

# UMS researchers always ready to support aquaculture sector – director

BP 29.1.2015 10

**KOTA KINABALU:** Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) is committed to efforts in fostering closer cooperation between the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, Putatan District Office and the local community in the development of fisheries stock.

UMS Borneo Marine Research Institute (BMRI) director Associate Professor Dr Rossita Shapawi said the institute could provide quality spawns as well as consultation from experts in the aquaculture field with the facilities available at BMRI.

Rossita said this during the opening ceremony of a river awareness program organized by UMS BMRI's community project on stock enhancement of giant freshwater prawns in the Petagas River here yesterday. A total of 100 pupils from SK Petagas and SK Contoh took part in the campaign.

"We are always ready to render our moral and physical support to the committee of the community project to ensure success in the activities organized," she said.

Rossita said the community project to enhance the prawn stock in the Petagas River began in 2012 and was officiated by Deputy Chief Minister cum Minister of Agriculture and Food Industry Datuk Seri Panglima Yahya Hussin.

Although the project was called

the stock enhancement of giant freshwater prawns, its benefits were far reaching as the project involved the local community in Putatan to care for the river.

She said several releases of spawns had been carried out since the inception of the project.

At least one to two releases are being done every year, and to date, 23,000 spawns have been released to the Petagas River.

"I have received the latest news that the spawns released into the river three years ago have been harvested."

In addition, she said several awareness campaigns had been held that involved the public, Village Security and Development Committee (JKKK), and primary and secondary school students.

She said the JKKK had also organized trips to the BMRI hatchery which enlightened the participants on the potential of fish and prawn farming in Sabah.

On BMRI, Rossita said the institute was the only potential excellence centre in the field of aquaculture at national level.

She added that the institute would also officially launch the Aquaculture Partner programme in April. The programme was announced by UMS deputy vice chancellor during the Aquaculture with Community Workshop last December.