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Positioning Malaysian Palm Oil through Quality and Food Safety

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The palm oil industry in Malaysia needs to be vigilant to changing regional and global scenario. Issues such as food safety, quality and deforestation are constantly emerging in one form or another which warrants the industry to adopt proactive strategies to address these concerns.

The definition of "quality" by International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) is interpreted to encompass "food safety". It is shown that quality does pay in the long run for it can bring about financial savings to the refiners. The production of palm oil has come to a stage where it should no longer be based on quantity alone as end-users now have a wider choice of supplies. Rather it should be an oil that must include quality with issues of food safety and sustainability that are addressed.

An advantage the Malaysian palm oil has is that it does not destroy new rainforest. With the expertise in the industry, good infrastructure and well established plantation groups, the Malaysian palm oil industry can rise up to the occasion by producing good quality palm oil that is food safe and obtained in a sustainable manner. Palm oil derived from such a source can be 'branded' and it is one that can put Malaysian palm oil in a different light altogether.

The industry needs the will and commitment and needness to say, it requires a paradigm shift to produce such type of oil. The export of which is best monitored by the setting up of a national quality assurance scheme. It would be even better if the industry itself gravitate towards this direction on its own accord without any institutional intervention.

Keywords: Refiner's need, quality, food safety, branding, paradigm shift.

