

Sustainable Agriculture Practices

The distributors extensive experience in management of oil palm plantations in Malaysia. It is very much committed to the subject of sustainable agricultural practices. With it's parents company it works stimulate and is in line with sustainable best practice, including improving the productivity of existing plantations. If yields can be improved, this reduces the demand for land conversions. They also believe high level quality assurance will allow the selection of suppliers against environmental ustainability criteria. The distributor believe in the principles of sustainable agriculture. They define sustainable agriculture as being productive, competitive and efficient, while at the same time protecting and improving the natural environment and conditions of local communities.

They believe that sustainable agriculture has to support the following principles:

1. Sustainable development
2. Environmental protection
3. Economic progress
4. Social development

It should produce crops with high yield and nutritional quality to meet existing and future needs, whilst keeping resource input as low as possible; It must ensure that any adverse effects on soil fertility, water and air quality and biodiversity from agricultural activities are minimised and positive contributions are made where possible; it should optimise the use of renewable resources whilst minimising the use of nonrenewable resources; It should enable local communities to protect and enhance their well being and environments.

The following points have been established covering the three principles of sustainable agricultural development.

1. **Soil Fertility and Health.** A rich soil ecosystem improves the performance of crops. Sustainable agriculture practices can improve the quality of the soil ecosystem.
2. **Soil Loss.** Erosion by wind and water can lead to soil loosing its structure and organic matter, reducing the main asset of the agriculture system. Sustainable agriculture practices work to reduce soil erosion.

3. **Nutrients.** Palm oil needs a broad balance of nutrients. Some of these, such as nitrogen, can be created locally. Nutrients are lost through activities such as cropping, erosion and emissions to air. Sustainable agriculture practices can enhance locally produced nutrients and reduce losses.
4. **Pest Management.** A small but significant proportion of pesticides used on crops can escape to the environment, harming wildlife and accumulating in foods. Sustainable agriculture practices can substitute natural controls for some pesticides, so reducing dependence on externally introduced substances.
5. **Biodiversity.** Sustainable agriculture practices can help improve biodiversity, improving the habitat for natural predators.
6. **Product Value.** This is a measure of the desired outputs of an agricultural system. Sustainable agriculture practices should be able to maintain or improve the value of the product and reduce wastage during plantation and processing.
7. **Energy.** Agriculture uses energy from nonrenewable sources, such as tractors and the energy needed to make agrichemicals. Sustainable agriculture can improve the balance of energy inputs and outputs, and ensure that the process produces more energy than it uses.
8. **Water.** Some farming techniques require irrigation and other practices can lead to the pollution of ground and surface waters. Sustainable agriculture practices ensure that water is conserved and possible pollutants are carefully controlled to reduce the risks of pollution.
9. **Social/Human Capital.** Collective action, the sharing of knowledge and the intensity of local social networks help ensure that natural resources are conserved for future use. Some conventional farming techniques have undermined local networks and located knowledge outside the farming communities. Sustainable agriculture works to improve both social and human capital. The prime responsibility for their livelihoods should remain with the local community.
10. **Local Economy.** Sourcing agricultural inputs, such as goods, labour and services locally helps to sustain local businesses and livelihoods. Sustainable agriculture practices make the best use of local resources and help improve the efficiency of the local economy.