

# PalmSphere



DECEMBER 2025 VOL:13

OF CATTLE AND OIL  
PALM: A SMALLHOLDER'S  
JOURNEY

EUDR RECALIBRATED: WHAT  
2025 TAUGHT US ABOUT REGULATION,  
REALITY, AND READINESS

EVIDENCE IN PRACTICE,  
SUSTAINABLE MALAYSIAN PALM  
OIL NUTRITION IN FOCUS



GLOBAL FROM THE GROUND UP:  
HOW MALAYSIA'S PALM OIL INDUSTRY  
STOOD ITS GROUND AND SHAPED THE  
CONVERSATION



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# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



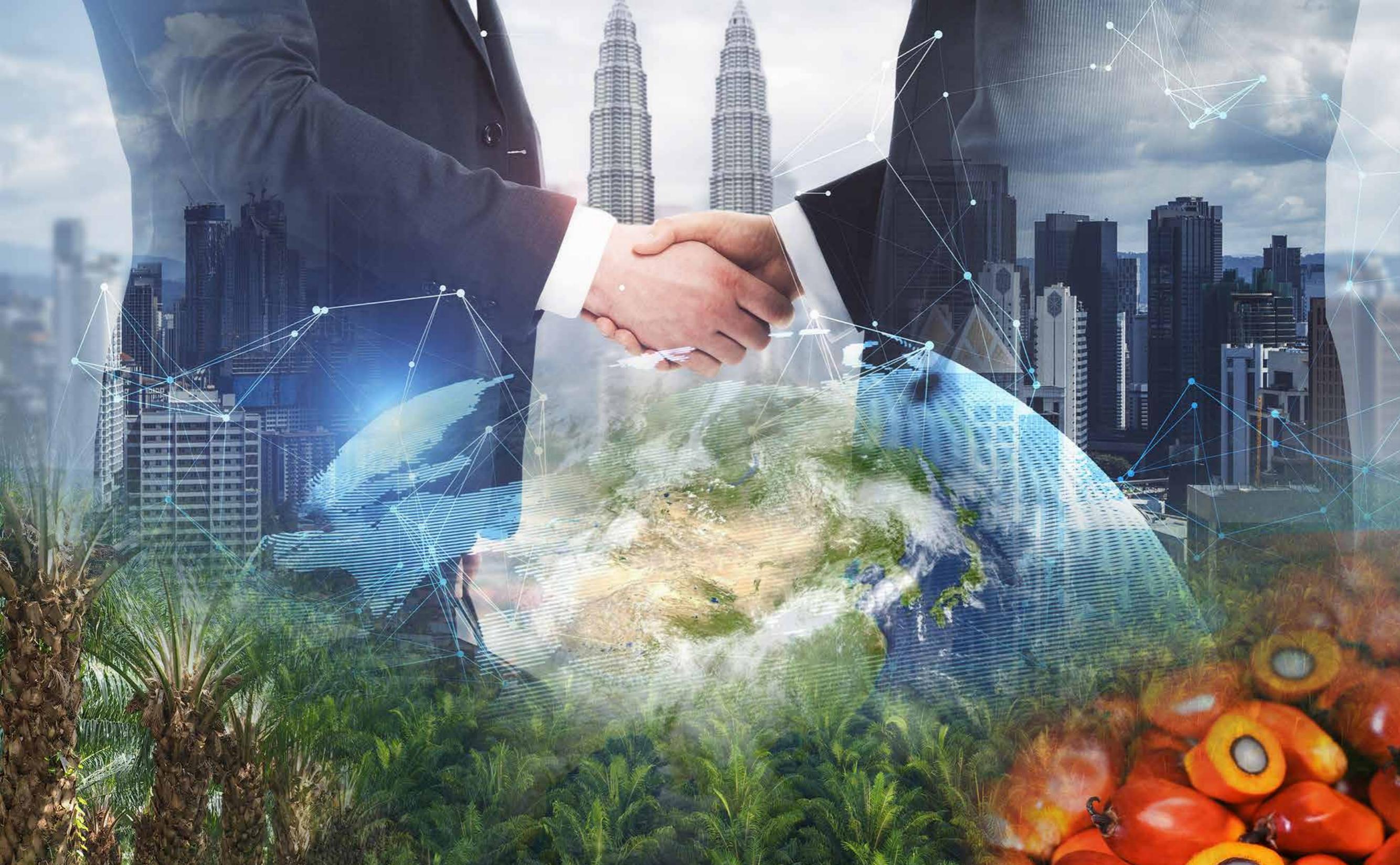
**Belvinder Sron**  
CEO of MPOC

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**Dear Readers,**

As we close another important year for the Malaysian palm oil sector, this edition reflects how Malaysia's story is increasingly understood through evidence, engagement, and shared experience. Throughout 2025, our work across global media, scientific platforms, and international dialogues has helped clarify the realities of sustainable Malaysian palm oil and the people who drive it. Our cover story, *Global From the Ground Up*, traces how Malaysia has shaped the global conversation by presenting facts, research, and lived experiences through trusted platforms. Features across worldwide channels and family-centred content fortify international understanding of a supply chain built on traceability, credible science, and community resilience. This edition also highlights regenerative practices through the journey of a smallholder, whose integrated cattle and oil palm system demonstrates practical ways in farming. Another article, *EUDR Recalibrated*, outlines how the European Union reconsidered elements of the EUDR in 2025. Malaysia continues to present data, engage constructively, and strengthen readiness through national coordination.

In the area of nutrition, *Spectrum* features efforts to translate nutrition science into accessible formats as more markets updates, health guidelines and food safety expectations. Equally meaningful, the two familiarisation visits involving the European Union, the United Kingdom, Egyptian and Turkish stakeholders further strengthened mutual understanding through field exposure and open dialogue. As we move into 2026, our work continues across market growth, diversification, sustainability, nutrition and evidence-based communication. Together, we will continue to reinforce Malaysia's position as a trusted supplier of sustainable, nutritious, and responsibly produced palm oil.



# **GLOBAL FROM THE GROUND UP: HOW MALAYSIA'S PALM OIL INDUSTRY STOOD ITS GROUND AND SHAPED THE CONVERSATION**

This year, the world looked again and saw something different. Fewer assumptions. More evidence. And a supply chain that is not waiting for change but already operating with it.

**T**HE global conversation on palm oil has long been marked by noise. But in 2025, the tone began to change. There was less conjecture, more evidence. Narratives began aligning not with assumptions but with evidence and at the centre of that realignment was Malaysia.

This was not a shift driven by new practice. It was a shift in recognition. Scientific integrity, traceable supply chains, and commitments to people and landscapes have always underpinned Malaysia's approach. What changed was that the world finally began to take notice.

The question is no longer whether the world is ready to accept sustainable Malaysian palm oil; the question is whether it is ready to learn from it.

ECONOMIST  
IMPACTAdvertisement feature i

The oil palm crop also produces much higher yields than any other vegetable oil crops, requiring four to 10 times less land to grow, making it more efficient and also affordable for household and commercial use.



