

Two companies to develop UMS land in Keningau

TBP 27.06.2023 P.05

KOTA KINABALU: The EcoFarm Management Center (PPEF) of University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with two companies to develop part of the UMS land located in Kampung Apin-Apin, Keningau.

The MoA with Malaysian Kuwaiti Investment Co Sdn Bhd (MKIC) is for integrated coconut cultivation, including the study of fodder production from agricultural organic waste.

For the agreement with Yun Fook Resources Sdn Bhd (YFR), the project to be carried out is integrated oil palm cultivation, including a study of oil palm plant spacing.

The exchange of documents was completed by UMS Vice-Chancellor, Prof Datuk Dr Kasim Mansor and MKIC chairman Datuk Seri Dr Sabin Samitah and YFR managing director Datuk Yap Yun Fook.

Dr Kasim said among other things, this collaboration aims to support the development of teaching and learning as well as research in preserving the agricultural industry and fodder production in Sabah, including the use of knowledge such as the production of probiotic fodder to improve digestion and nutrient intake by animals.

He said this is in line with one of the wishes in the Sabah Maju Jaya Development Plan, which is to increase agricultural productivity through the use of the latest technology in line with the Industrial Revolution (IR4.0) and the Internet of Things (IoT).

"This collaboration also helps UMS in maximising the use of assets thus providing income returns and improving the university's financial sustainability.

"In addition, it also helps UMS produce agricultural graduates who are ready to make an impact on the agricultural industry immediately after graduation," he said.

Meanwhile, UMS Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation), Prof Ir Dr Rosalam Sarbatly who has led



Dr Kasim (left) exchanging MoA with Sabin.

the negotiations between UMS and the two companies, said the operational cost of land development and research on UMS land in Kg Apin-Apin, which is generally a UMS Living Laboratory will be fully borne by the company with UMS as the lead for the research that will be carried out later.

"This project is a smart collaboration in research and innovation at the university level because it will produce products that continue to be used by industry and society.

"The findings from the research at the Life Laboratory will be published in a high-impact journal," he said.

The director of PPEF UMS, Ts Dr Januarius Gobillik, said the scope of cooperation with MKIC will involve the planting of matag coconut (hybrid) and tacunan with the initial plan being the planting of 3,500 seedlings on 40 acres of land.

"The waste from this industry will be used in producing animal feed formulations. The

integration of coconut crops and livestock is also part of the plan that is thought of in this collaboration.

"MKIC will inject funds into the research of the feed formulation through AFEDRI which is a Specialized Living Laboratory for research and industrialization of livestock feed.

"Meanwhile, the collaboration with YFR will involve integrated oil palm cultivation on 30 acres of land with research on the impact on production and environmental ecology by plant spacing of 30 x 30, 35 x 35, 40 x 40 square feet," he added.

For the record, the UMS land development project in Kg Apin-Apin is part of the projects carried out by PPEF, UMS which has been entrusted to develop some land owned by UMS including land in Mesilou, Kundasang which is being developed as a Research and Learning Center for Highland Agriculture.

UMS on Monday also entered into a two-year research

consultation agreement with Wong Aquaculture Sdn Bhd (WA) to investigate the potential of duckweed as a potential alternative feed component for Chanos chanos, also known as milkfish or Ikan Baulu.

Dr Rafidah Binti Othman and Associate Professor Dr Falhana Ching Abdullah @ Ching Fui Fui, both researchers from Borneo Marine Research Institute (BMRI), UMS, will work with WA and BMRI UMS on this RM232,000 collaboration.

Their combination expertise and background in research will give the research a firm basis.

Both organisations are excited to start this fascinating research project and are certain that their collaboration will produce important insights into the possible advantages of using duckweed as a feed supplementation for milkfish.

The two ceremonies were witnessed by Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin in conjunction with his working visit to UMS.