Sarawak aims to modernise agriculture, attract more young farmers

By Goh Pei Pei - September 14, 2021 @ 10:20pm

Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas visits the Antares Venture Sdn Bhd rice processing plant in Batu Kitang Road here today.

KUCHING: Sarawak is gearing to modernise its agriculture sector to attract the young generation to take up farming as a career.

Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Douglas Uggah Embas said the majority of the farmers in the state were those aged 50 and above, so the participation of more youths in the sector is required.

"One of the biggest problems in the agriculture sector in the state is that the youths are not too keen on farming as a career. So, the government has decided to modernise it to make it appealing to youths.

"We are looking at precision farming like the fertigation method based on the Internet of Things (IoT) which will make the sector trendier, with less mental work but greater returns," he said.
Uggah said Chief Minister Datuk Abang Johari Openg had allocated a sum of RM100 million to the agriculture sector to further develop and modernise it.

The Sarawak Agro Fund established in 2017 had also approved RM28.6 million in grants and loans to 25 farmers in the state.

Uggah said the allocations were being disbursed progressively to the farmers based on the progress in their projects.

"The agro fund is to assist in this direction, either as providing the starting up capital or for further business growth and expansion."

Uggah, who is also agriculture modernisation, native land and regional farming minister was speaking to the media after visiting the Antares Venture Sdn Bhd rice processing plant in Batu Kitang Road here today.

The company, involved in exporting authentic Sarawak indigenous rice to Singapore, had an order book of 180 tonnes this year.

Uggah also witnessed the signing of a joint venture agreement between Antares Ventures and Carus Greenwealth to form the Carus Antares Plantation to support the growth of the indigenous rice industry.

He said there were so many modern technologies available now which the government would bring to the state.

"We are going to set up more greenhouses, more precision farming areas in our agro parks to be created state-wide.

"The Rampangi Agriculture Research Station in Rampangi here was one such modern farming model. We have a number of young farmers there and they are doing very well."

Meanwhile, Uggah said the creation of the Sarawak Trade and Tourism Office Singapore (Statos) would help in the marketing of the state agricultural products to Singapore and beyond.

"We are already exporting our tilapia fish, live pigs and pork products and others to Singapore. I am optimistic Singapore will be our link to more international markets.

"We want to market all that our farmers plant or rear. This will generate income for them and the state," he said.