

Making a habit out of publishing

UNIVERSITI Sains Islam Malaysia organised its fourth book launching ceremony recently.

Held annually, the book launch is a celebration of USIM academics who have penned books or journals.

It is also part of the institution's effort to promote the culture of publishing among its academic staff.

Since its inception six years ago, USIM has published 55 books and journal titles.

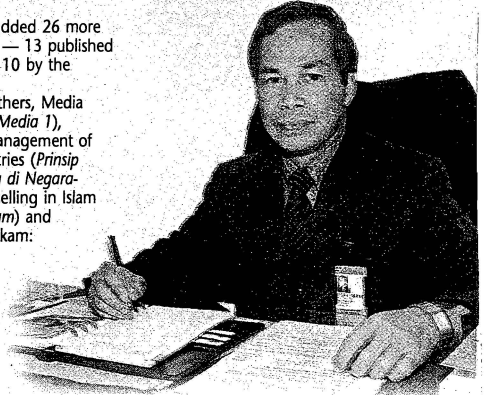
Deputy vice-chancellor (academic and international affairs) Prof Datuk Dr Mohamed Asin Dollah admits that in the first three years of USIM's inception, the university rarely published.

"But there has been a big improvement since.

Last year alone, it added 26 more publications to its list — 13 published by the university and 10 by the faculties.

They are, among others, Media Discussions 1 (*Bicara Media 1*), The Principles and Management of Fatwa in Asean Countries (*Prinsip dan Pengurusan Fatwa di Negara-negara Asean*), Counselling in Islam (*Kaunseling Dalam Islam*) and Nushuz, Shiqaaq & Hakam:

According to the Al-Quran, Sunnah and Islamic Family Law (*Nushuz, Shiqaaq & Hakam: Menurut Al-Quran, Sunnah & Undang-Undang Keluarga Islam*).



Datuk Dr Asin Dollah

Research is hot, real hot

CHILLIES that grow upright, new variations of roselles that "bloom" in abundance and lemon grass that has stems.

Strange as they may sound, these are real plants and they are some of the research projects currently undertaken by the Centre for Research and Conference Management at Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), where courses are crafted to seamlessly blend core Islamic principles with industry needs.

Geneticist and bio-technologist

Assoc Prof Dr Ahmed Mahir Mokhtar Bakri was lecturing in Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia when he developed the *Bangi* chili as a solution to dependence on import of the plant.

Bangi is not only hotter than the common type found in the market but produces higher yields.

"We can have large scale and staggered planting. It grows all season," adds the gold medal winner at the 34th International Exhibition of Invention, New Techniques

and Product held in Geneva last year.

Ahmed Mahir believes that the upright chillies' advantage is that it is "not only perfect for large scale planting but makes for easier harvesting using a harvester machine".

Under Ahmed Mahir's supervision, the centre has also genetically mutated roselles that flower easily.

"Roselles has more Vitamin C than blackberries but it is hard to flower and has little variations,"

he says.

A mutative treatment has changed the fruit shape and colour of the roselles.

Apart from that, Ahmed Mahir's team found that the plant also produces hydroxyl citric, a slimming agent found in asam gelugor (tamarind skin or sliced tamarind).

"Out of 21 mutations, we have identified two that have the potential to be launched. We are also looking at improving the yields and planting habits of

roselles," he adds.

The Centre for Research and Conference Management has also developed mutated lemon grass that develops stems for easier harvesting.

"The stem makes it simpler for us to harvest the plant without damaging the stalk, which is used for cooking. This is ideal for large scale planting.

"The longer leaves, meanwhile, produce better cytral content, which is needed to produce quality essential oils."

Geneticist and bio-technologist
Assoc Prof Dr Ahmed Mahir Mokhtar Bakri tending to the chili and roselle plants and lemon grass.



FACULTIES

- Quranic & Sunnah Studies Faculty
- Leadership & Management Faculty
- Syariah & Law Faculty
- Economics & Muamalat Faculty
- Science & Technology Faculty
- Medical & Health Sciences Faculty
- Major Language Studies Faculty
- Dentistry Faculty

ACADEMIC CENTRES

- General Studies Centre
- Tamhidi (matriculation) Centre
- Research & Conference Management Centre

INSTITUTE

- World Fatwa Management Research Institute