NEWS

Taiwan firm to do R&D in M'sia

Tony Peng showing the bio-organic fertiliser product

By ZAZALI MUSA
in Pasir Gudang, Johor

TAIWAN-based diversified multinational corporation, All Common Pte Ltd, will be moving the group's research and development (R&D) on agriculture from Taiwan to Malaysia next year or the following year.

Tony Peng Shih Hao, managing director of its Malaysian subsidiary All Common Industries Sdn Bhd, said RM15mil would be granted to set up the R&D centre and at least RM2mil would be used annually for R&D purposes.

He said the company had identified several sites in the Klang Valley for the setting up of the centre, including the Malaysian Technology Park in Bukit Jalil but it was still open to other sites within the area.

Peng said the Federal Territory and Selangor area was chosen as the company wanted the R & D activities to be centralised and the good air, land and sea transportation system.

"In fact, Singapore is also trying to attract us to set up our R & D centre there, but definitely Malaysia is a better choice in many ways," he told *Sun Business* recently.

Peng said the company's first bio-organic fertiliser plant in Malaysia at Johor's Pasir Gudang industrial estate opened in December 2000 with RM2mil investment, producing 15,000 tonnes of bio-organic fertiliser monthly.

The Johor plant is the only such large scale facility in Asean. The group has 7 other plants in Shanghai and Suzhou in China.

He said 90% of the total production catered to the Chinese, Taiwanese, Japanese and several European countries market and 10% for domestic consumption.

The relocation of the group's R & D activities to Malaysia would also be done simultaneously with the setting up of 5 new bio-organic fertiliser plants for RM250mil in the country within the next 2 or 3 years.

The R&D centre would have 30 employees, mostly experts from Taiwan.

All Cosmos to impart high-tech expertise here

TAIWAN-based diversified multinational corporation All Cosmos Pte Ltd, which has been in the country for the past eight years, seeks to be further involved in Malaysia's high-technology sector.

All Cosmos Group chairman Peng Sheng Ching said the company plans to increase its investment in the country, particularly in construction, bio-technology, agriculture and forestry.

"We have so far invested RM60 million in Malaysia during the last eight years.

"We want to bring in more expertise in high-tech areas in Malaysia, especially when the country will be part of Asean Free Trade Area," he told a news conference after the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between All Cosmos' subsidiary, Pembinaan Setia Arena Sdn Bhd (PSASB) and Alumni UKM Holdings Sdn Bhd (AUHSB), an economic arm of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) Alumni Association.

The signing ceremony, which took place in Bangi yesterday, was witnessed by National Economic Action Council executive director Datuk Mustapa Mohamed.

AUHSB is represented by managing director Nik Rosman Nik Daud and executive director Mohd Nadzmi Khafidz Mohd Sayuti, while PSASB by chairman Samsuddin Ahmad and Peng.

The MOU will see AUHSB and PSASB making joint efforts in various fields, especially construction and engineering.

Under education, AUHSB will send UKM students and experts in engineering and chemical fields to be trained by All Cosmos Group's subsidiaries.

The cooperation will also involve construction projects which will be carried out within UKM and outside.

As proof of All Cosmos' long-term commitment to the country, a RM1 million contribution was given to AUHSB for the setting up of UKM Alumni chair.

According to Samsuddin, initially a research and development unit will be established in the university, utilising the grant from the endownment chair.

Following the MOU, PSAB will also bring in delegations from Taiwan and China to explore business opportunities in Malaysia as well as forge closer business cooperation between both sides. — ***By Hamisah Hamid and Zuraimi Abdullah***

NEWS

All Cosmos to invest RM250mil to set up 5 bio-organic plants

By ZAZALI MUDA
in Pasir Gudang, Johor

TAIWAN-BASED All Cosmos Pte Ltd plans to invest RM250mil to set up five bio-organic fertiliser plants in Malaysia within the next two or three years through its local subsidiary, All Cosmos Industries Sdn Bhd.

This will turn Malaysia into a major bio-organic fertiliser hub, said managing director Tony Peng Shih Hao.

The company, which currently operates Malaysia's only bio-organic fertiliser plant at the Pasir Gudang Industrial Estate, would invest RM50mil in each new plant. Three of the plants would be in the peninsula, with the fourth and fifth in Sabah and Sarawak respectively.

"The existing plant is the only such large-scale facility in the Asean region and with five new plants in the pipeline, Malaysia is set to make its mark in the international fertiliser industry.

"Initially, we wanted to make Johor a leading regional producer of bio-organic fertiliser, but now the focus is turning Malaysia into a bio-organic fertiliser hub," Peng told *Star Business*.

