

Headline	R&D can help boost country's herbal mart: FRIM		
MediaTitle	Daily Express (KK)		
Date	08 Apr 2021	Color	Black/white
Section	Nation	Circulation	25,055
Page No	7	Readership	75,165
Language	English	ArticleSize	238 cm ²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	MYR 506
Frequency	Daily (EM)	PR Value	MYR 1,518



R&D can help boost country's herbal mart: FRIM

JEMPOK: The cultivation of Kacip Fatimah, calamansi and lemongrass using the integration planting system at a farm in Kampung Serting Ulu here, can help boost the herbal market in the country, as well as guarantee the production of high quality products.

Forest Research Institute Malaysia (Frim) senior research officer, Dr Farah Fazwa Md Ariff said the farm was also equipped with infrastructures such as rumah teduhan and rumah keratan that are used for plant propagation and to house saplings before they were transferred to the farm.

She said, the one hectare farm has 23,000 Kacip Fatimah trees, 6,600 lemongrass and 1,700 calamansi trees.

"We conducted a study on the elite clone of Kacip Fatimah (*Labisia pumila* var. Alata) for almost 10 years. It has superior characteristics encompassing the growth rate of the herb, phenolic chemical content and high amount of biomass, as well as adapt easily to various environments.

"As for the superior clone of calamansi, the plant is able to produce essential oil and linalool with high chemical composition," she told Bernama.

Farah Fazwa said the integration farm-

ing project, which involves 100 participants from Koperasi Rancangan Felcra Gugusan Bayai Berhad (KPRFGB), was aimed at popularising FRIM's research and development outcome, to help increase the income of the B40 group.

Training courses were also provided for the participants, to enable them to learn about technologies in breeding, care, maintenance and cultivation techniques in the integration farm, she said.

Farah Fazwa said lemongrass can be harvested in six months, while it usually takes nine months before Kacip Fatimah can be harvested and calamansi is able provide long-term income to the participants as the life cycle of the crop could last up to 10 years.

"The FRIM Herbal Technology Centre (HTC) and Koperasi Frim Sdn Bhd (Kofrim) will buy the harvested Kacip Fatimah, to produce several products while the calamansi and lemongrass essential oils will be bought by Syarikat Tropical Bioessence Sdn Bhd," she said.

Meanwhile, Frim deputy director-general, Dr Norwati Muhammad hoped that the participants would give their cooperation in taking care, monitoring and maintaining the herbal integration plot as it is a

high value living asset and has great potential to be the country's new commodity in the future.

She said that based on a study conducted in 2016, 73 per cent of consumers in the peninsula used herbal-based products such as fragrances, health supplements, cosmetics and toiletries, which indicated that the demand for herbal products would increase in the future.

Norwati said according to the latest study by Frim, 87 per cent of Kacip Fatimah's raw material supply was sourced from natural forests and only 17 per cent was obtained from the farm.

Thus, herbal farming activities have the potential to produce the supply of raw materials with high commercial value if it is fully explored and well managed, she added.

She said the project had also received a grant of RM260,000, which was approved in October last year from the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (Mosti), under its Malaysia Social Innovation (MySI) programme.

The project will be implemented within a one year period (2020-2021), while the monitoring phase will take place from 2021 to 2023. - Bernama