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Land Preparation Practices for Oil Palm Replanting - Sawit Kinabalu Group's Experience in Sabah

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Replanting is an important strategy adopted by Sawit Kinabalu Sdn Bhd to improve the production of its plantations planted in the early eighties. It provides a chance to rectify problems and mistakes associated with field layout, planting density, drainage and road system in the old planting. This is also an opportunity to use the high yielding materials produced by the group's seed production unit. A total of 25 908 ha or about 35.8 per cent of the total oil palm area has been replanted from 2002-2009.

In line with the company's emphasis on environment and sustainability, necessary attention is being given to good land preparation techniques with zero burning and effective soil conservation measures which include the planting of Mucuna cover plants. In terms of disease management, proper sanitation is carried out to reduce the inoculum of Ganoderma from the old stands. Integrated pest management is initiated as early as during the land preparation stage. These measures include the treatment of the shredded materials almost immediately with use of metarhizium against rhinoceros beetle and the planting of beneficial plants along the roads to attract the natural enemies of the leaf eating pests. For areas where mechanisation is possible, the layouts of road, drainage and other infrastructures to enable good accessibility of machine are crucial to reduce the long-term labour requirement.

Management Control System (MCS) where key performance parameters on land preparation practices are systematically monitored is an important management tool used in Sawit Kinabalu Sdn Bhd to ensure good standards of replanting.

Keywords: *Land preparation, replanting, sustainability, pest and disease management, management control system (MCS).*