The new plants would be designed and modelled after its first Malaysian plant, which opened in December 2008. They would each have a monthly production of 15,000 tonnes of bio-organic fertiliser, of which 90% would be exported.

"The three proposed plants in the peninsula will be in the southern, central and northern regions. Among the states identified are Johor, Negri Sembilan, Selangor, Perak and Kedah," Peng said.

He said All Cosmos Industries was likely to choose Johor for its second plant. It could either build a new plant elsewhere in Johor or expand the existing plant.

The RM50mil plant in Pasir Gudang produces 15,000 tonnes of bio-organic fertiliser monthly, the bulk of which is exported to China, Taiwan, Japan and several European countries. About 10% is sold in the local market.

Asked why the company needed to have five plants in different locations, Peng said it would be more economical when sourcing for raw materials as it could be done at the places where the plants operate.

He said the company sourced 90% of its raw materials in the form of organic matter such as oil palm, soybean waste, rice husks, fish pond debris, coco peat, coffee beans and seaweed extract locally.

Peng added that the group had developed a new technology using micro-organisms, which reduced the fermentation period of the organic waste from two years to two weeks, to encourage farmers to switch to bio-organic fertiliser.

He said Malaysia, which was noted for its strong agro-based economy before turning to industrialisation, should venture into high-scale farming and food production and aim to become a leading food producer in the region.

At the parent company level, All Cosmos is involved in research and development in Taiwan. Since 1987, it has set up – and now operates – seven bio-organic fertiliser plants in China, mainly in Shandong and Sudera.

TRIAL RUN ... Peng showing the fermentation process in progress at the Pasir Gudang plant.

All Cosmos to make Johor a bio-organic fertiliser hub

By Abaantika Ganguli
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JOHOR is all set to become a leading regional producer of bio-organic fertiliser with the initiation of a new plant by All Cosmos Industries Sdn Bhd, a member of the Taiwan-based Real Strong Limited Group.

The five-acre plant, with an investment of RM50 million, is located at the Pasir Gudang Industrial Estate.

The plant, which is on a trial run, is the only such large-scale facility in the Asean region.

In initial operations, the plant is expected to yield a monthly turnover of US$12 million (RM44.4 million).

Utilising machinery from Taiwan and Japan, this plant will be producing 10,000 tonnes of bio-organic fertiliser per month, of which 10 per cent will be for the local market, and the rest will be exported to China and Taiwan.

Real Strong, which is involved in property development projects in Taiwan, recently diversified into this arena with the initiation of an RM30 million seven-acre plant in Shanghai, China, in December 2005, with another RM50 million.

Both these plants, each with a capacity of 10,000 tonnes, will be supplying fertiliser to the local China market. The existing plant has an average monthly turnover of RM60 million.

Speaking to NST Business recently, All Cosmos's managing director Tony Peng said, "This hi-tech plant will be fully operational by November this year. Of the 10,000 tonnes of fertiliser produced, 60 per cent will be for the China market.

"Another 30 per cent of the products will be exported to Taiwan, while the remaining 10 per cent will be for the local market, helping us to garner an initial turnover of US$12 million per month.

"An in-house process has been developed by us to infuse eight kinds of micro-organisms and bacteria into these fertilisers, thus giving the soil the right nutrients and ensuring better-quality produce.

"Farmers do not use bio-organic fertilisers as the fermentation process usually takes several months to complete, but we have devised a method to complete it within two weeks.

"Next year, we will be moving the group's research and development (R&D) hub from Taiwan to here. We will be investing RM10 million in the R&D facility, which will be used annually for R&D purposes.

"Another RM10 million will be invested next year to acquire a five-acre land here, for warehousing and fermentation work.

"In tandem with increasing demand, we will be setting up another plant soon, possibly in Negri Sembilan, with an expected investment of between RM30 and RM40 million.

"Johor was chosen as the regional hub because its humid climate is ideal for the fermentation process. Also its excellent port facilities, and the steady supply of raw materials in the form of organic matter, such as oil palm and soybean waste, and fish pond debris, also proved attractive.

"Malaysia imports most of this fertiliser from Australia and Germany, and we see a big market potential here.

"The demand for fertiliser in Malaysia and Taiwan is about eight million tonnes each per annum, while northern China alone requires about 40 million tonnes every year — thus, our business holds a lot of promise."

The Real Strong group also has a RM15 million plant in Pasir Gudang, producing wood chips and

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All Cosmos to invest in R&D centre

Oleh Haryani Ngah

KEADAAN bentuk muka bumi di Malaysia yang berbukit bukau di samping mempunyai pelbagai jenis tanah bermasalah dengan kadar hujan tidak menentu menjadikan hasil sawit yang ditanam di kawasan berbatuan juga berkurangan.

