

MOSTI aids private sector in digitising agriculture



The Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) through its agencies is to assist the private sector in the export of premium food by infusing technology into the supply chain, with the Musang King durian as the initial product focus.

Its minister Datuk Seri Panglima Madius Tangau said as Malaysia was not one of the world's agro-food top exporters, one of the best ways to move into this sector was to focus on the premium product segment and explore new market frontiers.

"In the present competitive global environment, the biggest challenge for our producers and their suppliers is to continuously improve their product quality and being able to comply with government regulations industry standards," Madius said at the launch ceremony of the MyTrace traceability system, here, today.

"In order to penetrate, succeed and sustain in a niche segment such as premium food, exporters need appropriate technologies in all stages of the supply chain. With the appropriate ICT technologies, we can add value to our product, gain higher premium and protect our businesses from the onslaught of more dominant market players," he said.

Also present at the ceremony were MIMOS Chairman Dato' Wira Omar Kaseh, MIMOS Chief Executive Officer Datuk Abdul Wahab Abdullah, MOSTI Deputy Secretary-General (Science) Prof Madya Dr Ramzah Dambul, MyTraceability Sdn Bhd (MTSB) Chief Executive Officer Ir Adnan Ghazali, and representatives from the G6 Durian Processing Centres.

G6 Durian Processing Centres is a group of six local durian exporters approved by China's General

Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (China-AQSIQ) to export Malaysian premium durian into China. The group will subscribe to MyTrace services, which are compliant to the Global Standards One (GS1) standards.

Madius said that the technology launch represented the government's commitment in supporting the industry through collaboration with the private sector as well as among government agencies. The event was one of the commercialisation activities under the Malaysia Commercialisation Year 2016 initiative championed by MOSTI, he said.

The minister said MOSTI had fulfilled one of its key roles which were to support the industry by effectively creating the ecosystem and generating the necessary technology as well as platforms for authenticity verification and standards, he said.

MyTrace was developed by MOSTI agencies; namely MIMOS, which developed the technology platform, the National Institutes of Biotechnology Malaysia (NIBM) which provided biotechnology-based DNA marker for authenticity verification of the premium durian, and the Department of Standards Malaysia, which established the traceability procedure standards for Malaysian agro-food exports; in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture as regulatory body for phytosanitary certification, and the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA), which established the process as well as implemented the e-commerce platform.

He said that the MyTrace system had integrated two of today's biggest technology trends – the Internet of Things (IoT) and Big Data Analytics (BDA) – which could be game changers for agriculture in this country. “By integrating these emerging technologies into the product value chain, the export of Malaysian premium agro-food can present a business model with high market potential,” he said.

“The government would create bigger market access and more opportunities to position Malaysia as hub for premium products and next-generation technologies. With the digitisation of more vertical sectors, we will be on the right track to transforming our digital economy,” he said. “I look forward to seeing more export products to use MyTrace as de facto standard,” he added.

Abdul Wahab said: “MyTrace is part of MIMOS' work in transforming the agricultural sector. The application of IoT technology will strengthen the logistics process of premium product exports and provide a solution to the counterfeiting of premium Malaysian agro-products.”

He said that the launch of MyTrace was the first landmark event on IoT Services in the digitisation of the agriculture sector aligned with the National IoT Strategic Roadmap.

“The IoT Services of MyTrace provide a digital passport for agro-food products. It identifies three fundamental areas; food authenticity, quality and safety,” Abdul Wahab said.

Meanwhile, representative from one of the G6 Durian Processing Centres, Dato' Paul Mak, said that the introduction of MyTrace was expected to push up demand for Malaysian frozen durians by 20 percent as the consumers in China are able to check the authenticity of the premium durian using their smartphone-enabled apps.

“For 2016, the export value by the six local Durian Processing Centres approved by China-AQSIQ is expected to reach RM30 million, with the first shipment scheduled for next month,” he said.