

2008

December

Successful Development of a Model for Cattle Integration in Sawit Kinabalu

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Sawit Kinabalu Sdn Bhd (SKSB) has adopted systematic cattle-oil palm integration model to integrate cattle into its oil palm estates. The initial objective is to manage its maintenance cost especially weeding using grazing cattle as a biological weed control mechanism. The model is based on two essential strategies which aims to reduce and possibly avoid any adverse effect to existing estate operations. Palm oil production shall be sustained as it will always remain the core business of the group. Strategic insertion is the first strategy in which cattle shall be introduced successfully into the estates with minimal 'disturbance'. Strategic rotational grazing management is the second strategy in which the introduced grazing cattle are synchronised into daily estate operation through the use of mobile electrical fencing. The model had worked effectively in introducing 3 000 heads of cattle into three estates in 2005 and 2006. Such standard of agronomic practices as manuring, weeding and harvesting had been executed as planned. Participating estate's productivity has not been compromised. Cattle are breeding and multiplying to reach 7 000 head by March 2008 in 12 estates covering an area of over 20 000 ha. SKSB is committed to sustainable and 'greener' palm oil production through systematic cattle integration model as it optimises its available resources by producing two 'commodities' per unit area of its land, and helps to increase local beef production hence reducing imports of frozen beef.

Keywords: *Systematic cattle-oil palm integration; strategic insertion; strategic rotational grazing management; biological weed control.*