

Sarawak sends maiden shipment of durian paste to China



KUCHING, March 21 — Sarawak, through local fruits exporter Top Fruits (Sarawak) Sdn Bhd, made its first-ever shipment of frozen durian paste to China today, sending 16 tonnes to what is becoming a voracious market for the king of fruits.

Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas launched the shipment at the company's processing plant at Kota Sentosa near here and said Malaysia exported about RM130 million worth of frozen durian fruits and frozen durian paste last year, mainly to China.

“As such, the state ministry of modernisation of agriculture, native land and regional development will undertake various programmes to encourage local farmers to venture into durian farming in a large scale,” he told reporters after the launch of the shipment.

”Our farmers are hardworking and I am sure that they can plant more durian trees, but they must be prepared to use new technology so the durian trees can produce high quality fruits and trees that bear fruits twice a year,” he said.

He said that for this year, Top Fruits Sarawak is targeting to produce 60 tonnes of durian paste, which requires at least 300 tonnes of fresh local durian fruits.

Fruits exporter were also encouraging farmers to rehabilitate and maintain their current durian trees and supply fresh durian fruits to them.

The state Department of Agriculture (DoA) has been tasked to look into a programme to rehabilitate existing durian trees to be more productive and producing high quality fruits during the coming season, he added.

Uggah said the department is also identifying suitable durian farms in Semongok (Kuching), Layar (Betong) and Kabuloh (Miri) to become demonstration plots, where Top Fruits Sarawak will transfer and showcase their technologies in during farming to farmers.

He called on entrepreneurs to venture into commercial farming of clonal durian such as Musang King, Black Thorn and D24, saying that these varieties are in high demand especially in Chin.

He added that the entrepreneurs can approach DoA for technical advices or collaborate with Top Fruits Sarawak in developing their commercial durian farms,” he said.