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Enhancing Basic CPO Quality

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The palm oil industry is currently facing unprecedented issues and challenges. Global climate change is caused by human activity such as deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions. Unfortunately, palm oil has been singled out as the perpetrator. While the industry has taken proactive steps to deal with the negative consumer image by producing certified sustainable palm oil (CSPO), improving crude palm oil (CPO) quality must go in tandem with CSPO; otherwise the onerous efforts will be negated. Surveys over a span of 25 years have shown that our CPO quality has, at best, remained status quo. Enhancing palm oil quality is not just a must but a prerequisite. This is because these are the very characteristics that affect consumer's perception of its value. The industry must produce CPO quality that refiners, and ultimately consumers, want and not the quality they think the refiners want. Refiners want CPO with low free fatty acid (FFA), low contamination, low oxidation, and high iodine value. Leaders of the industry must be committed to produce quality products, not just provide lip service. Formulating quality as a policy, and having effective control systems, do not in themselves, produce quality products. Such a task needs the commitment and the will of everyone within the organisation to set it in motion. In the long run, the most important factor affecting a business unit's performance is the quality of its products and services in relation to its competitors. To produce quality CPO, all that is needed is – reduce contaminants during collection of fruits, minimise fruit damage and process the fruits early. Good coordination and cooperation between estates and mills is a must.

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