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FRIM researcher awarded prestigious Japanese title

FOREST Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) researcher Dr Kevin Ng Kit Siong (*pix*) was recognised as Young Agricultural Researcher at the prestigious Japan International Awards 2009 held at the University of Tokyo, recently.

Ng, 34, who works at the FRIM Biotechnology Division Genetics Laboratory, won the award for his innovative research in the distribution and arrangement of selected tropical tree species and impact of logging on genetic diversity of these species.

FRIM director-general Datuk Dr Abd Latif Mohamad described the award as a form of recognition for the institute as well.

The Japan International Awards, held since 2007, is presented annually by the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery to recognise the contributions of young foreign researchers to technological development for the improvement of food security and environment in developing nations.

Ng, who joined FRIM in August 1999 after

graduating from University Malaysia Sabah with a degree in conservation biology, obtained his PhD in forest genetics from the University of Malaya in 2005.

A recipient of the Japanese ITTO Wellcome Fund Fellowship in 2001 and Research Fellowship for Foreign Specialists in 2002, Ng, who has published more than 30 scientific papers in various journals and proceedings, had clinched the FRIM Best Thesis Award in 2006.

Ng who has been actively involved as a co-researcher or project leader in 16 major research and development projects, is heading genetic studies on the timber species *Gonystylus bancanus*, commonly known as *Ramin Melawis*, in Malaysia.

The studies are aimed at generating information on the species' adaptation and change under the influences of evolutionary processes and the establishment of a DNA database to track smuggling activities.

