

Sustainable Palm 2023

By Nadir Godrej

*The Oil Palm is very tropical
And no one thought it topical
To grow it in higher latitudes.
But we have changed attitudes.
Oil Palm requires constant rain.
In India this was cause for pain.
Some months are cold, some months are dry,
So many thought this would not fly.
But the secret is good irrigation.
The yields now meet expectation.
The seasonal swing is very wide.
And this for us is the downside.
But then the higher insolation
Is a partial consolation.
More male flowers are also found.
Fruit bunch development is very sound.
The summer yields are very high
And so Oil Palm is worth a try.
In fact compared to global yields
We reach one third in Soya fields.
But in Oil Palm, I must mention
That with the help of good extension
On small holdings our yields are fair
And with other lands they can compare.
And so Oil Palm can entice
Land from Mango, Coconut and Rice,
Which the farmers choose to spurn
For Oil Palm's good, sustained return.
In India we switch from crop to crop.
So forest area doesn't drop.*

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*We do not choose to slash and burn.
And if we cut we plant in turn.
With Oil Palm too we'll ensure
Good practices will endure.
It's the policy in our nation
To avoid peat lands and deforestation.
We'll practice water conservation
By using drip irrigation.
And controlling GHG emission
Will be our abiding mission.
As the Oil Palm steadily grows
In the early years everyone knows
Much carbon is captured in the wood.
In later years it's understood
The carbon capture would be less.
But some there would be, I'd like to stress.
We will always closely work
With our farmers and never shirk
In new knowledge acquisition.
Helping our farmers is our mission.
Our farmer practices we can assess
Thanks to our useful FMS.
The Farmer Management System's nice
It helps provide good advice.
Yields increase, the costs decline
The farmer practices are fine.
Both soil and leaf are analysed.
Good insights are realised.
Our farmers are then made aware.
As all these insights we carefully share.*

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*Another benefit of course
Is traceability to source.
On this much effort has been spent.
We have achieved 100 percent.
Of course to implement this scheme
We have our extension team.
150 is now their strength
And they will go to any length
To help the farmers in every way.
The yields improve day by day.
Good advice is always sought.
Sustainable practices are taught.
We always like to stay in touch
After all there is so much
That we can share through our app.
We can quickly fill a gap.
The users are clearly identified.
Tailor made solutions are supplied.
High yielding seedlings will be supplied
Many experiments will be tried.
At GAVL, I should mention
Sustainability covers every dimension.
And indeed it is our goal
To have robust internal control.
On geomapping we are bent.
We have achieved 90%.
Oil Palm indeed, can be sustainable
The goal for us is attainable.
After studying RSPO
As well as ISPO, MSPO*

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*For India IPOS was conceived
The Standard has been well received.
It is the standard that we use.
Last year's assessment made good news.
The many criteria that they fix
Amount to as many as 76!
Our rating we were told
Was 94% level gold!
But we of course will aspire
To go higher and higher!
Now Indian output's bound to grow
With the new policies we can show
Progress of a substantial kind
Till then of course you will find
Immense imports from SE Asia
From Indonesia and Malaysia.
But we should have no fears
In about 20 years
As our farmers get efficient
India will be self sufficient.
Thanks to innovation and constant toil
We won't need to import oil.*

This poem is penned by

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Chairman,

*Godrej Agrovet outlining GAVL's
initiatives for the overall
oil palm industry*