

PALM SUGAR WORK VISIT TO PUSA, BETONG, SARAWAK

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Universiti Teknologi MARA Sarawak Branch, in partnership with the UiTM Sarawak Branch's Business Development Unit (BDU), has recognised the potential for apong sugar-based goods to be commercialised on a larger scale. Sarawak Apong Sugar, a well-known product of the state, is in the process of obtaining Geographical Indication (GI).

As a result, on June 7 and 8, 2023, a working visit was made to Kg. Sri Kalok, Pusa, Betong, Sarawak to conduct field research, observations, and special discussions about sugarcane. The visit was attended by Professor Dr. Abang Zainoren Abang Abdurahman, Deputy Rector of Research and Industrial Networking of UiTM Sarawak Branch, Dr. Ahmad Fadzil Jobli, General Manager of BDU, and 9 professors who are also members of the project directed by Mrs. Junaidah Mat Jusoh.



INDUSTRY >

PALM SUGAR

Mr. Juhlie @ Joblee bin Ramli, Chairman of the Darul Ulum Kalok Betong Berhad Parish Cooperative, graced the work visit in Pusa. Members of the project were given a tour of the traditional sugarcane processing area, where sugarcane is cooked over firewood. Aside from that, tour participants will be able to watch the traditional nipah roof production process, which is also being worked on by cooperative members in order to meet the demand from local residents. Following the traditional manufacturing location, the group was taken to the cooperative's Apong Sugar Processing Centre.



DETAIL >

This processing centre has been in operation for a few years, and its primary focus for the time being is on the modern processing of granulated sugar using semi-automatic processing equipment, including the use of multi-purpose cooking stoves and gas barrels as a source of fire. Modern processing, according to the cooperative, takes somewhat longer than conventional processing. The data and analysis obtained through the characterization of traditional and modern processing methods, as well as the characteristics of the resulting apong sugar, are critical in identifying the unique apong sugar criteria, which is required for the GI filing process for Sarawak Apong Sugar.

In addition, the tour observes and investigates the langkau, which is the traditional location for the production of apong sugar and is generally deteriorated in terms of physical structure, building materials, and basic facilities required for future improvement efforts. This initiative is a step towards assisting small entrepreneurs' economies to build and sustain the apong sugar enterprise on a global scale. In this regard, a discussion session was also held with the cooperative in order to establish an official agreement to identify apong sugar producers from the Masjid Darul Ulum Kalok Betong Berhad Parish Cooperative as participants in the Sarawak Apong Sugar GI.