



Director of Agri Business Consultancy Sdn Bhd, Ho Yin Nyuk (fourth from left) shakes hands with Prof Datuk Dr Kasim after signing the agreement witnessed by director of Yun Fung Sang Group Sdn Bhd, Steve Lee (third from left) and UMS researchers.

UMS, company to strengthen Eco-Farm Agriculture

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) welcomes the collaboration with Yun Fung Sang Group Sdn Bhd to strengthen Eco-Farm Agriculture as an educational platform based on research training for the benefit of all stakeholders, especially students and agri-entrepreneurs.

Its Vice Chancellor, Professor Datuk Dr Kasim Mansur believed that these efforts can encourage more local parties to get involved in the field of agriculture and create space for research activities in oil palm and other agricultural fields.

"It's because agricultural education is one of the most important aspects for the continued growth of Malaysia's agricultural sector as it leverages technology and innovation to enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the downstream oil palm sector," he said when officiating the signing of Research Agreement (Regenerative Agriculture and Biodiversity) between UMS and Yun Fung Sang Group at UMS on April 19.

Dr Kasim added this research collaboration agreement will also increase the visibility and strength of UMS in the community through close collaboration with the palm oil industry and other related industries.

In addition, both parties also agreed to cooperate in establishing the Chair of Regenerative Agriculture and Biodiversity.

This chair is important to strengthen the palm oil industry in the country, especially in the aspect of improving the health of agricultural lands and conservation of agrobiodiversity.

"The fertilizer that is produced later is more economical and environmentally friendly, still having a high impact in increasing the production of sustainable agricultural crops, including oil palm," he pointed out.

Yun Fung Sang Group has agreed to support the UMS eco-farm project, which involves studying the application of additional trace elements to soils to improve oil palm yield, soil health and soil fauna diversity in a 12-hectare oil palm plantation in Gum-Gum, Miles 16 Sandakan, through donations.

For information, the project has been implemented in 2022 and involves a contribution over a five-year period from Yun Fung Sang Group and the participation of its subsidiaries, Baja Harapan Group Sdn Bhd, Kang Ke Palm Sdn Bhd and Agri Business Consultancy Sdn Bhd.

This research project also involves a number of experts and researchers, namely the lead researcher, Associate Prof Dr Suzan Benedick (Entomology & Biodiversity), Dr Clament Chin Fui Seung (Microbiology & Biotechnology), Dr Januarius Gobilik (Multi- and Cross-disciplinary Agronomy) and Dr Salumiah Mijin (Horticulture and Soil Nutrition).

Earlier, Associate Prof Dr Suzan Benedick stated that the goal of this collaborative project is to improve soil nutrient management in the palm oil agroecosystem by providing better information and advice to palm oil farmers, focusing on sustainability indicators such as soil trace element enrichment and cost-effectiveness.

"We believe this collaborative project can help palm oil farmers consider the three key factors: People, Planet and Profit," she added.

Director of Yun Fung Sang Group Sdn Bhd, Steve Lee, said he would work to strengthen the agricultural sector, especially the palm oil sector, to achieve the policy goals of the Sabah government's initiative to make the state a global leader in the sustainable palm oil industry.

"We hope through this research the competitiveness can be further strengthened, and a system of cooperation between academia and industry can contribute to the development of the oil palm nutrient management industry," he added.

Through this agreement, both parties agree to cooperate to achieve outputs involving publications and research seminars related to fertilizers, palm oil production and biodiversity in palm plantations, exchange of human resources and expertise in the specified fields including producing trade secrets of research results and trademarks of results research.