

Headline	FRIM spreads its wings to Sabah to help herbal growers		
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Dr Ismail signs the NBHGA banner as Norhanida look on.

FRIM spreads its wings to Sabah to help herbal growers

Wu Vui Tek

KOTA KINABALU: Sabah herbal growers can now receive proper guidance and expertise from the Forestry Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) as they had expanded their wings to the State.

Its Director General Dr Ismail Parlan said FRIM is excited to share its expertise and experience with the local herbal growers as they are responsible to help the industry players to grow starting from planting to processing and packaging.

"We have facilities in our campus in Kepong, Selangor and our station in Marang, Pahang that are related to herbal activities," he said during a talk on "Herbal-Completing the Sabah Herbal Industry Value Chain" at Gaya Teachers' Training Institute here.

He said FRIM want to be inclusive because since its establishment in 1994, they had recorded 7,010 industry players in peninsula but none in Sabah and Sarawak, he said.

He said FRIM believed Sabah has the potential to contribute to the development of the national herbal industry because the global size for herbal based products is expected to hit USD190.2 billion by 2032.

"We hope to help the local herbal industry to grow as we are bringing seven experts to share their experiences with

the local players here," said Dr Ismail.

He also invited the Sabah herbal players to visit FRIM's facilities in Kepong for a study tour as the centre is also equipped with a laboratory test facility that can issue herbal safety certification approved by the Health Ministry.

North Borneo Herb Growers Association (NBHGA) Chairman Norhanida Annol said the Sabah herbal industry was still at the infant stage even though they had been practicing it for many years.

"For us, we are just doing it as a hobby to pass time, but now after seeing the great potential of the industry in Malaysia and the global markets, we are beginning to identify which herbs have the demand for the market," she said.

For the time being, she said common plants such as lemongrass, ginger, turmeric and kaffir lime which is locally known as limau purut has been identified to have the huge potential to be developed for domestic herbal market.

"We hope FRIM will provide us the guidelines and experience to expand our knowledge on growing, operation and production.

"FRIM has come here help us to realise our dreams because we been asking around what we have been doing is correct or not and the practice that we are doing got any future to go far," she said.