

**Strengthen Palm Oil Sustainability Practices To Counter Negative Publicity, Says Muhyiddin Bernama  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 10 (Bernama) -- Palm oil players need to strengthen sustainability practices to counter negative publicity on the industry, says Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

He said certain international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have used unethical tactics and negative reporting on some companies although they implemented the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) system.

"To-date, some 10 plantation companies have been RSPO-certified, producing two million tonnes of crude palm oil (CPO) annually.

"However, the off-take of this certified sustainable palm oil has not been up to expectation and the associated premium has been dwindling," he said tonight at the Malaysian Palm Oil Association (MPOA) annual dinner.

Muhyiddin said there was also pressure from NGOs to hamper the cultivation of oil palm in logged over forests and peat land as they claimed it would deplete available carbon stocks.

Thus, he said oil palm production needed to reduce carbon emission to levels which would enable it to compete with other oilseeds.

"While significant reduction can be easily achieved through best management practices and methane capture from palm oil mills, there is urgency for more scientific studies," he added.

Muhyiddin also said the same sustainability requirement did not apply for other oils and fats hence it appeared that an artificial trade barrier was being erected discriminately against oil palm.

"This makes it difficult to comply with and NGOs are capitalising on this to attack the industry. We have to be very careful in approaching this issue," he said.

The past experience of managing health issues related to the smear campaign on oil palm lead by the American Soybean Association should be used as a guidance, Muhyiddin added.

Malaysia is the world's largest exporter of palm oil and the second largest oil palm producer in the world with a planted area of 4.9 million hectares. council member Tan Sri Lee Shin Cheng, former MPOA council chairman Tan Sri Mohd Nor Ismail and Felda Global Group President Datuk Sabri Ahmad.

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