As featured in *The Economist*, Malaysia is no longer viewed as a reactive participant but as a proactive driver in the global push for sustainable food systems.

“

**Sustainability is no longer a marketing tool. It's a business necessity.**

Belvinder Sron,  
CEO of MPOC (featured in *The Economist*)

ECONOMIST  
IMPACT

Global palm oil production

making up nearly a quarter of global production.

Malaysia's contribution



Read the full feature and watch the video on *The Economist*



## Reaching Minds, Not Just Markets

- Global: 316 articles, over 654M impressions

### Storytelling that Shapes Global Perception

Effective communication builds credibility. In 2025, MPOC spearheaded campaigns across global media, reaching over 500 million impressions across TV, digital and social platforms. From editorial to animation, every asset was designed to do more than inform. It sparked dialogue and earned trust.

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english



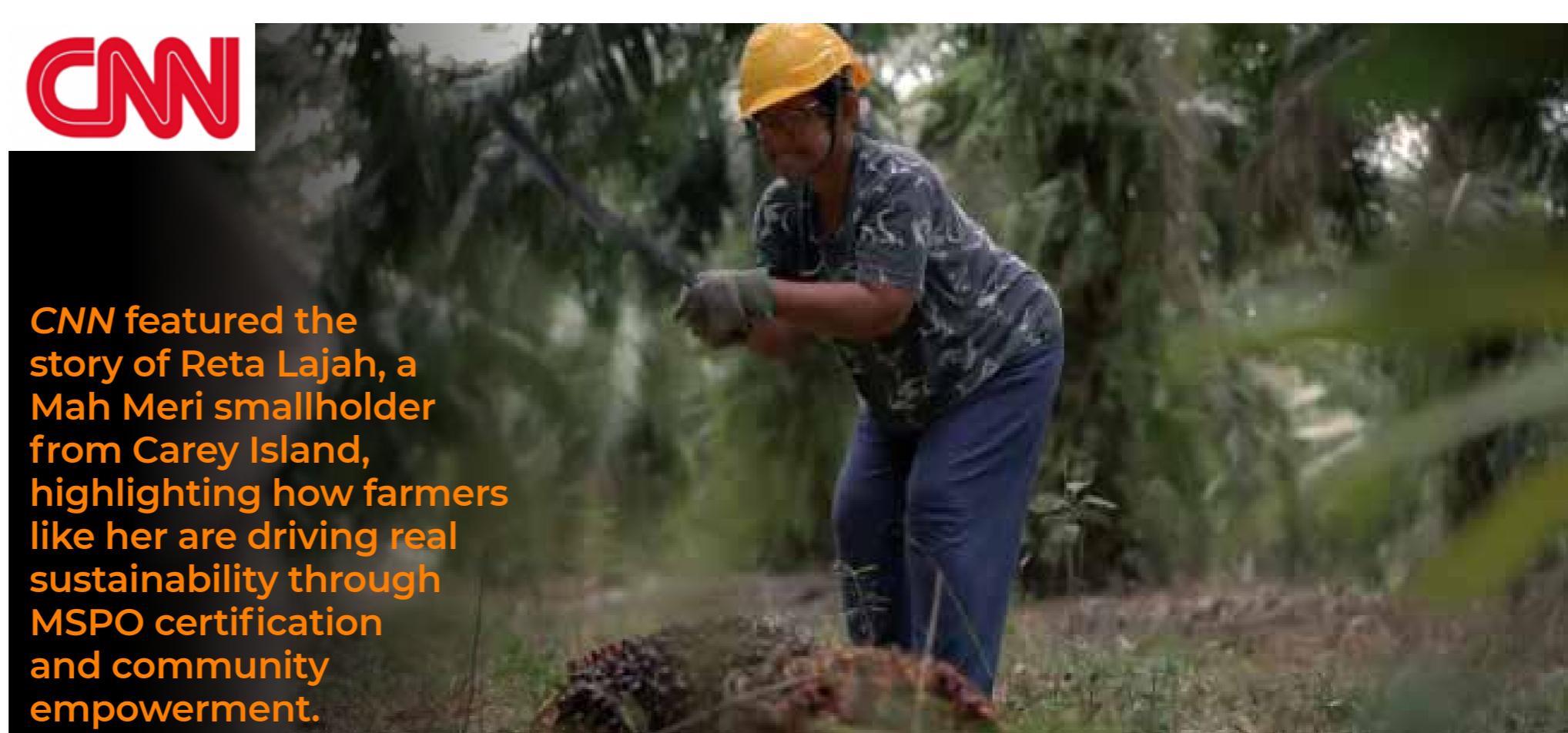
**Nature's Gift: How Malaysian Palm Oil Is Feeding the World Sustainably —**  
featured on *Al Arabiya* as part of MPOC's 2025 international media collaborations, highlighting Malaysian palm oil's role in nutrition and sustainability to audiences across the Middle East.

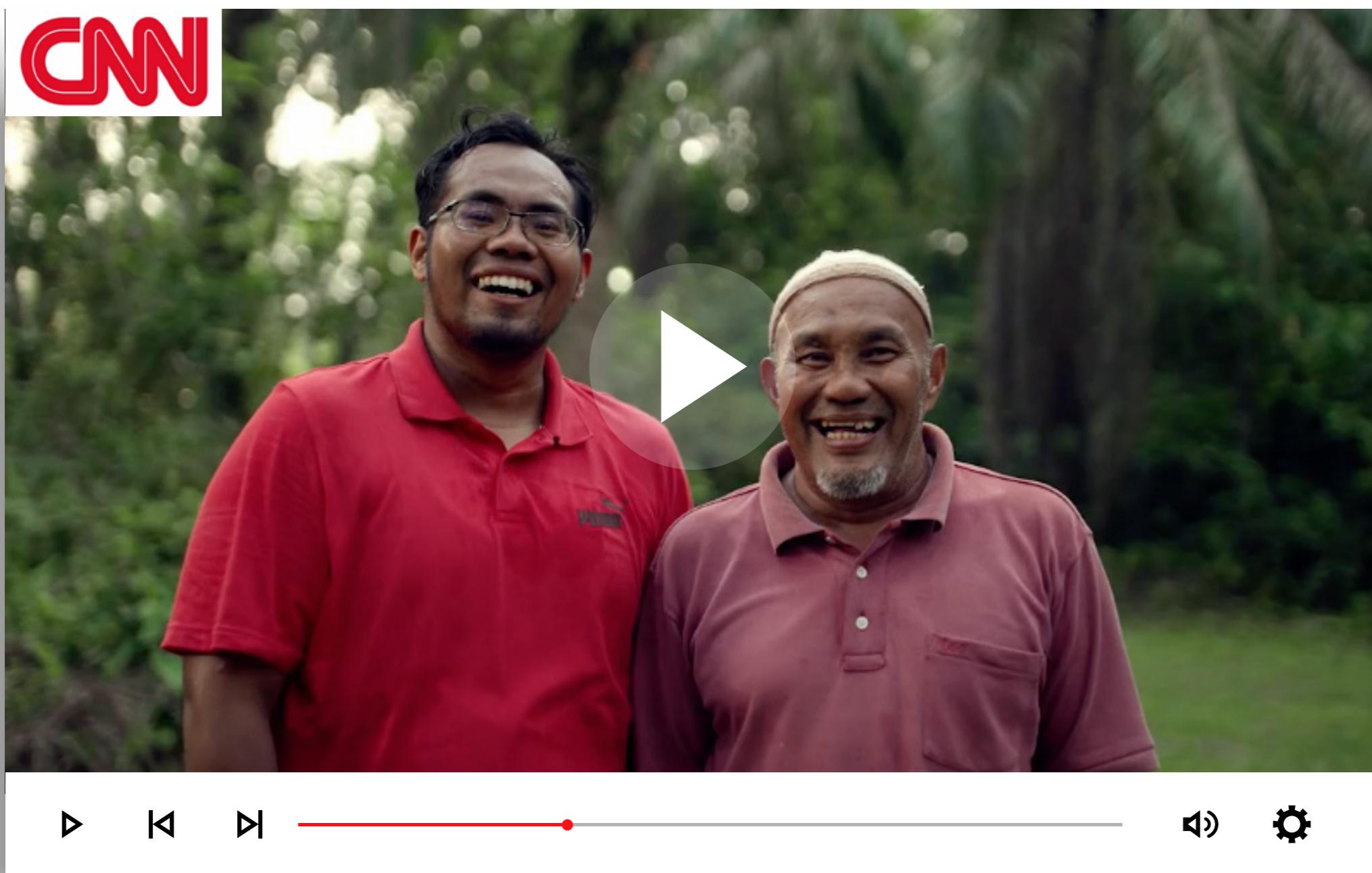
*Al Arabiya* profiled Malaysian palm oil as a “golden opportunity” not just for nutrition and food security, but as a model of ethical production and land efficiency. The piece resonated across the Arabic-speaking world, reaching millions online and through syndicated channels.



