

Food Safety from the Perspective of Malaysian Palm Oil Industry.

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Food safety is becoming an important issue in the food trade. In the edible oil industry, good quality of the oil has been achieved and that the focus is now the food safety requirements. Malaysian palm oil industry as a contributor to the world oils and fats is conscious of the food safety regulation and strive to meet with the stringent requirements.

The continuous acceptance of palm as edible oil and fat is important to Malaysia. Hence the government and the palm oil industry have undertaken steps to ensure that palm oil meets the strict consumers' demand. Legal frameworks or legislations are established to demonstrate assurance of the safety, quality and sustainability of palm oil products.

One of the legislative frameworks is the Malaysian Palm Oil Board Act 1998 or Act 582 including the subsidiaries was established to regulate and control the Malaysian oil palm industry. The licensing regulations monitor trade practices, collection and dissemination of information, collection of cess and quality control. The national food control system also governs the palm oil industry through the Food Act 1983 and Food Regulations 1985. These legislations are harmonized with the Codex Standards. Regulations of importing countries on oils and fats are also taken into consideration when drawing up standards and specifications.

MPOB has also developed certification programmes for the oil palm industry to use as tools to self regulate the production of palm oil along the whole supply chain. These programmes are in the form of codes of practice for oil palm industry from the nursery, estates, mill, kernel crushing, refining, handling, storage and bulking installation. These certifications will become the benchmark for competency for the Malaysian palm oil industry. The industry has also taken the initiatives to incorporate other quality assurance programmes such as ISO 9000, ISO 14000, HACCP, GMP, Good Hygiene Practices, ISO17025 and others.