

AquaEco launches palm oil green tech system

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KUALA LUMPUR: Aqua Ecotech Sdn Bhd (AquaEco) estimates that RM1.2 billion worth of oil can be recovered in Malaysia annually using its palm oil raw sludge filtration system, AquaEco-SRORS (Solids Removal Oil Recovery System), which the little-known company launched yesterday.

AquaEco director and principal shareholder Andrew Liew said AquaEco-SRORS will transform the palm oil industry by allowing millers to address long-standing palm oil waste sludge challenges that have been a major industry problem and costly affair for decades.

He said AquaEco-SRORS enables the extraction of up to 80% of the oil in raw palm oil sludge. This translates to an improvement of 0.4%-0.6% in oil extraction rate (OER), reduction of biogas emission by 70% and the output of an oil-free filtrate with no suspended solids that is discharged into waste water treatment ponds.

This, he said, is a big deal for palm oil millers as this green technology drastically reduces the high chemical oxygen demand and biological oxygen demand in waste water. This uplifts the entire state of the industry to be

much cleaner and environmentally friendly.

"Annually, an average mill that processes 300,000 tonnes of crop will be able to recover 1,462 tonnes oil or 0.5% OER, translating to an incremental revenue of RM3.8 million," Liew said after introducing AquaEco-SRORS.

Currently the average OER of Malaysia's palm oil stands at 20.65%. With AquaEco-SRORS, the entire industry's production would increase to 21.15% (with existing palm oil fruit produce).

There are about 450 palm oil mills operating in the country currently.

Having installed the system in two palm oil mills in the country - one each in Sandakan, Sabah, and Bota, Perak - the company is in talks with three to four mills to install the system, which costs RM5 million to RM12 million, depending on capacity and set-up.

Palm oil millers can expect a return on investment in less than three years, he added.

AquaEco took five years to develop and fine-tune the AquaEco-SRORS technology into a commercially viable and proven investment for palm oil millers.

AquaEco plans to introduce the system in Indonesia. AquaEco-SRORS is patented in Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia.