



Fresh produce: Prof Mohd Fauzi pointing at some vegetables produced through alternative methods, to the Sultan of Selangor.

Focus on urban agriculture

IMAGINE getting fresh vegetables from a farm right in the middle of the city. Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) intends to make this a reality with their plan to revitalise the field of agriculture in their university, especially in the field of urban agriculture.

UPM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Mohd Fauzi Ramlan announced the university's direction in his speech during the Putra Academic Excellence Awards (MGAP) ceremony earlier this week.

"To realise this vision, the university is proposing to set up a Centre for Food Security that will be an integrated centre for all fields related to urban agriculture, food security and reinforcing the importance of agriculture. It will also include the dissemination of information," said Prof Mohd Fauzi.

He added that this effort would be supported by the formation of a University-Community Response Team (UCRT) that would consist of experts who would ensure that community-related issues in which the university has expertise in would be solved holistically, with long and short term plans.

"We're also venturing into making Serdang a 'Food Valley' that would combine expertise and ideas from all the agricultural agencies in Serdang," said Prof Mohd Fauzi.

He also announced that the university had undergone another audit and will continue to be recognised as a research university.

"The official results of the audit – that UPM has maintained its status as a research university for another three years – will be announced soon," he said.

He also said that the university's achievements would not have been possible without effort from "the community".

"This didn't just come from one person, or just a few. It's from the efforts of the entire UPM community," he said, adding that those who had played a large role in upholding the university's status were recognised at the MGAP.

Now in its fifth year, 13 academic and two non-academic staff received the Vice-Chancellor's Fellowship Award while another academician received the Outstanding Consultant Award.

The award recognises excellent contribution by staff in promoting innovation and creativity in teaching, education, research, consultancy and professional services.

This year also saw the introduction of a new award – the Putra Special Academic Award. This was awarded to former vice-chancellors Datuk Dr Radin Umar Radin Sohadi and Prof Tan Sri Dr Nik Mustapha R. Abdullah for their contributions to the university.

The Sultan of Selangor Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah, who is UPM's Chancellor, presented the awards to the winners. — **BY JEANNETTE GOON**