

'Food production viable business venture in state'

By **Johnson K Saaij**
reporters@theborneopost.com

KOTA SAMARAHAN: Food production is one of areas not fully exploited in the state.

Assistant Minister of Resource Planning Datuk Mohd Naroden Majais said that Sarawak or the whole country for that matter had been too dependent on imported foodstuff despite having plenty of land.

"Malaysia spent about RM2 billion to import food from other countries last year. They include 92 per cent of sugar and 78 per cent of rice from Thailand and Vietnam, not to mention garlic and onions."

Naroden said that with the abundant land and the high demand for food, opportunity to grow our own food was always there for the people to venture into.

He said this at the launch of a student entrepreneur incubator programme and Jantayu Black Pepper House student entrepreneur kiosk (Kesisma) at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) here yesterday.

"My advice to the younger generation who plans to go into business is to consider venturing into food production. There are still a lot of rooms in this area especially for Bumiputera entrepreneurs who have ready



IT'S OPEN: Naroden (right) signing the plaque to launch the kiosk. Seen with him (from left) are Dr Syahira, Prof Mohd Fadzil and Kameri Affandi. — Photo by Muhammad Rais

My advice to the younger generation who plans to go into business is to consider venturing into food production. There are still a lot of rooms in this area especially for Bumiputera entrepreneurs who have ready lands.

Datuk Mohd Naroden Majais, Assistant Minister of Resource Planning

lands," he said.

He, however, said that they must assess their own capability in every aspect before they could start investing, "because not

everyone can do business and many have failed when they do not have the required skill and expertise".

He added that not everyone

with very keen interest in business would be successful.

Unimas deputy vice-chancellor (Students Affairs and Alumni) Professor Mohd Fadzil Abdul Rahman also spoke at the function, which was also attended by Higher Education Ministry's (Planning and Research Division) senior assistant secretary Dr Syahira Hamidon and Bumiputera Entrepreneur Development Unit at the Chief Minister's Office director Kameri Affandi.

Unimas mulls rearing livestock on vacant land

KOTASAMARAHAN: Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) plans to use some of its unoccupied land for deer-rearing with the hope to generate high and steady income for the institution.

Its deputy vice-chancellor (Students Affairs and Alumni) Professor Mohd Fadzil Abdul Rahman said he had personally proposed that the vacant plot of land belonging to the university be converted into a deer farm.

He said Unimas had only used 1,000 of the 2,100 acres of land it had.

"The proposal is now being discussed at the management level and if approved it will be referred to the Board of Directors which will later inform the Ministry of Higher Learning.

"There should not be any

problem with the ministry and as far as funding is concerned, we can apply from the relevant party, and if everything goes as planned we hope to start the project next year. If not deer-rearing we will try other livestock," he said at the launch of student entrepreneur incubator programme and Jantayu Black Pepper House student entrepreneur kiosk (Kesisma) at the university yesterday.

Assistant Minister of Bumiputera Entrepreneur Development Datuk Mohd Naroden Majais officiated at the event.

Speaking at the function earlier, Fadzil said the idea of rearing cattle and other livestock in universities, in fact, came about after visiting similar institutions in New Zealand and China.