[Explore the full feature and watch the video on \*Al Arabiya\*](#)

*The Economist* situates palm oil within the broader context of global food security, presenting it as a solution rather than a threat. In the Middle East, *Al Arabiya* opened a window into the responsible role of palm oil in feeding the world, reaching millions in both Arabic and English. CNN profiled the science behind sustainability, showcasing voices from the field and lab.





[Click to read the full story and watch the video on CNN](#)

Elsewhere, the South China Morning Post (SCMP) delivered documentary-style reporting from plantations and research sites. And for younger audiences, two parallel efforts carried the message forward.



Ir. Shyam Lakshmanan's insight brings the SCMP feature to life, showing viewers how Malaysia's commitment to responsible production is embedded from the very start of production.

Follow Ir. Shyam Lakshmanan, General Manager of IOI Edible Oils, inside a palm oil refinery in Sandakan. This visual story maps every step of the process, from harvest to quality testing, showcasing how Malaysian palm oil meets international food and safety benchmarks.



[Click to read the full story and watch the video on SCMP](#)

## Reaching Young Minds Through Culture and Creativity

MPOC's collaboration with Les' Copaque Production through the *Upin & Ipin* series brought the story home with schoolyard plays and community festivals. In every market, the message was calibrated but consistent: Malaysian palm oil is here, it is working and it stands ready.



*Upin & Ipin* series

The *Wira Minyak Sawit* episode brought palm oil education to life for young viewers through dance, school plays and a community festival set in Kampung Durian Runtuh. The special was broadcast nationwide and reached classrooms across the region.

### Episode Reach and Broadcast

#### Summary:

- 28 million views on YouTube (as of December 2025)
- Aired on TV3, TV9, ASTRO, Netflix and TV Indonesia
- Featured across three episodes of Season 19



The creative success also received formal recognition. In late 2024, *Upin & Ipin* won two national titles at the Asean Academy Creative Awards. The palm oil-themed episode took home Best Animation. Supported by the MPOC, the project showed how storytelling can carry sustainability messages to new generations in classrooms and homes.



[Watch the animated series episode](#)

## Research, collaborations and traceability

Malaysian palm oil's international standing has been reinforced this year through continued alignment with global sustainability standards and active participation in policy discussions. Technical briefings, research collaborations, and traceability audits have helped shape constructive engagements with partners across the EU, Asia-Pacific, China, India, Africa, and the Middle East.

The Wild Asia video series offered a different lens: Smallholders as innovators, not just farmers. Composting, intercropping and regenerative practices were not future goals. They were daily routines.

In 2025, the series won the RSPO "Communicating for Good" Award, acknowledging a campaign supported by MPOC that elevated smallholder narratives as both environmental and economic proof points.



Wild Asia received the **Communicating for Good Award** at the RSPO Excellence Awards 2025. The winning project, supported by MPOC, spotlighted smallholders as advocates and innovators in sustainable palm oil production, helping reshape how global audiences perceive the role of independent farmers.

The project elevated smallholders as credible voices in the sustainability narrative, using real experiences to build trust with consumers and the broader public.

# VOICES THAT MATTER

“ I’d look up farming tips on the internet, but nothing beats hands-on learning through practical workshops,”



Norella Ambang,  
MSPO-certified smallholder who  
owns a 4.8ha oil palm farm.

“ I’m not too worried about the bottom line because my production costs are low,”



Muhamarram Sompot,  
the 43-year-old who has been  
adopting chemical-free farming for  
five years.

“ My father’s generation extols the virtue of hard work. My generation places equal importance on social, environmental and economic success. Working smart outweighs working hard!”



Muhammad Hariz,  
the 29-year-old independent  
smallholder.

International media, including over 20 features by journalists from seven countries, chronicled these stories with depth and authenticity. These aren't pilot projects or demonstration blocks. They are working livelihoods, spread across regions from Kinabatangan in Sabah to Sungai Manik in Perak.

## Impact and Reach

- 10 international journalists
- 7 countries represented (India, Pakistan, Egypt, Philippines, Türkiye, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan)
- 20+ international stories published
- 3 plantation types visited: MSPO certified large estate, WAGS BIO smallholder, conservation-linked block



## Showcasing at World Expo Osaka, Japan

In Osaka, children met the familiar faces of *Upin & Ipin* on stage, while chefs demonstrated the versatility of palm oil across various cuisines. But beyond the theatrics, the deeper impact came from sustained attention. Decision-makers from over 30 countries paused long enough to listen. And that made all the difference.

