

## **BSF larvae touted as cheap and alternative feed**



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BREEDING the Black Soldier Fly (BSF) for its protein rich larvae could be a cost-effective alternative feed for fish and poultry, Harian Metro reported.

Universiti Malaya Faculty of Science's Institute of Biological Sciences senior lecturer Dr Norhidayah Mohd Taufek said the production of BSF larvae could reduce the livestock industry's heavy reliance on more expensive imported feed.

She said each gram of BSF eggs, costing around RM10, could yield three to four kilogrammes of maggots that can be processed into animal feed.

She said large-scale farming of BSF larvae could help stabilise animal feed prices, considering their prices are far more competitive than that of imported animal feed.

"If chicken farmers breed their own BSF larvae and replace 30% to 40% of the usually imported feed with the larvae, their cost will definitely come down.

“Apart from animal feed, BSF maggots can also be used for the management of organic waste as well as in the pharmaceutical, biodiesel and even cosmetic industries,” she said.

Norhidayah heads a team involved in a decade long research on locally available alternative protein sources to reduce the nation’s reliance on imported animal feed such as corn and soy.

She said the BSF had a short life span of 45 days, with females laying eggs when they are between 30 and 35 days old. The larvae can be harvested 15 to 18 days after they hatch.

“The species can be found worldwide and reproduce easily in hot weather, which makes Malaysia suitable for BSF farming.

“They are easy to breed. Just place about 1gm of BSF larvae in a basin together with some leftovers and cover it with a net. Then, let it grow to the pre-pupal stage when it is about an inch (2.54 cm) long,” she said, adding that BSF larvae are now easily available, including via e-commerce platforms.

She said the maggots could be fed to the chicken or processed into high-protein pellets. To serve as fish feed, the larvae need to be processed into flour and then blended with the pellet mixture.