

‘Paradigm shift needed in agriculture sector’

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Uggah (centre), accompanied by Dr Abdul Rahman (right), Sagah (second right) and some delegates, looks at the programme booklet and promotional items at ICAAS 2018.

KUCHING: Industry players must be ever willing to shift their paradigm to adopt and adapt to new, modern and more effective processes and practices to succeed in the agriculture sector.

Furthermore, the Sarawak government is committed to equip the industry players with the latest technology and practices in its effort to transform and sustain the state’s agriculture industry whilst creating new competitive edge over close competitors among its neighbouring countries, said Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas, who is also Minister of Modernisation of Agriculture, Native Land and Regional Development.

“This is important to ensure Sarawak could become the preferred destination for investors and venture capitalists,” he emphasised when speaking at the launching of the International Conference on Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Sarawak (ICAAS) 2018 at Penview Convention Centre (PCC) Demak, near here, yesterday.

ICAAS 2018, with its theme ‘Transforming the Agriculture Sector Through Smart Farming’, is seen as highly appropriate and timely in the Sarawak government’s efforts to actively promote the state’s

agriculture industry by adopting modern technology such as digital technology along the agriculture supply and value chain.

The conference was attended by more than 1,000 local and international delegates.

Uggah was glad to note that Sarawak had steadily gained more and more private sector participation through commercialisation development programmes.

“It is therefore timely for the industry players to embrace digital technology in order to reap the benefits of modern technology. In this regard, the ministry has been given the responsibility to lead and drive this transformation process,” he said.

For this year’s ICAAS, he said they had invited esteemed speakers from various countries and fields of expertise to share best practices in smart or precision farming and successful business models, public-private sector partnership, farmers’ organisation and agro entrepreneurs in commercialising the agriculture sector.

The two-day conference is divided into keynote addresses, as well as knowledge and experience-sharing sessions.

In yesterday’s session, one keynote paper and case studies were presented.

Day 2 will be concurrent sessions that will be divided into three agriculture sub-sectors namely crops, fisheries and livestock, and thereafter, the agro-based industry related to the three sub-sectors.

The closing of the two-day conference will be by Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Abang Johari Tun Openg at the same venue.

This second edition of ICAAS is organised as one of the key components of the inaugural Sarawak Agrofest, where various major activities have been lined up throughout the nine-day event, with 210 booths set up by local entrepreneurs, institutions and organisations to showcase their new ideas, products and innovations.

Among those present at the launching of the conference were Ministry of Modernisation of Agriculture, Native Land and Regional Development assistant ministers Datuk Roland Sagah Wee Inn and Dr Abdul Rahman Ismail, and permanent secretary Datu Ik Pahon Joyik, who is also the deputy chairman of the state-level organising committee of Sarawak Agrofest 2018.