



NEWSFLASH: Unlocking the value of commercial oil palm data with *Plantation Intelligence*

November 15, 2017. Penang, Malaysia – Plantations routinely record vast amounts of data for oil palm blocks throughout their lifecycle. This information is usually stored and maintained for accounting and operational management. Ironically, little of this valuable data is analyzed for the strategic or tactical management of oil palm yield itself. *Plantation Intelligence* (PI) applies the concept of business intelligence in which existing data of a company can be analyzed to facilitate better decision-making. As shown in a recent article by Oberthür and colleagues in *The Planter*, PI is a mechanism that brings together insights from data analyses of agronomic understanding, including research, to provide guidance on plantation management. It is able to support strategic management plans to counter uncertainties that are usually managed intuitively by plantation managers.

For example, major operational costs for palm oil plantations are fertilizer and harvest. Fertilizer alone accounts for about half of a plantation's annual budget expenditures. However, how profitable exactly is it? Often, plantation managers may only have good guesses at this.

International Plant Nutrition Institute (IPNI) and collaborators worked with plantation managers to help make fertilizer application to oil palm both environmentally sustainable and financially profitable. Data from 18,000 hectares and 450 blocks were studied and soils were classified into management groups. Based on the analyses, average fertilizer productivity varied between years depending on rainfall and soil management group. The analyses by PI helped managers assess and manage risks with regard to the interaction of soil, climate and fertilizer. PI provided objective information about field responses to applied fertilizer on the same scale at which management is required to make decisions. Management guidance is always robust from a practical viewpoint.

PI used by the IPNI team offers oil palm plantations clear insights into a complex system. Managers who want to improve the performance of the plantation now have a tool to evaluate the variable effects of fertilizer over different years, which can be used to make better management decisions. This will lead to greater fertilizer use efficiency as well as increased profitability.

To know more, read *The Planter* 2017, 93(1094): 339-351.

– END –

About IPNI

The International Plant Nutrition Institute (IPNI) is a not-for-profit, science-based organization dedicated to the responsible management of plant nutrition for the benefit of people. Through cooperation and partnerships with respected institutions around the world, IPNI adds its strength to agronomic research, education, demonstrations, training, and other endeavors. Best management practices for nutrient stewardship encourage the concept of 4Rs - applying the right nutrient source, at the right rate, at the right time, and in the right place. To learn more about IPNI, please visit: www.ipni.net

Contact

Dr. Thomas Oberthür, IPNI Director of Southeast Asia Program
Email: toberthur@ipni.net