

# MGRC, Felda achieve breakthrough in fungus study

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysian Genomics Resource Centre Bhd (MGRC) and Felda Agricultural Services Sdn Bhd (FAS) have succeeded in the sequencing and assembly of the *Ganoderma boninense* fungus genome.

In a joint statement yesterday, the companies said the success of the joint effort would enable scientists and

research groups to obtain vital information on the Ganoderma Basal Stem-Rot (BSR) fungal disease.

Ganoderma fungal invasion is one of the most serious biological threats to the palm oil industry as it causes basal stem rot in the trees, impacting the lifespan of affected trees and in turn affects both the fruit quality and yield.

The statement said the sequence data from the Ganoderma genome would be made available to the public at MGRC website, [www.mgrc.com](http://www.mgrc.com), making it the first company in the world, together with Felda, to offer this information for free to the global scientific community.

"By sharing the Ganoderma ge-

nome with the scientific community, we hope to accelerate research and development towards a solution for the oil palm industry," said MGRC chief scientific officer Dr Stephen Rudd.

FAS chief executive officer S. Palaniappan said the threat of Ganoderma BSR to the palm oil industry was serious and real and that Felda

was proud to collaborate with MGRC in the hope of accelerating solutions for the industry.

The statement said that with total oil palm area of 4.85 million hectares in Malaysia, a potential 30-70% loss of oil palm due to BSR has substantial implications on planting resources and revenue. — Bernama