

UMS sees role in Halal sector

Published on: Friday, May 03, 2019

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) is hoping to contribute to the Halal industry in Sabah through the expertise of its Faculty of Food Science and Nutrition. This was especially so after the faculty's Food Quality Analysis Laboratory was in February awarded an accreditation certificate from the Department of Standards, making it the first accredited laboratory to carry out DNA testing for the purpose of halal certification in Sabah.

"The faculty's initiative in getting laboratory accreditation for DNA analysis for Halal certification is accurate and in line with the development of the Halal industry which is among the country's agenda," said UMS Vice Chancellor, Professor Datuk Dr D Kamaruddin D Mudin at the presentation ceremony of laboratory accreditation certificate, here, Tuesday.

He was represented by UMS Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation), Associate Professor Dr Ramzah Dambul.

He said Malaysia's Halal industry has grown into one of the most established in the world and Malaysia has become a global reference point for expertise in Halal field. Malaysia, he said, has a Halal ecosystem that is conducive to the development of the Halal industry and this should continue to be emphasised because of the wide global potential and constantly increasing demand.

“I believe that with the expertise of the Faculty, efforts to support and empower the Halal industry in Sabah can be especially enhanced,” he said.

He said looking at the opportunities and potentials of the Halal industry, local industry players in Sabah should take the initiative to strengthen capacity building among Malaysian manufacturers and exporters.

“We in UMS will continue to play a role in providing a platform to share experiences and create collaborative opportunities between agencies and stakeholders in the Halal industry, especially in Sabah,” he said.

Also present was the Department of Standards’ Strategic Planning Division Director, Hussalmizzar Hussain, who represented the department’s Director-General, Datuk Fadilah Baharin.

Fadilah said the department has accredited 921 laboratories throughout the country and of the figure, a total of 720 laboratories still maintains the accredited status in various types of testing, medical and calibration tests including 31 laboratories in Sabah.

He said in addition, there is also a change to the new standard from MS ISO / IEC 17025: 2005 to MS ISO / IEC 17025: 2017 and UMS’ Food Quality Analysis Laboratory is the first laboratory in Sabah that has successfully accredited MS ISO / IEC 17025: 2017

The university now has three accredited laboratories: UMS Haemostasis Laboratory, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, UMS Water Analysis Laboratory, Faculty of Science and Natural Resources for Chemical Testing and UMS Food Quality Analysis Laboratory, Faculty of Food Science and Nutrition for Nucleic Acid Testing.

He went on to say that UMS’ Food Quality Analysis Laboratory has great potential to be the first laboratory in Sabah to be the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (Jakim) Halal Panel Laboratory.

Meanwhile, Faculty of Food Science and Nutrition Dean, Professor TS Dr Sharifudin Shaarani, said they plan and is working on applying to be the first Jakim Halal panel laboratory in Sabah.

“With the laboratory conducting this halal analysis, it is a complementary component of the Faculty as the only Halal Training Provider centre accredited by Jakim in Sabah,” he said.

He said it is their great hope that the Faculty will become a major Halal referral centre not only in Sabah, but also the nation and internationally.