

Agrobank programme to empower youth

KOTA KINABALU: Agrobank strengthens its commitment to empower the youth, especially the B40 and hardcore poor groups, through the Graduate Agricultural Youth Development Incubator (Probest) programme.

Probest is a synergistic collaboration between the bank, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (KPKM) and participating universities, focusing on all industries that contribute to the food chain, including agriculture, fisheries and animal husbandry.

The nationwide programme sees 96 students from local universities taking part, including from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Teknologi Mara, Jasin (UITM), Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK), Kuala Lumpur University (UniKL), Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and Pasir Puteh Vocational College, Kelantan.

As for Probest Sabah edition, students from UMS and UniKL are involved, whereby the state-level programme was launched by KPKM Deputy Minister Datuk Arthur Joseph Kurup at the UMS aquaculture incubator, Borneo Marine Research Institute here on Friday.

This year makes it the seventh time the programme was held since it was first introduced in 2016, with Agrobank allocating a total RM2.576 million for its implementation.

In the first six months of the one-year initiative, the participants will undergo technical and entrepreneurial guidance sessions, including sales and marketing from leading companies, while the remaining months will see their businesses monitored for further improvement and support.

Agrobank chief executive officer Dato' Tengku Ahmad Badli Shah

Raja Hussin said the students will be given a monthly RM500 allowance for the first half of the programme, and his side aims to increase their income by up to RM2,500 through their own sales and to leading companies.

"The agriculture sector is the country's main economic source. It offers many job opportunities that are not well known among the youth.

"Therefore, the involvement of the younger generation in this sector must be intensified as they are next in line to drive the country's future. Probest is an evidence of Agrobank's efforts and commitment to achieve progress in agriculture through youth involvement," he said.

Arthur said the programme is one of his ministry's ongoing efforts to attract the youth to join the agricultural sector through the use of modern technology, towards

producing young entrepreneurs who can play a proactive role in contributing to the country's agro-food sector.

He said Probest Sabah is a manifestation of Agrobank in creating opportunities for youth in universities, especially the B40 and hardcore poor target groups, to generate income and increase their entrepreneurial knowledge in the agriculture or animal husbandry sector.

"I believe that with the allocation of funds for project infrastructure development, technical guidance from leading companies and also entrepreneurial training through Agrobank, the success of this programme can be achieved and further encourage the involvement of the youth in the agricultural sector," he said.

Also present was UMS Vice-Chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Kasim Mansor.