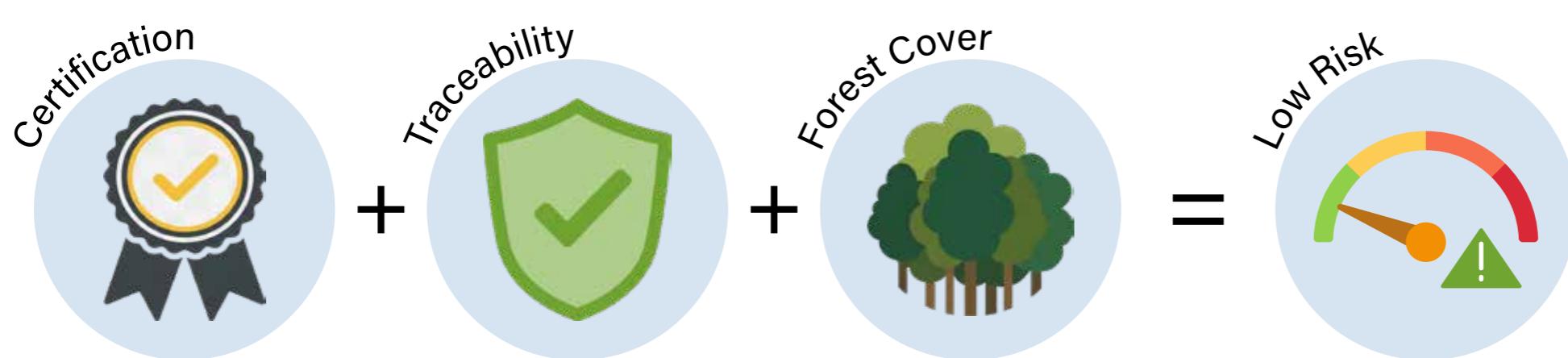
### World Expo Osaka – Palm Oil Week (9 to 15 June 2025)

- Visitors: 105,000+
- *Upin & Ipin* live shows: 12 sessions, ~2,000 audience members
- Celebrity chef demos: 9 live sessions
- 30+ international organisations attended policy side sessions



## Diplomacy with Data

2025 also marked critical progress on EUDR advocacy. Malaysia's position, supported by third-party reports and strategic diplomacy, presented a clear case for MSPO as a credible compliance tool. The conversation is shifting from resistance to respect.



The future of sustainable palm oil isn't being written in Brussels. It's being demonstrated in places like Beaufort, Kinabatangan and Carey Island.

## From Presence to Preference

There was a time when Malaysia had to explain. In 2025, it began to show. The path ahead is more coordinated than speculative. More smallholders are emerging, many of them young or newly empowered. Programmes like BIO are expanding into Central Sarawak. A digital trust layer via e-MSPO is gaining ground. And most critically, the narrative is no longer being built for Malaysia. It's being built with it.





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**Yusof Endut, a former welder, chose to retire early at 50 to embark on a farming journey in Kinta.**

## OF CATTLE AND OIL PALM: A SMALLHOLDER'S JOURNEY

By melding livestock and oil palm farming, a Malaysian-based smallholder proves this regenerative practice can produce good yields, restore biodiversity, enhance carbon storage and diversify income.

**“WHEN** done right, livestock and agriculture are not just livelihoods, but pathways to a better life,” says independent oil palm smallholder Mohd Yusof Endut.

“Invest in the land, and the land gives back to you.”

The 62-year-old farmer shares his farming philosophy as we lounge in a rest hut on his 10-acre oil palm farm in Tanjung Tualang, Perak.

Nearby, a herd of cows, their calves in tow, graze lazily under the palm trees while flicking their tails to deter flies and bees. Butterflies flutter over woody shrubs amidst the lush ground cover. The occasional egret or two glides in to join the cattle party. A gentle breeze wafts from the pond along the eastern edge of his farm.

Beyond the pastoral idyll, the farm is a showcase of agriculture returning to its roots. Yusof has been practising livestock integration with oil palm for 15 years.

For ages, the cultivation of crops was intertwined with the raising of animals. However, with the advent of modern agriculture, including intensive crop monoculture and industrialised meat and dairy production systems that aim to churn out commodities as efficiently and cheaply as possible, this age-old practice has been set aside.

However, today there has been a resurgence in integrating livestock and crops on farms, as regenerative agriculture, with its focus on improving soil health, biological diversity, and carbon cycling, gains traction. Research has shown strong links between how plants and animals are managed aboveground and the enhancement of carbon storage and nutrient cycling in the soil.\*

Yusof's cows help manage weeds naturally while enriching the soil with manure. Grazing stimulates plant regrowth, boosting carbon absorption. His healthy farm harbours a habitat for birds, pollinators, predatory insects, earthworms, and microbes, all of which are intrinsically linked. His chemical-free approach, with no herbicides and pesticides, has kept pests at bay and yielded steady results, averaging 1 to 2 tons of fresh fruit bunches (FFB) per acre.

His herd now numbers around 40. Calf mortality rate averages 2%, mainly due to stillbirths.

"On average, I sell about five to seven cows a year. With a market price starting from RM4,500, the earnings more than cover my farm's production costs. The rest is a bonus for the hard work!" Yusof adds, chuckling.

## The Learning Curve

Yusof's farming journey began at 50, after his welding job in Perak was made redundant. Offered a transfer to Negeri Sembilan or Dubai, he chose early retirement instead, opting to stay rooted in his hometown in Kinta District.

At that time, he had already dabbled in buffalo and giant freshwater prawn farming.

"My first two ventures (buffalo and prawn farming) failed because I was juggling a full-time job and couldn't give my 100%" admits Yusof. "But every setback is a chance to learn and grow."

As they say, the third time's a charm.

So when he started cattle farming, he learned from past failures and sought guidance from a friend, now a mentor, who operates a cattle feedlot. Five years into cattle farming, the father of three with school-age children decided to plant oil palm in 2012. He used his severance pay and a bank loan to purchase seedlings.



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**Crop-livestock integration in regenerative agriculture helps rejuvenate soil health, thereby enhancing palm oil field growth.**

One of the first lessons he learned about crop-livestock integration is to keep cattle away from palms younger than 5 years, as they are vulnerable to damage from grazing. Cows are creatures of habit. Yusof established a predictable feeding routine with quality feed and adequate space and ventilation in the barn. Instead of relying on store-bought feed grains, he crafts a blend of homegrown Napier grass, corn stalks from a friend's farm, and decanter cake sourced from a nearby mill.

"From the start, I don't use any herbicides because I want to maintain ground cover so the soil can retain moisture and to ensure the vegetation is safe for my cows to eat," Yusof explains. He performs manual weeding around the tree trunks, and the cuttings are turned into compost, enriched with cow dung, and returned to the soil, boosting its fertility, structure, and water retention.

"The first five years of the palm life cycle are the most challenging. You must monitor, fertilise, weed, and control pests to achieve healthy growth and future yields. It's just like raising a child!" Yusof quips.

Once the palm trees had matured, Yusof allowed his cows to return to the farm, utilising a rotational grazing system. He fenced off plots and moved the cattle between plots to reduce overgrazing and optimise weed control. This allows the grazed plots to 'rest', recover and keep the soil healthy.

In a 2013 [study](#) on the benefits of integrating livestock with oil palm, Malaysia's Department of Veterinary Services ([DVS](#)) recommends a stocking rate of 2 cows per hectare (1 cow per acre). Stocking rate is the number of animals grazing a specific area of land over a defined period. It impacts livestock production and pasture sustainability.

