



Varsity students say 'yes' to palm oil

Volunteers from Uniten's engineering faculty spread the word on its benefits

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WITH the pool of talents the university has, a Universiti Tenaga Nasional (Uniten) undergraduate believes that the students can tap into their skills and knowledge to improve palm oil and its by-products.

"We have a lot of engineering students here. I'm sure we can use our engineering skills to enhance the quality of palm oil or innovate new palm oil by-products," said Bhoshaga Mitran Ravi Chandran, who is studying civil engineering.

"The engineering faculty forms the biggest faculty at Uniten, with about 4,000 undergraduates pursuing the four degree programmes on offer."

Bhoshaga Mitran and a group of 19-year-old friends were speaking during the "Say Yes to Palm Oil" campaign held at the COE Foodcourt within Uniten's Kajang campus.

The two-day event, organised by YouthsToday in collaboration with Uniten, was aimed at educating students on the benefits of palm oil and creating awareness of the importance of palm oil in daily life.

"The palm oil industry affects some 2.6 billion people in the world," said Bhoshaga Mitran.

"Besides cooking oil, it is also used directly or indirectly to make soap, shampoo, food products, cosmetics and even furniture."

The more she read on the European Union's proposed ban on palm oil, the more Shalini Jeganathan felt the need to create awareness on the commodity with friends, family and neighbours.

"We need more people to support the use of palm oil, as Malaysia's economy and some 600,000 jobs are at stake."

"Palm oil can be produced and used sustainably. It can be done in such a way that it helps the environment, rather than destroying it," said Shalini, who is studying electrical power engineering.

"Malaysia was the number one exporter of palm oil worldwide, but has since lost that title to Indonesia," said Gu'ryal Singh Randhawa, adding that palm oil export accounted for RM20bil of Malaysia's gross domestic product.

"I believe the drop was partly due to loss of confidence in Malaysia's palm oil industry, and partly due to the lack of research and development efforts to innovate new palm oil products," said the mechanical engineering undergraduate.

On how the group planned to run the campaign, Gu'ryal said they chose to share fun facts and other interesting information on palm oil that they had researched on.

"We created a Facebook and Instagram page each to promote the campaign through social media. We are also getting students to sign their pledge to #sayyestopalmoil," said Tan Zhen Hong.

Bhoshaga Mitran said the group was working on convincing the foodcourt's stall operators to switch to palm oil for their cooking.

Shalini added that the group, which comprised 12 volunteers, enjoyed running the campaign so much that they did not mind helping to conduct it at other universities.



Uniten students lining up to sign their pledges in support of the 'Say Yes to Palm Oil' campaign.



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