

Sarawak appoints Top Fruits to improve durian quality and double production

By **Goh Pei Pei** - March 21, 2018 @ 3:37pm

KUCHING: Sarawak will improve the quality of its durians and double production.

Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas said the state government had appointed Top Fruits (Sarawak) Sdn Bhd to develop the durian sector.

“They have more than 30 years experience in growing durian trees and processing the fresh fruits into paste and other products.

“Thus, we need their expertise and knowledge to assist our farmers,” he said at a Top Fruits processing factory in Jalan Batu Kitang here today where 10 tons of frozen durian paste from Sarawak was shipped to Johor to be exported to Guangdong, China, marking the beginning of bigger market for the “King of Fruits”.

Douglas said a complete supply chain, from farm to market, would be established through the strategic partnership.

“We will start the programme next month at durian farms in Semongok in Kuching, Layar in Betong and Kabuloh in Miri.”

He said Top Fruits would use these farms as demonstration plots to showcase their durian farming technologies.



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“Most local farmers plant durians tree and wait for the fruits. If there aren’t any flowers, they assume there won’t be any durians. “Sometimes, a tree only produces two durians in a season. They don’t know what to do with unproductive trees.”

Douglas said fertilizer, technology and quality seedlings would be used to boost the quality and production of durians so that farmers could supply fruits to be processed into paste.

“Sarawak needs a mechanism or system to increase the production and quality of durian and ensure that every tree bears fruits every season. We hope to see results at the end of this year.”

In December and January, he said, Top Fruits processed 80 tons of local durian into 16 tons of raw paste.

“This year, we target to collect at least 300 tons of fresh durian to produce 60 tons of paste.

He said Malaysia exported about RM130 million worth of frozen durian and durian paste last year, mainly to China, Singapore, Indonesia, Hong Kong, America and Australia.

Douglas said the Agriculture Department was upgrading a collection, processing and packaging centre in Tarat, which would be operated by Top Fruits.

He said the state government was also looking into boosting the production and quality of coconuts and pineapples.

“Besides developing local fruits, it is also part of our efforts to increase the incomes of farmers to achieve high-income status by 2030,” he said.