

# Mahathir raps anti-palm oil lobby

NST 13 NOV 1984

**KUALA LUMPUR, Mon.** — The Prime Minister today criticised the influential anti-palm oil or pro-soyabean oil lobbies for downgrading the qualities of palm oil and imposing higher tariffs on the commodity.

In a speech at the opening of the American Oil Chemists Society (AOCS) and Palm Oil Research Institute of Malaysia (Porim) five-day world conference on the processing of palm, palm kernel and coconut oils in Kuala Lumpur, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said some of them have even enlisted so-called experts to proclaim that palm oil has no unique features.

However, he said these same experts forget to explain why the Ameri-

can potato chips maker is willing to continue using palm oil even when it holds a premium over soyabean oil.

In his address, read by Primary Industries Minister Datuk Paul Leong, he said the unfair accusations will not succeed as palm oil is almost cholesterol free and has a very high productivity oil yield — 10 times that of soyabean per hectare and its predictable production cannot be brushed aside.

It is in this light that the Prime Minister called upon traders and users of oils and fats to give palm oil its unbiased and fair competition in the world market.

Outlining the advantages of palm oil, the Prime Minister said its

significance is not only confined to the nutritional aspects but also to the productive uses of its oil mill and refinery by-products which would add dynamism to the oil palm sector.

As to its nutritional aspects, Dr Mahathir said Vitamin E can be recovered from the by-products of palm oil refining and the availability of beta-carotene and excess polyunsaturated fats found in palm oil has triggered its potentiality as an anti-cancer agent.

## Dependent

Besides, there is also the availability of a substance in palm oil that is able to "neutralise" or overrule the prothrombotic and atherogenetic effect of the saturated fatty acids found in it.

Billed the golden crop of Malaysia, palm oil now ranks second only to soyabean as the world's largest resource-based material for edible and industrial uses.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia, the world's largest producer and exporter of palm oil, now has more than 13 per cent of its population directly

or indirectly dependent on oil palm cultivation and its related industries.

He said that Malaysia's oil palm production is expected to increase steadily and reach 5.6 million tonnes in 1990.

Porim's efforts in research and development was also highlighted in his address. The advent of vegetative propagation through tissue culture, large scale clonal

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planting and replanting would also ensure that Malaysian palm oil continue to remain a very reliable source of supply.

The development and growth of the oleochemicals industry would also thrust Malaysia into yet another area of downstream processing.

As to commodity trading, the Prime Minister said, "the Government has no intention of abandoning the idea of making Kuala Lumpur an international commodity centre nor the concept of self-regulation which is vital in the operations of commodity exchanges."