

Shortage of vets

> Not enough university places despite high demand for the course

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KUALA LUMPUR: There is a shortage of veterinarians in Malaysia despite “very high” demand for the course among students.

Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) Faculty of Veterinary Medicine dean Prof Dr Mohd Hair Bejo said Malaysia currently only has one veterinarian to every 15,000 citizens, as compared with one in every 5,300 in the US.

“Although the government is taking various initiatives to improve the veterinary industry, such as establishing a new veterinary faculty in Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK), more can be done,” he told *theSun*.

Looking at the scenario, he said, there is a need to increase the number of students per intake, and add more facilities to accommodate that.

“The student intake and the facilities provided are all controlled by the government, so we need their approval. I really hope that they will help deal with this

problem (increase student intakes and improve facilities),” he explained.

Currently, UPM accepts some 100 students per year, while UMK enrolls 40 students annually.

On whether more universities should have veterinary faculties, Mohd Hair said: “When it reaches a point where our university can’t cope with the intake anymore, then I think we need a new university to provide vet programmes.”

Mohd Hair said although demand and interest among students in Malaysia for the veterinary industry is relatively high, not many universities in the country offer the doctor in veterinary medicine programme.

“At the moment, there is a lot of interest among students in Malaysia who wants to be part and parcel of this industry, but only two universities offer the programme.

“My faculty, for example, offers some 100 places for the doctor in veterinary medicine programme. The applications we receive for the programme is three times the places offered and most of them are students with a CGPA of over 3.75,” he said.

Mohd Hair said he hopes to see the industry grow, especially with it facing emerging challenges.