

2006

December

Potential for Kenaf Production in Malaysia

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Kenaf is a good source of strong and high quality fibre that can be processed into a large number of products such as pulp and paper, fibre and particle boards, fibre reinforced plastic composites and chemical absorbents. Young kenaf plants also have high protein content and can be processed into animal feed.

Realising the importance of this crop to the economy and environment, the Malaysian government through National Economic Action Council (NEAC) had directed the Ministry of Agriculture in the year 2000 to spearhead the fast tract research to see the potential of growing kenaf in this country as a source of animal feed ingredient and production of natural fibre.

After about five years of fast tract research, kenaf has been shown to be technically suitable for growing in most areas in Malaysia. Along with that conclusion, a number of technologies and expertise among researchers were also developed to help prepare for the development of kenaf in this country.

The technologies and information developed are: agronomic practices, identification of suitable kenaf variety, field machines, processing techniques for fibre as well as for animal feed ingredient, seed production technology and economic analysis. Further research is being conducted with cooperation of kenaf industrial users to cater to their specifications and quality requirements for kenaf products.

Keywords: *Kenaf, animal feed, bast fibre, core fibre, retting, pulp, paper and biocomposites.*