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2021
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Congratulations to UiTM Cawangan Johor on media coverage (The Star) titled Projek Kolaborasi Nanas

13 DEC. 2021

Varsity hopes to improve job opportunities for graduates through new pineapple variant project

The Star, Malaysia

Page 1 of 1

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THE Malaysian Academy of SME and Entrepreneurship Development (Mased) of Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Johor has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with agricultural company MFL Enterprise, to produce an improved MFL pineapple variant that will help improve job opportunities for graduates.

UiTM Johor campus rector Prof Dr Ismail Ahmad said the new hybrid pineapple was from Costa Rica and had a cylindrical shape, with an average weight of between 1.5kg and 2.5kg.

He said the harvesting period was varied – from 13 months to 24 months if grown on mineral soil, and between 13 months and 25 months if grown on peat soil.

"The sweetness level is over 14 degrees Brix, which is used to measure dissolved sugar in a liquid solution with an acid level of between 0.4% and 0.45%.

"This variant is very popular in the international pineapple market due to its sweetness and gold-to-blue colour when ripe," he said.

He added that Mased UiTM Johor started its pilot project on a pineapple plantation in September last year to study the best method to plant the new pineapple variety before it was expanded to help generate income and offer job opportunities to graduates.

"The pilot project is conducted with the help of Johor government and the Malaysian Pineapple Industry Board," he said, adding that it was also supported by state agriculture, agribusiness and rural development committee chairman Datuk Sanjivani Ismail as well as state education, information, heritage and culture committee chairman Marian Rajang.

Prof Ismail added that the new hybrid fruit was expected to have higher demand than other pineapple species due to its long-lasting quality.

"The price is also a bit higher, compared to other types of pineapple. Each fruit has the capacity to produce between five and 10 dozens which can be sold for RM2.50 to RM2.50 each," he stated.

He said in the first phase of the pineapple project, 15ha out of the 216ha of land located at the UiTM Johor campus had been set aside to plant the fruit.

The project is divided into three phases – the first involves ensuring that the land is cleared and tilled up; the second phase comprises planting 34,000 pineapple seeds, while phase three focuses on caring for the plants and harvesting them.

The project, expected to yield 51,000 fruits in each one-and-a-half-year cycle, started in September last year, with the first harvest ready in early 2022.

The hybrid MFL pineapple plantation at the UiTM Johor campus in Segamat.

