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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE PR2018-01

# NEWSFLASH: IPNI and Partners Set to Take Commercial Oil Palm Estates to the Next Level with Estate Scale Experiments on Fertilizer Response

January 16, 2018. Penang, Malaysia – Fertilizer is a major expense to oil palm plantations; understanding its far-reaching benefits could revolutionize commercial operations. While it is generally accepted that fertilizer application leads to sustained high productivity in oil palm, more can be known about the actual fertilizer responses to soil, climate, and harvest process factors occurring at the plantation block level within an estate. Managers often have to rely on intuitive decision-making when estimating fertilizer response, based on observations and minimal analysis of data.

Recognizing the potential and need for clarity in this area, IPNI Southeast Asia together with Canpotex Limited and Wilmar International have embarked on equipping commercial oil palm estates with a tool to generate more personalized fertilizer response estimates, using Estate Scale Experiments (ESE)*. With minimal additional costs, an ESE is easily adapted to a large production system and generates valuable intelligence that enables managers to see how fertilizers perform in their own plantations based on current operational conditions.

The return of investment in establishing ESE in plantations is manifold. Compared to the current practice of using extrapolations from fertilizer experiments, an ESE is able to provide more accurate results (block-specific) on actual yield responsiveness to fertilizer. This is supported by Plantation Intelligence**, an analytical tool developed by IPNI Southeast Asia, for data capture, analysis and interpretation of plantation operations.

Not only are managers able to make better decisions on fertilizer rates to be used within the plantation. With such detailed and specific insights, they now also have the evidence they need to quantitatively back up their intuition for the development of fertilizer budget scenarios that require senior management approval.

** Oberthur, T., H. Sugianto, R. Lim, S.P. Kam, C. Donough, S. Cook, S. Primananda, L.K. Wai, G. P. Guan and A. Musthofa. 2017. Estate Scale Experiments (ESE): Continuously Improving Response to Fertilizer in Large Commercial oil Palm Operations. Fertilizer Focus Nov/Dec 2017: 32 -36.*

*** Oberthur, T., C.R. Donough, S. Cook, H. Sugianto, Y.L. Lim, J. Cock, S.P. Kam and M.J. Fisher. 2017. Plantation Intelligence Applied Oil Palm Operations: Unlocking Value by Analysing Commercial Data. The Planter 93(1094): 339-351.*

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**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

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