For smallholders, the biggest stumbling block to adopting livestock integration is limited land. Yusof is fortunate to graze his cattle on a neighbouring 40-acre oil palm plot, thanks to a far-sighted landowner. "It's a win-win. My cows provide natural weed control and organic fertiliser, and I cover the fencing costs, which also helps deter trespassers and livestock thefts," says Yusof, who received his MSPO ([Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil](#)) certification in 2021.

Yusof joined the Wild Asia Group Scheme ([WAGS](#)) in 2023 to further improve his farm management practices. More than just gaining farming know-how, Yusof is eager to tap into Wild Asia's [network](#) of farmer community, expert guidance and global market.

"We grow by learning from others and staying curious. That's why building meaningful connections matters," Yusof shares.

"For me, the real value *is knowledge*."

## Data Speaks

Since 2000, the Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB) has promoted the [integration of livestock into oil palm plantations](#) as a strategy to optimise land use, increase farmers' income, and drive sustainability in the palm oil industry. However, [adoption has been slow](#), mainly due to a lack of industry-wide focus and incentives.



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**With a herd of 40 cows now, Yusof recalls that the first lesson is to keep cattle away from palms that are younger than 5 years to avoid damage.**

“

**With proper management like rotational grazing, it can transform plantations into climate-smart, biodiversity-friendly landscapes.”**

Dr Badrul Azhar,

**an associate professor in Conservation Biology and Wildlife Ecology at Universiti Putra Malaysia, and the author of numerous studies on crop-livestock integration.**

Time and again, studies have shown cattle grazing in oil palm plantations is an effective nature-based solution to reduce herbicide dependence, restore ecosystem functions and support regenerative oil palm production.

“For smallholders who lack a sizeable parcel of land to do a rotational grazing system, they can integrate small ruminants (grazing animals) like sheep and goats,” says Badrul. Sheep graze on the soft grasses whilst goats control woody shrubs; they complement each other.

“Small ruminants are easier to handle for women and older farmers. However, you need to build a shelter for them, which incurs extra costs.”

It’s important for smallholders to give their land a 45 to 90-day break after grazing, Badrul added. This rest period allows grass and plants to regrow, helps prevent overgrazing, and protects the soil from compaction. “Given that most smallholders own small parcels of land, working with nearby farmers or other landowners is necessary to make this work.”



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**Yusof remains positive, doing the grunt work of farming every day, like clockwork, as he finds the perfect rhythm.**

## Ongoing Research on Livestock Animals and Palm Oil Production

UPM is currently collaborating with Japan's [Hiroshima University](#) on a project that examines the impact of grazing animals, such as cattle, sheep, and goats, on biodiversity in oil palm plantations.

Led by UPM's senior lecturer and grazing management expert, Dr Frisco Nobilly, the Living Lab project aims to demonstrate that switching from chemical weed control to natural grazing can introduce more beneficial insects and earthworms, and reduce rodent pests over time.

"Integrating livestock animals can also improve food security by producing palm oil and animal protein from the same plot of land – a land optimisation strategy that can address deforestation as well," Nobilly explains.

Livestock integration not only strengthens the sustainability of palm oil production, but Malaysian palm oil also provides many [health and nutritional benefits](#). For instance, naturally rich in a balanced mix of fats—about 50% saturated and 50% unsaturated (Omega-9 and Omega-6)—palm oil is packed with powerful phytonutrients such as vitamin E, tocotrienols and provitamin A carotenoids (red palm oil). These antioxidants help protect the body and may play a role in disease prevention.

## Steward of the Land

In June, Yusof sold seven cows at RM5,500 each during the Muslim festival of sacrifice, Hari Raya Korban (Eid al-Adha), raking in a sizable bonus.

But raising livestock and growing oil palm demands hard work and grit, he added. Each morning, he arrives at the farm at 8am, tends to his cows and trees, and concludes the day at 4pm after moving his cows back to the barn.

"Once you get used to the grunt work, it becomes a rhythm, just like clocking in to work every day," he smiles. "If you're tired, rest. Eat well, and recharge. But most importantly, focus and show up!"

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### Reference

\* Hawken, Paul. *Regeneration: Ending the Climate Crisis in One Generation*. Penguin Books, 2021.

# EUDR RECALIBRATED: WHAT 2025 TAUGHT US ABOUT REGULATION, REALITY, AND READINESS

The process of EUDR implementation, which has undergone numerous postponements and adjustments, is finally taking shape in 2025, with further action being taken towards its realisation.



**TWO** years after the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) entered into force, 2025 became the year Brussels was forced to confront the realities of implementation. Political resistance, industry pressure, and practical challenges, both within and beyond the EU, reshaped how the regulation evolved over the year.

## **A Year of Delays, Debate and Data**

The EU's earlier agreement to postpone EUDR's full application at the end of 2024 was more than an administrative delay. It was a recognition that the regulation, ambitious in intent, was unworkable in its original form. The decision came amid growing unease from European businesses, small farmers and major trading partners, including Malaysia, who had long argued that the EUDR's complex requirements were neither proportionate nor inclusive.

In April 2025, the first simplification package was introduced, to reduce compliance-related administrative costs by 30%. It allowed annual due diligence statements and greater flexibility across supply chains. Yet for producing countries, including Malaysia, these changes brought limited relief. The EUDR still required costly, tedious geolocation data and full traceability to the farm level, which are complex requirements for smallholders in developing countries.

Then came the much-anticipated release of the EUDR country benchmarking classifications in May 2025. Despite overwhelming evidence of reduced deforestation and strengthened national certification under the Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO) scheme, Malaysia was assigned 'standard' risk status. This outcome triggered sharp responses across the Malaysian industry, as the classification directly affects exporters' costs and competitiveness.



**Under 'standard' risk, every shipment requires full due diligence, and companies face triple the audit frequency compared to 'low' risk countries.**

### October Simplification: A Shift Toward Realism

By October, mounting political and industry pressure forced Brussels to act again. The European Commission tabled a legislative amendment introducing targeted simplifications, chief among them the creation of a new category: "micro and small primary operators." These operators, limited to 'low' risk countries, enjoy relaxed data requirements (postal address instead of geolocation coordinates) and simplified one-time due diligence declarations.

While this concession primarily benefits EU small farmers, it inadvertently highlights a key inequity: smallholders from developing, 'standard' risk nations like Malaysia - those least equipped financially and technically - are excluded from this leniency. This underscores a core flaw in the EUDR's design: its most significant flexibility is reserved for those who need it the least. For Malaysia, true fairness would mean extending these simplified measures to smallholders across all risk categories.

## Parliament's Turning Point: A More Workable EUDR Takes Shape

On 26 November 2025, the European Parliament voted decisively on the proposed package of targeted simplification measures to the EUDR, including a significant postponement of application deadlines to 30 December 2026 for large operators and 30 June 2027 for micro and small operators. The vote also endorsed streamlined due diligence obligations, including requiring only the first-placer on the EU market to submit the due diligence statement, as well as special provisions for micro and small primary operators. By backing these measures with a strong majority, Parliament signalled a clear institutional shift toward practicality, rebalancing ambition with operational feasibility and acknowledging longstanding concerns raised by businesses and stakeholders.

