



These temperate weather Broad-Breasted White Nicholas turkeys are kept on a low-fat diet of 70% fresh grass at the farm in Kulim, Kedah. — Photos: GARY CHEM/The Star



The long turkey necks are especially good when cooked with Chinese herbs, says Ooi.

# Turkey supply fresh from the farm

Entrepreneur dresses and grows Borneo bird in Kulim, Kedah

## PENANG

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WITH this season to be jolly, most people will think of turkey.

Stuffed roast turkey is the hands down, unchallenged, middle-of-the-table dish for Westerners from Thanksgiving to Christmas, with a whopping 270 million birds served in America during the year-end festivities annually.

The tradition has spread to Malaysia and after decades of relying almost entirely on deep-frozen turkey from overseas, lovers of this healthy, lean meat can now

look forward to Borneo Turkey, freshly dressed and grown in Kulim, Kedah.

A visit to the 1.6ha farm in Bandar Baru Putra Kulim offers an enlightening look at why this poultry meat is also staple for weight watchers and bodybuilders, who need a large protein intake minus the fat.

Two farm hands spend all day cutting about 300kg of high-protein napier or elephant grass from a 1.2ha meadow to feed the 6,000 Broad-Breasted White Nicholas turkeys living in a 0.4ha poly-tunnel enclosure.

"Grass can make up 70% of the diet of turkeys and also geese. The

turkeys will not be fatty and this also keeps them from overheating in the tropical weather," said Borneo Wood Dream Farm founder Ooi Say Tuan.

Ooi has been rearing turkey in Sabah for about 15 years, exporting whole, fresh turkey to the Philippines.

But this entrepreneur from Kedah, who found his fortunes in the Land Below the Wind, had trouble shipping dressed turkeys to peninsular Malaysia because of regulatory restrictions, so three years ago, he started bringing in day-old turkey chicks to rear them in Kedah.

"Imported turkey is deep-frozen

for who knows how long.

"Our farm gives Malaysians fresh, tender turkey. We even harvest the birds at 10 weeks to make sure they won't be old and tough," said Ooi.

Cleaned and packed, Borneo Turkeys weigh around 6kg each, making an impressive sight compared with common broiler chickens.

Ooi's passion for turkey is evident in his knowledge of not just how to rear these temperate weather birds in the tropics, but also how to prepare them for the dinner table.

"There are 27 distinct cuts to turkey meat. The cuts produce

dark or white meats, rich or light flavours.

"The long turkey necks are especially good when cooked with Chinese herbs," said Ooi, who also owns several other agriculture businesses.

He foresees a "turkey craze" in the market with his farms in Kulim and Batang Kali, Selangor.

"With our farm-fresh turkey supply, restaurants and other food outlets will have a culinary ingredient that is both well-known and fresh," he said.

To find out more about Borneo Turkey, call 012-8785001 (Ooi) or look up the farm's Facebook page Borneo Wood Dream Farm.