

13 NOV 1998

APEC-NEWS-FRUIT

M'SIA-KIWI JOINT-VENTURE FIRM TRYING OUT LOCAL FRUIT FLAVOUR

By: Harlina Samson

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 13 (Bernama) -- Nekta Kiosk (M) Sdn Bhd, a Malaysia-New Zealand joint-venture food-based company, is expanding its fruit-base products with local flavour.

Its General Manager Stuart Soo said the company, which had been producing New Zealand's fruit-based products, was now experimenting Malaysia's roselle fruit juice extracted from hibiscus flower and ice cream.

"We are still experimenting it and it looks encouraging," he told Bernama at the Third Apec International Trade Fair '98 opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the Mines Exhibition Centre in Sungei Besi today.

Using the New Zealand food technology, the company produced Nektalite, an ingredient technology based on kiwi fruit, Nektaplus, a nutritional product, Nektabake, a baking powder, Nektaherbal, a range of herbal beverages and Nektacream, a fat and dairy-free frozen fruit dessert.

The 65:35 Malaysia-New Zealand equity ratio firm, set up in 1996, had exported two containers of RM300,000 worth of kiwi fruit juice to Taiwan since its overseas operations commenced six months ago.

Soo said the sales of kiwi fruit juice in Malaysia had exceeded RM1 million over a six-month period.

"The sales are encouraging as Malaysians are conscious of healthy food products," he said.

He said the company was eyeing Hong Kong as its next overseas market.

Besides stepping up Research and Development (R&D) on the roselle juice as a fruit-base food product, the company also need to expand its market networks, product quality and labelling before venturing into bigger projects to manufacture other products.

Soo said the company also planned to move into a franchise programme to boost the sale of the products.

It has one franchise outlet in the Mines Shopping Centre in Sungei Besi and fruit juice kiosks at all Jaya Jusco's shopping outlets.

-- BERNAMA

HS TS