

Editorial

This journal's role and future

After eight issues in two years, we regret to inform our readers that we have to reduce our journal frequency to two issues a year starting next year, 2017. Our sponsorship funding is not sufficient to support four issues.

We continue to believe in the importance of promoting agriculture through stories that are informative, attractive and inspirational. We also believe in eliminating the communications barrier between scientists and non-scientists in agriculture so that information can flow in both directions.

Our story in this issue on the farming of sturgeons in Malaysia is an example of breakthrough development by an enterprising individual who was not trained as a 'scientist' and whose achievement would not be reported in any normal scientific journal. He did what scientific teams in other parts of the world have said would be impossible—to farm sturgeons in the tropics! A party of academic staff from UTAR visited the sturgeon farm in October and were amazed by the number of big healthy sturgeons of various species being raised in the farm. As a

result, sturgeon is now available in the menus of high-end restaurants in Kuala Lumpur.

Also in this issue, we can see that the horticultural plants, the fruits and the ornamental fish of today differ from those 20 years ago and will most likely be different in 20 years' time. Some changes are driven by the research of known scientists as in the case of Dr. Songpol Somsri's work on durians, but many advances in tropical agriculture are anonymous. The documentation of changes in agriculture, whether anonymous or not, is important because each time something is documented and published, a benchmark is established and subsequent efforts have to be better. This is how we create an environment for continuous improvement.

Documentation and publication are also important for alerting society to negative developments. One of the most negative ones is the continued destruction of biodiversity in the name of agriculture. In our review of the hobby fish industry in this issue, it has emerged that the rare Johor Fighting Fish is about to become extinct because its last known refuge is a small area of peat forest in Pagoh, Johor and that forest is scheduled to be converted to oil palm plantation. If the Johor Fighting Fish disappears, many other species sharing its habitat will also disappear and another component of the country's diverse natural heritage will be erased.

The rapid growth of the global tourism industry is based largely on the natural scenery and wildlife that is unique to each tourist destination. Hence something that is natural and unique to Johor is surely of greater potential to Johor and Malaysia than further extension of oil palm monoculture.

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