



Hana Tropika grows its own zolla plants.

part of the birds' protein menu—the result can be seen in the sticky, dense and stretchy egg white and creamy yolk, Mr Tan said.

Pineapple power

By feeding its birds a fruit extract containing bromelain, Aqina Farm in Johor produces what it calls "pineapple chicken".

Bromelain, which comes from the stems of large-sized MD2 pineapples and other fruit, is said to have a number of beneficial properties, including improving digestion and boosting immune health. It is also believed to ease sinus discomfort, sooth varicose veins and help relieve bone pains.

The extract became part of the Aqina birds' diet after a lab test by University Malaysia Pahang conveyed that it was suitable for poultry



Aqina's chickens are fed with an extract from the MD2 pineapple.

consumption. It is continuously supplied into the bird houses through feed water from the time the DOC arrive until they are ready to be slaughtered.

The free-range birds, which are also raised free of antibiotics and growth hormones, grow for up to 72 days.

"The results were outstanding. We saw their mortality rate drop from 5% to 1.2% and their growth rate has been excellent," said Aqina's Business Development Manager, Muhammad Kumu.

"Our chickens look better and healthier with the bromelain extract. Their behavior has changed, leading them to become more active and inquisitive, instead of just lying down on the ground like normal broiler chickens."

The pineapple extract's effect goes all their way to the meat's texture and aroma, whereby cooked products are found to be sweet, juicy, tender and have a pleasant pineapple aroma, Muhammad added.

Slow food movement

Hana Tropika Agro, a farm on the west coast of Malaysia started by Igneseous Noris, set out to raise cruelty-free, free-range poultry without antibiotics and growth hormones.

Its chickens roam freely in grass fields and are left to grow on their own for a maximum of 100 days, rather than being forced-fed to grow faster or gain more flesh.

They are fed a mixture of commercial feed and locally-grown corn with rice waste, dried fish, worms, duckweed, grains and other additives.

"Together with that, the chickens are also given local herbs such as azolla, *ketum ayam*, turmeric, ginger and lemongrass," said Mr Noris.

"These are known to act as antibacterial agents. We plant them on the farm, then boil and mix them into the birds' drinking water." **AF**



Hana Tropika chickens can expect a long life.



The madre de agua plant, known locally as "ketum ayam".