FGV To Start a Joint Research Lab on Palm Oil with Dutch Crop Innovation Company, KeyGene

Felda Global Ventures Holdings Berhad (FGV) and Dutch crop innovation company, KeyGene have signed a Memorandum of Collaboration (MoC) agreement to establish a strategic partnership to start a joint research laboratory (Joint Lab).

This Joint Lab will empower FGV's research and development (R&D) arm, FGV R&D Sdn Bhd, to become a centre of excellence by strengthening its research capabilities, enabling faster introduction of better and more sustainable oil palm varieties to the market.
FGV is the largest producer of Crude Palm Oil (CPO) and the third largest oil palm plantation operator in the world.

The research and development collaboration has multiple objectives but will primarily focus on the development and improvement of planting material through marker-assisted breeding. The collaboration will help FGV to fast-track the development and commercialisation of oil palm planting material with high oil yield, disease tolerance and other special traits.

"The agreement assures FGV's access to KeyGene's vast technology and expertise in crop genomics. In turn, this will significantly increase our competitiveness in the oil palm seed market through faster introduction of new and improved oil palm planting material.
"The collaboration also brings benefit to FGV by increasing its research capabilities in the molecular genetics research area leading to the development and production of superior oil palm planting material," said Dato' Zakaria Arshad, Group President and Chief Executive Officer of FGV.

Currently, FGV is the largest seed producer in Malaysia with a market share of 42%. It is also the only authorised foreign company that is able to penetrate the highly competitive Indonesia's seed market.

CEO of KeyGene, Arjen van Tunen said: "We are excited to embark on this strategic journey with FGV R&D to setup a joint lab. KeyGene will contribute with its know-how and expertise, benefitting from a successful track record of 27 years in providing innovative technologies. Together with FGV, we will breed healthy and sustainable oil palm varieties that meet the future demands of our societies.

"Starting a joint lab will enable both parties to work together at each other's location, enabling maximum interaction, knowledge sharing and expertise building. This will lead to a

better understanding of the needs which will be fulfilled in terms of capacity building, technology implementation, and the development of breeding and resource management tools for oil palm breeding".

The MoC tenure is eight months and upon mutual agreement by both parties to be supplemented by a 5-year definitive agreement.