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GENERAL ARTICLE

HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE SEED CERTIFICATION SCHEME?

Wan Nurul Maisarah Wan Faisal, G. Manickam Govindaraju

School of Media and Communication Taylor's University Lakeside Campus.

*Corresponding Author Email: propassiontulc@gmail.com

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At the center of our lives, holds the fundamental importance of consuming safe and certified food that helps enrich our bodies for a healthy life. Food is essential in our lives, however, it comes down to the question of: How do we know what we eat is safe for our bodies? That is what we aimed to answer. On Wednesday, 26 November 2022, ProPassion, a student consultancy for Taylor's University final-year PR students, visited Ladang Nanas KOSAS, alongside our clients, the Department of Agriculture (DOA). ProPassion Consult is collaborating alongside DOA for a campaign titled "MyTULENSeed" which focuses on overcoming the prevalent issue of low-quality seeds and seedlings in Malaysia.

"MyTULENSeed" is a campaign that aims to highlight DOA's Plant and Seed Certification Scheme (SPBT) through various activities prepared by the ProPassion team. Increasing the scheme's awareness and the understanding of certified seeds for consumers, will advance the promotion of DOA's SPBT to secure an established scheme that will benefit the Malaysian agriculture sector as a whole.

In October, DOA took us on an experiential learning trip to a pineapple nursery in Sepang, where we gained a personal insight on how nursery owners feel on the topic of certifying seedlings and plants, as well as learning how the nursery operates. Uncertified seeds and seedlings have a detrimental impact on the general well being of the plants, which affects the likelihood of safe and secured food availability. Therefore, we as PR students, wanted to deepen our knowledge on the problem at hand, from a seed cultivation expert. Mr. Shahril, nursery owner of Ladang Nanas KOSAS, delved into the nursery procedures and the challenges nursery owners face when handling faulty seeds.

"When dealing with low-quality seeds, it's important to demolish or burn it, to prevent the bacteria from spreading to other seeds", explains Mr. Shahril. Faulty seeds have extremely harmful effects on farmers specifically, with seeds infected with insects and diseases increasing the risk of spreading to the healthier seeds, therefore affecting farmers financially and physically. "There is a certain procedure we do when selling our seeds," states Mr. Shahril. "Firstly, we do a procedure to ensure the bacteria does not harm the pineapple suckers, and then we perform a fungi retrieval, to which we then send it to the market." Ladang Nanas KOSAS prioritizes the health and condition of their pineapple suckers to ensure that consumers are consuming safe and certified fruits.

To ensure the suckers are healthy, DOA representatives demonstrated

how to differentiate healthy suckers from less healthy suckers. Though there are multiple varieties of pineapple suckers, more emphasis was put on understanding MD2 (AC9) pineapples and distinguishing which sucker was the healthiest out of the cluster. We discovered that the healthiest suckers have green thorns as well as strong, sturdy leaves.



As PR students, we gained a deeper understanding and awareness on the importance of certified seeds. Uncertified seeds have damaging consequences on the agriculture industry. Without proper certification, this is harmful for consumers as no authorization has ensured the safety of the plants, therefore, providing consumers with little to no knowledge on what they are consuming.

DOA's SPBT prevents these damaging consequences from occurring. It verifies seed qualities, to which DoA Inspecting Officers will conduct verification of clone seedlings of plants that meet the prescribed standards. This SPBT will ensure nurseries are providing safe and certified seedlings that will guarantee consumer trust. DOA's SPBT will initiate a new and well-needed change in the agriculture industry, and with ProPassion's campaign, it will undoubtedly increase consumer's awareness on an impactful scheme.

ProPassion Consult is a Final Year Public Relations Event Consultancy module at School of Media and Communication, Taylor's University that aims at creating impact and bringing change in the community.

