

Malaysian halal certificate is globally recognised accreditation – dean

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KOTA KINABALU: The status of the Malaysian halal certificate as a globally recognised accreditation puts it in high demand and boosts the country's image as a halal hub.

University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Faculty of Food Science and Nutrition dean, Professor Dr Sharifudin Md Shaarani said this also supported the university's initiative to brand itself as a local referral centre in the halal field.

Officiating yesterday's Knowledge Advocacy Program 'Empowering Halal Industry Integrity', Dr Sharifudin said UMS had collaborated with Heilongjiang Academy of Science (HAS) in China on two of its products.

"In our joint venture, we helped HAS obtain halal certificates for its Black Fungus and Black Garlic products.

"The reason why HAS wanted to have the Malaysian halal certificate is because our certificate is recognised worldwide.

"This means that if they choose to market their products



Dr Sirajuddin (sixth right) after the opening ceremony of Empowering Halal Industry Integrity program at Universiti Malaysia Sabah.

in other countries, they do not have to go through the process of applying for that country's halal certificate," Dr Sharifudin said.

He also said both Black Fungus and Black Garlic products had been marketed in Sabah since the beginning of the year, in supermarkets around the state capital.

The products are only available

here at the moment, with plans to penetrate the national market in the near future.

Malaysia Islamic Development Department (JAKIM) halal hub division director, Dato' Dr Sirajuddin Suhaimie said awareness on halal-related issues still needs to be improved amid confusion and rumours circulated on social media.

He said the department

was constantly providing information and explanation to the public regarding halal status and certification.

"The meaning of halal and halal status needs to be understood by everyone to eliminate confusion.

"People need to understand what halal is in terms of management and production," he said, adding that speculations

on social media make matters worse.

"Sometimes, there will be issues that are circulated all over again on social media regarding halal status when in fact, we have already answered and clarified those issues.

"To avoid uncertainty, we advise people to visit the Halal Malaysia Official Portal, where they can get information on the halal status of companies and products, as well as how to go about applying for a halal certificate."

Dr Sirajuddin said this in light of many who still do not understand the procedure of applying for a halal certificate.

"JAKIM has determined that application for halal certification can be made through halal hubs and the Sabah Islamic Affairs Department (JHEAINS).

"A certificate can be obtained from as low as RM400 for two years' validity, for local entrepreneurs," he said.

Business owners, especially new ones, often have three main concerns regarding halal certificate application,

said Dr Sirajuddin, including the difficulty in obtaining the certificate, high management costs and lack of efficiency from JAKIM.

To speed up the process of applying for the certificate, Dr Sirajuddin said JAKIM introduced the Instant Halal Certification Initiative, which had been ongoing since June 21.

The initiative categorises applications into critical and non-critical categories, without compromising on integrity and transparency.

"Critical applications comprise those from slaughterhouses and new food premises as well as meat-based products, while non-critical applications involve certificate renewals and non-meat-based products," he explained, adding that successful applications would be certified within three working days.

As of this month, a total of 224 businesses are halal-certified, 73 of which are Bumiputera-owned, 35 from small industries and 27 from small and medium industries.