

Ayam Akar to meet local demand

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I REFER to the news report, "Super fowl' breed created" (*The Star*, Aug 8). It was reported that Universiti Putra Malaysia had created a new breed of free range chicken that can lay more and bigger eggs than kampung chicken.

The breed known as *Akar Putra* was said to have come about due to a chance mating by a jungle fowl that entered the UPM compound and a free range chicken there.

It was also reported that the cross-bred chicken had more flesh and better resistance to diseases.

In order to breed *Akar Putra* on a commercial scale, two separate multiplication farms should be set up, one for rearing and multiplying pure bred jungle fowl and the other to grow and multiply the free range kampung chicken so that there is a continuous supply of the two pure lines of chicken available

for cross-breeding.

Mating of the hybrid *Ayam Akar* with each other (inter-se mating) will not produce a second generation of *Ayam Akar* with the same desirable qualities as the parents.

This is because the *Ayam Akar* is a hybrid and not a stabilised breed that can breed true.

A stabilised breed, unlike a hybrid, when bred, produces offsprings with the same characteristics as the parents, generation after generation.

Therefore, there is a need for farms to continuously produce the two pure lines to produce the cross-bred chicken which have the advantage of the hybrid vigour – a genetic boost that comes to the first generation of cross-breds when two different breeds are mated together.

Besides evaluating the desirable economic traits of the *Ayam Akar* such as growth rate, marketable

age, meat to bone ratio, feed conversion ratio, etc. it would be useful to formulate a poultry ration for *Ayam Akar* based on locally grown or locally available feed ingredients to bring down feed costs and cost of production of *Ayam Akar*.

The current rise of chicken prices is due to the high cost of imported feed ingredients for formulating poultry feed.

Currently, 70% of the cost of commercial broiler chicken is due to feed costs from the high cost of imported poultry feed ingredients.

As the *Ayam Akar* appears to be a hardy bird that is more adaptable to local conditions than imported breeds, it may be able to thrive on poultry rations made from locally produced, quality, but cheaper feed ingredients.

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