

UMS wins agri-food innovation challenge

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KOTA KINABALU: Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) has put Sabah on the map when its 'ChiVera' product won the main prize in the recent Rising Star Agri-Food Innovation Challenge (RSIC) 2021 competition.

The product, which seeks to reduce agricultural waste from Kundasang farm, earned the university's Faculty of Food Science and Nutrition (FSMP) undergraduates a whopping USD5,000 (RM21,130).

UMS made to the top 16

'Superstar' level, which saw the university battle it out against other teams from Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia itself.

According to FSMP senior lecturer Dr Rovina Kobun, the Chivera adopts a spray technology that prolongs the

lifespan of fruits and vegetables in Kundasang, especially during the pandemic. Her team learned that there was an occurrence of food waste as crop production had exceeded consumer demand.

"They had to discard unsold produce because of its short

lifespan," she said.

Rovina explained that the product was produced by using chitosan extracted from two organic sources.

"The spray will refresh and extend the shelf life of fruits and vegetables," she added.