This momentum culminated on 17 December 2025, when the European Parliament formally adopted the outcomes of the Trilogue negotiations and approved the targeted revisions, confirming both the extended timelines and the simplified due diligence provisions. The package also introduced a mandatory April 2026 review clause, enabling the European Commission to reassess administrative burdens, system readiness, and data realities. For Malaysia and other producing countries, this could create a critical opportunity to present updated evidence, demonstrate progress, and advocate for fairer treatment going forward, including future risk reclassification where warranted.

### A Vindication for Producing Countries

The EUDR's multiple revisions in 2025 vindicate what producing countries have argued since day one - that the regulation was adopted without adequate consultation and failed to reflect on-the-ground realities. Malaysia has consistently called for three key recognitions:

- 01** Acceptance of national certification schemes like MSPO
- 02** Exemptions or special provisions for smallholders
- 03** A fair and data-driven path to 'low' risk classification

Each subsequent EU "adjustment" implicitly acknowledges the validity of these positions. The postponements, simplifications and political debates of 2025 have all stemmed from the same source: the EUDR's initial rigidity.

## Malaysia's Response: Coordination and Commitment

Despite its 'standard' risk classification, Malaysia has not wavered. In June 2025, a Multi-Ministerial Special Committee on EUDR was established to coordinate national compliance and engagement. Diplomatic engagement intensified. In September, European Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy, Her Excellency Jessika Roswall's visit marked a milestone - her public acknowledgement of the MSPO as "a credible pathway to compliance" and recognition of Malaysia's significant progress in reducing deforestation. These statements signalled growing EU confidence in Malaysia's sustainability credentials, even if official classifications have yet to catch up.

## SKN: The Next Leap Forward

Central to Malaysia's EUDR readiness is the upcoming '*Sistem Kebolehjejakan Nasional*' (SKN) or the National Traceability System, to be launched in early 2026. SKN will serve as a national digital traceability platform integrating MPOB's SIMS and GeoSawit with MSPO's e-MSPO. It will provide verifiable, government-backed data on land legality, certification and supply chain movements to ease the process for Malaysian exporters in providing EUDR due diligence-related information.

More than a compliance tool, SKN represents Malaysia's broader vision: a transparent, data-driven ecosystem that reinforces global confidence in sustainable, legally produced and deforestation-free palm oil.



The SKN to be launched in 2026, will serve as a national digital traceability platform integrating MPOB's SIMS and GeoSawit with MSPO's e-MSPO.

## Recognising Progress, Rewarding Performance

Scientific data support Malaysia's case for reclassification. The recently released FAO Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) 2025 report has demonstrated that Malaysia has improved its results in addressing deforestation over the last decade, with forest loss volumes and rates now near or below the EUDR's 'low' risk thresholds. This validates findings from Global Forest Watch, which reported a 70% reduction in primary forest loss between 2014 and 2024, providing clear evidence that the country's reforms and conservation measures are delivering a real, measurable impact. These metrics now place Malaysia much closer to the EUDR's 'low' risk thresholds than before.

Recognising Malaysia as 'low' risk in the 2026 benchmarking review would not be an act of concession; it would be an act of fairness, acknowledging a producing country that has demonstrably delivered results through sustained governance, certification and national coordination.

## Strengthening Readiness, Broadening Horizons

As 2025 draws to a close, Malaysia stands ready for the EUDR's evolving reality - prepared, proactive and principled. MPOC will continue its work into 2026, strengthening industry readiness, addressing non-tariff barriers and ensuring that Malaysian palm oil remains globally competitive and recognised as the world's leading source of sustainable, deforestation-free and nutritious vegetable oil.

“

**Our mission is clear. We will continue working hand in hand with our partners to ensure that Malaysian palm oil is not only compliant but also continues to set the global benchmark for sustainability and transparency. EUDR may be evolving - but so is Malaysia and we are ready.”**



Belvinder Sron,  
CEO of MPOC



## **EVIDENCE IN PRACTICE, SUSTAINABLE MALAYSIAN PALM OIL NUTRITION IN FOCUS**

Evidence-based conversations about the nutritional benefits of palm oil are becoming more common in countering misinformation and encourage its daily consumption in regional countries.

**ACROSS** key regions in Asia, the Middle East, and beyond, conversations about nutrition have grown more serious and more structured. Families, regulators and media platforms are placing greater value on reliable science, especially as public health debates increasingly hinge on the accuracy of information people consume. In this landscape, evidence-based communication has played an essential role in guiding healthier choices and strengthening trust in food systems.

Sustainable Malaysian palm oil became part of this broader movement toward clarity. Its nutritional profile was communicated through a science-first approach supported by researchers, technical experts and health professionals. These voices helped translate complex data into practical understanding, reinforcing the idea that credible nutrition advice begins with verified evidence.

The principle remained constant: Make science accessible, address misinformation before it spreads, and ensure that the story of a widely used edible oil aligns with the data and fits within modern dietary practices.



## **Nourishing a Healthier World via Malaysian Palm Oil (*The Edge*, April 2025)**

Palm oil supplies more than 30% of the world's edible oils and fats and continues to play a central role in global food security. Its balanced fatty-acid profile, natural vitamin E tocotrienols, and absence of trans-fats make it an essential ingredient in both home cooking and large-scale food manufacturing.

Palm oil's equal blend of saturated and unsaturated fats provides a versatile, stable cooking base without hydrogenation.

Read the full feature

[CLICK HERE](#)



### **Evidence at the Centre of Public Nutrition Messaging**

A noticeable shift in global nutrition communication has been the emphasis on transparency and practical understanding. Research on balanced fats, vitamin E, and heat stability moved from laboratories to mainstream media, helping audiences see the science that underpins a widely used edible oil.

Palm oil's functionality across food, household, and industrial applications is closely tied to its natural properties. According to food scientist Professor Tan Chin Ping from Universiti Putra Malaysia, these advantages explain why palm oil is used in everyday products, from breakfast cereals and ice creams to cosmetics and detergents. It is the most versatile and safest vegetable oil, and therefore one of the most widely consumed oils on the market.

## Highlights of Malaysian palm oil:

- Naturally stable during high-heat processing
- Zero need for partial hydrogenation, avoiding trans-fat formation
- Balanced composition with both liquid and solid fractions
- Reliable performance in large-scale food production
- Efficient land use and strong sustainability credentials under MSPO
- Exported to nearly 160 countries, supporting multiple global industries

Explore the full feature and insights from Professor Tan

[CLICK HERE](#)

Features across *The Edge*, BFM 89.9, CNN, *The Economist*, South China Morning Post (SCMP), *Al Arabiya* and family-audience platforms such as *Upin & Ipin* and Cartoon Network further demonstrated how credible health information gains traction when shared through familiar, trusted formats.

Nutritionist and Managing Director of the *Malaysian Journal of Nutrition*, Dr. Roseline Yap, outlines how balanced eating, supported by palm oil and smart portioning, can transform daily meals in Malaysian households. Her feature on SCMP bridges the science of health with the everyday act of cooking.



