

**ALOR STAR:** The Muda Agricultural Development Authority (Mada) is seeking about RM20 million in funds from the Federal Government to upgrade drainage systems and farm roads in 4,127ha of new areas taken over by the agency.

Its chairman, Datuk Othman Aziz, said Mada would apply to the Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry Ministry and the Finance Ministry to get the allocations as soon as possible to improve basic infrastructure in areas recently taken over by the agency, such as Pokok Sena, Kubang Pasu, Pendang, Yan, Kurung Anai, Sungai Adam and Bintong.

"We realise that even though the area is 4,127ha, infrastructure, such as drainage system and farm roads needed are extensive.

"In the initial stage, we will focus on cleaning up drains and upgrading roads.

"We are studying areas that do not have sufficient drainage systems and basic infrastructure to plant padi.

"We have received a RM1.8 million allocation to do that," he said after the handing over of the new areas ceremony here yesterday.

The blocs, 11 in Kedah and three in Perlis, were previously managed by the Agricultural Department, the

Drainage and Irrigation Department, and the Farmers' Organisation Authority.

Othman urged the Federal Government to expedite approval of the funds as it would speed up the return on investment, which would also benefit padi farmers.

On this year's first padi planting season, Othman said 99.9 per cent of the Muda area had been covered, and as of Aug 31, 48 per cent of the crop had been harvested.

For the blocs that Mada had just taken over, Othman hoped they would also achieve the seven tonne per hectare target set by Mada for padi yields.