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Australiaâ??s AgriGen to establish Bruneiâ??s first private food laboratory

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Australiaâ??s AgriGen has signed an agreement with Brunei-based FarmFresh Industries to establish Bruneiâ??s first private food testing laboratory.

The Brunei Integrated Analytical Laboratory (BIAL) is planned to be set up in the coming months. By expanding testing options for the industry, the lab is positioned to become a key support service for Bruneiâ??s food sector â?? one of the countryâ??sÂ five priority sectorsÂ for economic diversification.

The pioneering project is targeting to commence operations between the fourth quarter of 2025 and the first quarter of 2026, initially occupying two floors of an existing building in a phased expansion approach.

Once operational, BIAL is expected to offer faster turnaround times and a broader range of testing services, many of which are currently outsourced overseas or available only through government agencies and higher education institutions.

The Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between AgriGen and FarmFresh to collaborate on the establishment of BIAL took place on July 1 at the Rizqun International Hotel, on the sidelines of the Brunei Business Conference 2025.

BIAL aims to become an ISO-certified centre of excellence for real-time Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) testing in the region.

RT-PCR is a highly sensitive, DNA-based method used to detect and measure the presence of specific organisms, such as viruses, bacteria, or to confirm the species identity of an ingredient. It plays a key role in halal verification, traceability, and meeting export standards.

BIAL will also specialise in the manufacture and development of reagents â?? the chemical substances used to trigger reactions in lab tests. Producing these locally will help avoid supply disruptions and support future research and commercial opportunities.

BIALâ??s core testing capabilities will span four main areas:

Microbiological testing

Checks for harmful bacteria like *E. coli*, *Salmonella*, *Listeria*, *Vibrio*, and overall bacteria levels in food. These tests help ensure food is safe to eat and free from contamination â?? commonly used for seafood, raw meat, and ready-to-eat products.

Chemistry testing

Analyses food and water for trace metals and other chemical components to ensure products meet safety and quality standards. Applicable to raw ingredients, processed foods, and water used in food production.

Residue and contaminant testing

Detects the presence of pesticides, antibiotics, and allergens in food products to ensure compliance with safety regulations. Important for farms, processors, and manufacturers producing for both local and international markets.

Molecular biology testing

Uses DNA-based methods such as PCR to detect viruses, confirm species identity, and identify genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Supports halal verification, traceability, and market-specific labelling and certification requirements.