

**Freer Trade Will Prompt Stronger Trade Volume, Says FGV Boss**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 4 (Bernama) -- Freer trade as a result of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) will eventually prompt stronger trade volume, says Felda Global Ventures Holdings Bhd Group President and Chief Executive Officer, Mohd Emir Mavani Abdullah.

He said the agreement would benefit local oil palm planters as it would allow them to be more competitive, given the easy trade access and considering Malaysia is the second biggest exporter of palm oil.

The agreement would also open new export markets such as the United States, he told Bernama on the sidelines of the Palm and Lauric Oil Conference and Exhibition 2014 Tuesday.

Asked on the acceptance of edible oil in the United States, Mohd Emir said the acceptance has been always there, "it's more of educating the public on the benefits."

On crude palm oil prices, he expects the commodity to hover between RM2,500 and RM3,000 a tonne in the first quarter until April, reflecting the current situation of strong demand amid low production due to the long drought.

Mohd Emir, who was one of the speakers at the conference in his session earlier, said demand for sustainable products was growing, especially from European countries.

"We deal a lot with the smallholders here and they are the ones who are most concerned about sustainability because it's an added cost for them," he said.

Malaysia will soon come up with its own standards for sustainable palm oil production as an alternative to the existing standard by the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO).

Mohd Emir, however, said adopting the local standards would be more cost-effective to local smallholders considering its localised mechanism.

"Smallholders do want to produce sustainably, but they do not want to add to their production cost," he added.

The RSPO is a non-profit organisation issuing the certificate that validates the production of palm oil is sustainable, which is crucial for plantations to export their products to European and other Western countries.

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