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Padi fields in Kelantan, Langkawi and Terengganu have been affected by the dry spell. FILE PIC

HOT SPELL

STEPS TAKEN TO STOP PADI FIELDS FROM DRYING UP

Ministry monitoring water sources, conserving supply in planting areas

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CONTINGENCY plans have been put in place by the Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Ministry to prevent rice production from being affected by the extreme weather.

The country is facing a period of extreme heat, which is expect-

ed to last until early next month.

Among the steps taken by the ministry is to control water management at crop areas, water sources and conserving water at reservoirs, as well as maximising water storage.

The ministry said agencies would make sure that equipment and machinery related to water storage were despatched to affected areas.

It said if the dry spell became

worse, it would work with the Malaysian Meteorological Department to carry out cloud seeding.

"Up until Monday, padi areas that have been affected are those under the Kemubu Agricultural Development Authority (7,557ha), Seberang Perak Integrated Agricultural Development Area (4,600ha) and Kota Belud Integrated Agricultural Development Area (2,000ha).

"Locations outside these areas that have been identified include Kelantan (563ha), Langkawi (251ha) and Terengganu (50ha)," the ministry told the *New Straits Times*.

It said it was monitoring areas for other crops that could be affected.

"At present, fruits and vegetables are not affected because water used to cultivate them comes from wells and pools."

The Meteorological Department had said the country was experiencing the end of the northeastern monsoon season and would experience a transition period from next month to May.

It said the country's rainfall would reach an average level in June and July, and this would help the agricultural sector.