In SCMP's feature, Dr. Roseline Yap shows how Malaysian palm-based ingredients can support nutritious, enjoyable meals in everyday homes.

These narratives did more than correct misconceptions. They created room for a more nuanced understanding of palm-based nutrition in regions where public debates had long been shaped by incomplete information.

Watch how Dr. Roseline builds a balanced plate

CLICK HERE

## Turning Research into Practice

Scientific findings only influence behaviour when they are explained clearly. Technical insights from MPOB research were reshaped into formats that supported public understanding, from visual explainers to short-form videos. Some of the strongest engagement came from short-form educational content that turned scientific data into simple takeaways for everyday use.

## Public Health Snapshot – Bite-Sized Research Explainer

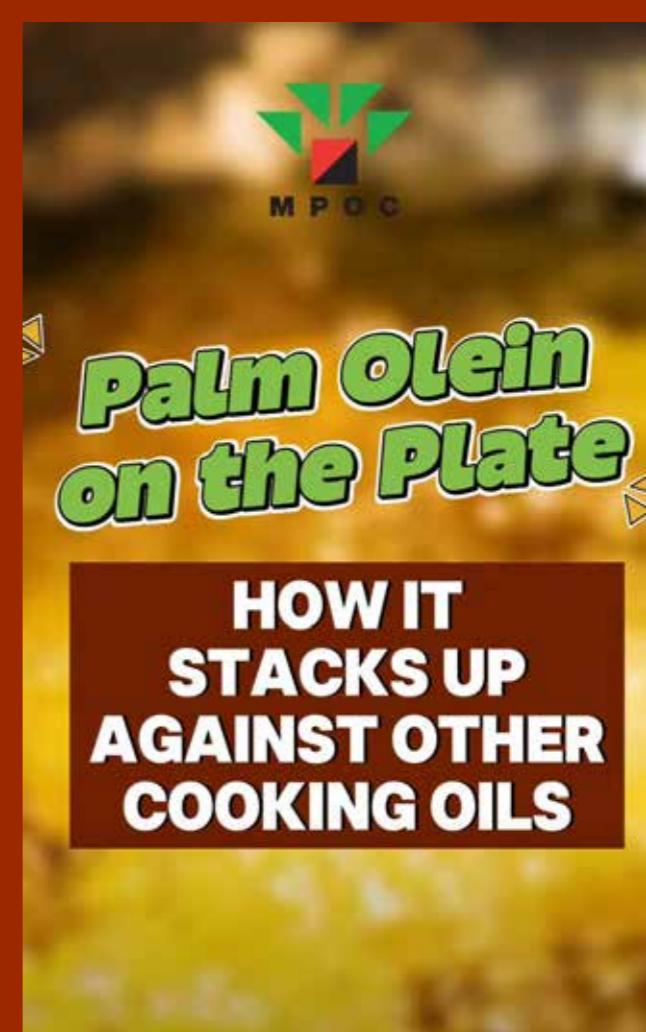
A study comparing palm-based high-oleic cooking oil with extra virgin olive oil found no significant difference in markers of insulin resistance and glucose tolerance among overweight adults – yet the technical language is often complex for consumers to interpret.

Read the research

CLICK HERE

To address this, MPOC distilled the findings into short, visual explainers across social media. These bite-sized messages highlighted the key points:

- High-oleic palm-based blends perform on par with olive oil in metabolic health markers
- No impact on insulin, glucose tolerance, or related indicators
- Suitable for balanced diets when used in recommended amounts
- Evidence supports informed, practical decision-making in home cooking



See how the research was simplified for public audiences

CLICK HERE

## Culinary Storytelling through Asian Food Network

Public communication on nutrition also extended into culinary formats through MPOC's partnership with Asian Food Network's *Chef vs Chef* series. The programme brought palm oil into everyday cooking demonstrations, where chefs highlighted the oil's functionality in practical, accessible ways.

The initiative combined television exposure across AFN, Discovery Channel SEA and India, as well as TLC SEA and India with digital and social content designed to reach viewers where cooking decisions are made. Audience engagement was supported by a campaign that delivered an estimated 2.2 million digital impressions across video and static posts.



Watch episodes from the Chef vs Chef series

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## Responding to a Changing Global Regulatory Landscape

As food systems evolve, regulators in Central Asia and Türkiye have begun signalling new standards for 3-MCPD, glycidyl esters, MOSH/MOAH, and trans fats, with similar attention expected across the wider MENA region. These developments underline the importance of maintaining nutrition communication that is accurate, science-led and aligned with emerging safety expectations. The new WHO guideline on ultra-processed foods reinforced this shift toward clearer dietary guidance. Markets are moving beyond single-ingredient debates toward a broader understanding of how foods are produced, consumed, and explained. In this context, nutrient literacy and verifiable research have become essential pillars of responsible communication.

## Strengthening Advocacy in Nutrition-Sensitive Markets

Public health priorities continue to shape global demand for trustworthy nutrition information. Work supported by MPOC deepened engagements in India and Türkiye, two regions where evidence-based communication is essential. Expert-led events, targeted media outreach and partnerships focused on clear health messaging are expanding into markets with similar needs.

Advocacy also expanded through long-form storytelling, including conversational platforms that allow experts to explain product innovation, health applications, and market strategy in greater depth.

## Sustainability in Action: Health, Nutrition, Innovation

A five-episode podcast series exploring palm-based innovation, market differentiation, health applications and consumer-centred product development.

- Episode 1 – Steven Lee: Educating the market
- Episode 2 – Bryan See: Global entry strategy
- Episode 3 – Dr Fung Wai Yee: Format innovation
- Episode 4 – Jeff Kong: Commercialising nutrition products
- Episode 5 – Jimmy Yow: Competing with synthetics and global positioning



Listen to the podcast series

[CLICK HERE](#)

Food systems are becoming more complex, and nutrition remains one of the strongest forces shaping consumer expectations and regulatory priorities. In this environment, evidence serves as a public good. Transparent production, credible research and responsible communication guide public understanding of what a healthy diet includes. Sustainable Malaysian palm oil reflects these principles in practice. Through scientific clarity, expert engagement and real-world stories, it continues to hold its place in global nutrition discussions as a trusted, well-understood ingredient grounded in facts rather than assumptions.

# BUILDING UNDERSTANDING THROUGH DIRECT ENGAGEMENT: INTERNATIONAL DELEGATIONS EXPERIENCE SUSTAINABLE MALAYSIAN PALM OIL

Unrelentingly committed to showcasing the world's leading sustainable palm oil practices, MPOC organised several visits for international stakeholders to highlight the positive aspects of Malaysian palm oil production.



In November, MPOC organised two familiarisation visits for international stakeholders, providing them with a closer look at Malaysia's palm oil sector. Delegations from the European Union, the United Kingdom, Egypt, and Türkiye participated to learn about sustainable plantation practices, research activities, community livelihoods, and conservation work related to Malaysia's palm oil production.

The visits were designed to provide participants with direct exposure to on-the-ground realities and to facilitate informed discussions on sustainability, certification, trade opportunities and challenges, as well as the broader context in which sustainable Malaysian palm oil is produced and used. Each group followed its own agenda, guided by the issues most relevant to their respective roles in business, policy-making and media reporting.

