

UMS Eco-Farm improve economic growth in Apin-Apin

By **MARUTIN ANSIUNG**

KENINGAU: An Eco-Farm and Food Livestock Research Centre in Apin-Apin will provide job opportunities to villagers and hence improve socio-economic growth in the area.

It will be built by Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) in Apin-Apin, which is located 18 kilometres from Keningau at a cost of some RM10 million.

An area of 74 acres will be developed with 60 acres set aside for dairy farm incubation and the 14 acres for research and administrative purposes.

UMS Director of Entrepreneurship Research and Development Centre (ERDEC) cum chief of the Industry Centre of Excellence (ICoE) Agriculture Cluster, Dr. Bonaventure

Boniface said construction work will start at any time pending approval from both UMS and the industry.

He said the dairy farming incubation area will serve as a training centre for undergraduates, graduates, and young entrepreneurs by providing in-depth understanding of dairy farming practices besides producing dairy food formulations using local resources that are cost effective and sustainable.

"UMS also has plans to turn rural areas into eco-tourism education centres which will provide economic benefits to the local people," he said.

Meanwhile, Assistant Minister of Agriculture and Food Industry, Datuk Haji Sairin Haji Karno commended UMS for embarking on the project that would attract more experts to venture in the

agricultural field.

Sairin who is also the assemblyman for Liawan said: "It is with great hope that this centre will assist the state government in formulating nutritious dairy food more cost effectively using Sabah's own natural resources."

He was speaking at an entrepreneurial agriculture and social event held by UMS in SMK Apin-Apin here on Saturday.

Sairin said the project was in line with Sabah's Agriculture Policy that focuses on the development of food security and food production.

"With the existence of the centre and strong support from UMS, the government hopes that more young entrepreneurs will venture into agriculture and boost the economic development of Sabah.



Sairin (middle) receives a token of appreciation from UMS vice-chancellor Datuk Dr. Harun Abdullah.

"Farming has huge potential to be developed in Sabah mainly because of the state's strategic location. Sabah is also free from major diseases and this is an advantage to the livestock industry," Sairin stressed.

He encourages people in the rural areas to seize this opportunity and cooperate with UMS to ensure their children will have a promis-

ing future in farming.

Villagers of Apin-Apin wholly welcomed the Eco-Farm and Food Livestock Research Centre by UMS.

Chairman of the Megitom Development and Security Committee (JKKK), Rosmi Jamisin, 39, said it would boost economic growth in the area through agriculture and provide job opportunities for

them at the centre.

Victor Kumin, 38, from Kg Linsudan, Apin-Apin, said they had long waited for such developments that will change their socio-economic standards for the better.

Also present was the principal of SMK Apin-Apin, Cheah Chu Tai, Sook Community Development Leader, Charles Ikang and community leaders.