

UMS to lead research on agro-food uses

By Mariah Doksil

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) will be leading a research to find out fresh agro-food uses in Malaysia.

The research, costing RM4.8 million, is expected to be completed within 18 months.

Deputy director-general of Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA), Mansor Omar, said data collected from the research would be used for the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-based Industry (MOA) as a reference for the agro-food planning in Malaysia, which is one of the most important to achieve the National Transformation 2050 (TN50).

"FAMA will be the ministry's secretariat for this research - Kajian Penggunaan Agromakanan Segar di Malaysia. Meanwhile, UMS under UMS Investment Holdings Sdn Bhd (UiNVEST) will be leading the team where three other higher learning institutions are also involved in collecting the data, namely University Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA) and Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).

"The current reference for FAMA to make agro-based uses projection is not relevant due to the outdated data which was done in 2003.

"In 2015, the Department of Statistics produced Supply Utilization Accounts (SUA) and Household Expenditure Survey (HES), detailing uses and expenses. However, the data did not meet FAMA's requirements," he said.

Mansor also said that data collected in the research would be used in three important areas.

Firstly, to plan agricultural production to meet the country's export requirements and to identify the substitution of imported materials.

Secondly, to identify the shift of current usage patterns and agro-food consumption pattern in the future.

Thirdly, to estimate the needs of raw materials within the country specifically based on the highest usage variety.

Mansor said this yesterday at the signing ceremony of the negotiation project at UMS, which was also attended by UiNVEST Board of Director Datuk

Mohamed Zulfikar Ahmad.

In his speech, Mohamed Zulfikar said UiNVEST was looking forward for more collaboration in the future.

Chief consultant for the research, Dr Bonaventure Boniface said three aspects would be covered to ensure a comprehensive data collection.

"We will be focusing on household, institution and industry. There will be 8,000 respondents from all over Malaysia that will be selected randomly to participate in this research.

"I believe it will be a complete set to find out specific data on agro-food uses in Malaysia," he said.

Ten other experienced consultants who will be led by Bonaventure are Prof Dr Ismail Ali (UMS), Prof Madya Dr Geoffrey Harvey Tanakinjal (UMS Labuan), Prof Madya Dr Rayner Alfred (UMS), Prof Madya Dr Stephen Laison Sondoh Jr (UMS), Prof Madya Dr Nalini A/P Arumugam (UniSZA), Prof Madya Dr Nolila Mohd Nawati (UPM), Prof Madya Dr Mohammad Affendy Arip (UNIMAS), Dr Assis Kamu (UMS), Dr Mori Kogid (UMS) and Thomas George Timin (UMS).

The signing ceremony yesterday was represented by UiNVEST chief executive officer Ramlan Awang Ali and senior director of FAMA marketing information department, Faridultrash Md Mokri.