11-16  
**NOVEMBER**

2025



### **EU-UK Business Stakeholders: Engaging with Sustainability on the Ground**

This six-day familiarisation visit focused on providing practical insight into Malaysia's sustainability framework and offered opportunities to observe how Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO)-certified operations are managed on-site. Delegates visited plantations, research facilities and conservation areas, including the Tun Razak Agricultural Research and Development Centre, FELDA Sungai Tekam Utara, as well as FGV Jengka 8 palm oil mill in Jerantut, Pahang. These visits highlighted Good Agricultural Practices, replanting approaches and various initiatives that support smallholder participation in the supply chain.

At the PERHILITAN Biodiversity Institute in Lanchang, participants received briefings on wildlife protection by PERHILITAN, the Tengku Hassanal Wildlife Reserve (THWR), and the Malaysian Palm Oil Green Conservation Foundation (MPOGCF), as well as peat restoration by Enggang Holdings Berhad. They then visited the Malayan Tiger Conservation Centre (MTCC) and the National Elephant Conservation Centre (NECC), reinforcing the nation's biodiversity policy and conservation efforts. Further engagements at SD Guthrie's Ecogardens in Carey Island and the Wild Asia Smallholder Group project in Kg. Sungai Bumbun demonstrated how landscape-level planning, group certification and community support are applied in practice. A dialogue session with Malaysian industry players and NGOs gave stakeholders the opportunity to discuss certification, traceability systems and the practicalities in meeting the evolving regulatory requirements, including the European Union Deforestation Regulation. These exchanges helped clarify expectations and offered a space for constructive discussion.

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**NOVEMBER**  
2025



### **Egyptian and Turkish Senior Journalists: Strengthening Context and Sector Understanding**

MPOC welcomed nine senior journalists from Egypt and Türkiye for a five-day programme designed to highlight the sustainability of the palm oil industry and support accurate and well-informed reporting. The programme began with a full-day Nutrition Satellite Symposium held in conjunction with PIPOC 2025, which highlighted the latest scientific findings on the roles of palm oil to health and nutrition. The journalists then visited a FELDA smallholder scheme to learn about the Government's strategy in tackling rural poverty and FELDA's success story in uplifting the livelihood of its settlers. A visit to an innovation centre in Negeri Sembilan introduced the journalists to the R&D efforts undertaken by a big plantation conglomerate in downstream product diversification and minimising waste from the palm oil industry. This provided context for understanding how innovations and research contribute to the long-term competitiveness and resilience of the Malaysian palm oil industry. At the Malayan Tiger Conservation Centre, officials from the Malaysian Palm Oil Green Conservation Fund (MPOGCF) and MSPO explained the conservation activities carried out within oil palm plantation landscapes and the MSPO certification scheme, respectively. The discussions that followed provided the journalists with a clearer view of the environmental considerations the industry has undertaken, as well as the need for a certification scheme to provide assurance of the sustainability of Malaysian palm oil. Throughout the visit, the journalists showed a great interest in Malaysian palm oil and engaged with technical experts and industry representatives on topics such as certification, sustainability practices, labour requirements, smallholder support and the communication of palm oil's health attributes and its nutritional information.

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**NOVEMBER**  
2025



### **Shared Learning Through a Common Scientific Touchpoint**

Both delegations attended the Nutrition Satellite Symposium, held in Kuala Lumpur alongside other industry programmes. The session provided a clear starting point on the science of palm oil and nutrition. For the EU and UK delegates, it rounded off their visit. For the Egyptian and Turkish journalists, it served as their first touchpoint before they proceeded with field visits and interviews.

This shared moment laid a common scientific foundation, complementing the practical and sector-specific insights each group gathered during the rest of their time in Malaysia.

Together, these familiarisation visits contributed to more informed international conversations on Malaysian palm oil by combining direct observation with sector briefings and open dialogue. By providing delegates with the opportunity to visit plantations, research facilities, and conservation areas, and to meet with experts from across the supply chain, MPOC continues to support engagement with stakeholders who play essential roles in business, regulation, and public communication.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Your essential guide to the palm oil industry, covering nutrition and health, sustainability, environmental impact, and industry best practices.

## Acknowledgement:

Haniza Ahmad, Nur Azwani Ab Karim, SD Guthrie Technology Centre Sdn Bhd

**PALM** oil is more than a global cooking staple – it is increasingly positioned as a vehicle for better nutrition. Fortifying palm oil with essential vitamins such as A and D has emerged as one of the most cost-effective strategies to address micronutrient deficiencies, particularly in regions where “hidden hunger” continues to affect children and vulnerable groups<sup>1-3</sup>. For industry peers, governments, and investors, this represents both a public health opportunity and a pathway to reinforce the role of palm oil in sustainable food systems.

## QUESTION:

What makes palm oil an ideal vehicle for micronutrient fortification compared to other edible oils?

Palm oil is widely consumed across Asia, Africa, and emerging markets, reaching populations across all income levels. It exhibits high oxidative stability and is naturally compatible with fat-soluble vitamins, such as A and D. This makes it a cost-effective and scalable delivery vehicle for addressing hidden hunger<sup>4</sup>.

**QUESTION:**

How effective has vitamin A fortification of palm oil been in reducing deficiency-related health issues?

Evidence from studies shows that vitamin A-fortified palm oil increased daily intake by 26% to 40% of the RNI, raised serum retinol by 2% to 19%, and reduced deficiency prevalence from 18% to below 6%. Community programmes also reported reduced night blindness, stronger immunity and better child growth outcomes<sup>5</sup>.

**QUESTION:**

Why is vitamin D fortification becoming a priority, even in sun-rich regions like Malaysia?

Despite abundant sunlight, studies show that more than 90% of pregnant Malaysian women and many children are vitamin D-deficient. Vitamin D fortification in oils has been proven to improve bone mineral density, immune markers and reduce the risk of chronic diseases<sup>6-8</sup>.

**QUESTION:**

What technologies ensure that fortified palm oil remains stable and effective during storage, transport, and cooking?

Stability is achieved through antioxidants, microencapsulation, and UV-protective packaging. Research shows that mildly oxidised palm oil retains ~90% of vitamin A after 60 days, whereas poor packaging or high oxidation can cause up to 46% nutrient loss<sup>9</sup>.

**QUESTION:**

How does palm oil fortification align with sustainability and global nutrition goals?

Fortification supports SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) by addressing micronutrient deficiencies at a large scale. It enhances palm oil's sustainability credentials by linking health outcomes with responsible production and nutrition innovation<sup>10</sup>.

**QUESTION:**

What opportunities does palm oil fortification present for the Malaysian industry in global markets such as the EU, UK, and US?

Fortified oils offer market differentiation as "better-for-you" products, catering to the growing demand of health-conscious consumers. By meeting fortification mandates and aligning with global nutrition policies, Malaysia can position palm oil as not only functional and sustainable, but also as a solution for global health and wellness<sup>11-12</sup>.

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