Ketidaksuburan tanah berbatuan adalah disebabkan oleh kandungan nutrisinya yang rendah, manakala penggunaan baja kimia yang digunakan sebelum ini membabitkan kos yang tinggi.

Dalam menghadapi masalah ketidaksuburan itu, keperluan menghasilkan baja yang berkesesuaian adalah sangat penting dan hasil kajian penyelidik Lembaga Minyak Sawit Malaysia (MPOB) mendapati bahawa baja yang mengandungi nutrien tinggi adalah langkah yang perlu diambil.

Sehubungan itu, MPOB menjalankan satu formulasi dengan menghasilkan baja MPOB F4 iaitu baja campuran organik yang terbukti berkesan terutama dalam aktiviti penanaman kelapa sawit.

Keberkesanan MPOB F4 adalah berasaskan kepada keputusan percubaan penggunaan baja kelapa sawit MPOB yang dialih oleh MPOB selama lima tahun serta kajian inventif berbalung keperluan nutrien kelapa sawit yang tepat selama 20 tahun.

Baja MPOB F4 dihasilkan dengan formulasi 9-4-18-2-0.5. Baja ini berupaya memperbaiki struktur tanah berbukit, tanah laterik, tanah liat dan lain-lain.

Ketua Unit Agronomi dan Mekanisasi Ladang, Bahagian Penyelidikan Biologi, MPOB, Ahmad Tarmizi Mohammed berkata, sebelum ini MPOB menghasilkan baja F1, F2 dan F3 iaitu baja yang mempunyai campuran kimia.

"Uniknya baja F4 ialah kita menggunakan campuran organik dan kimia bertujuan untuk membantu mengatasi masalah tanah kurang subur seperti tanah bukit.

"Penghasilan baja ini turut menggunakan bahan zeolite yang berupaya mengawal pelepasan nutrien selaras dengan keperluan pokok kelapa sawit.

"Dengan zeolite juga, pengambilan Nitrogen (N) akan meningkat dan penerapan Nitrogen (N) ke udara akan berkurangan berikutan perubahan cuaca dan ini sekali gus dapat mengawal kos penanaman pokok kelapa sawit, malah ia mungkin lebih mesra," katanya.

Tarmizi berkata, baja MPOB F4 berupaya membekalkan nutrien seimbang iaitu selain mengandungi N, P dan K, baja MPOB F4 juga mengandungi magnesium, boron, kalsium, silikon, kuprum, besi, molibdenum, zink, sulfur, karbon, oksigen, hidrogen dan klorin.

Baja MPOB F4 berupaya membantu meningkatkan hasil pengeluaran pokok kelapa sawit melalui kesan secara terkawal hasil kombinasi elemen baja MPOB F4 dan ia juga berupaya memperbaiki pH tanah serta struktur tanah yang bermasalah.

Menerusi bahan organik serta zeolite yang ditambah dalam MPOB F4 dapat meningkatkan (Exchange Concentration) tanah dan dapat mengelakkan nutrien daripada terperangkap dalam tanah.

Penggunaan baja MPOB F4 juga dapat menyelesaikan tanah yang berbeza-beza di mana organik yang ada di dalamnya berupaya menarik kehadiran cacing tanah serta mikro-organisma berfaedah.

Ia sekali gus memudahkan risiko serangan penyakit dan serangga dan kehadiran cacing tanah dapat menyediakan persekitaran yang sesuai untuk kehidupan mikro-organisma berfaedah dan membantu mengoksigenkan tanah secaratu aktiviti semula jadi.

Dalam mengeluarkan Baja MPOB F4, MPOB dengan Sdn Bhd dan untuk tujuan itu satu Memorandum Persefahaman (MoU) telah dimeterai sempena Persidangan Kebangsaan Biofertilizers 2008 lalu.

Sementara itu, Pengarah Urusan, Syarikat All Cosmos Industries Sdn Bhd, Dato' Tony Peng berkata, syarikat itu ditubuhkan pada 2001 di Pasir Gudang, Johor dan turut memperoleh kelulusan ISO:9001 itu adalah pengeluar sekunder baja itu.

"Syarikat ini bermatlamat mempromosikan konsep pertanian hijau di Malaysia dengan mengitar semula bahan buangan dan seterusnya menjadikan bahan berkesan itu sebagai baja organik."

"Baja campuran organik ini banyak diperlukan di kawasan berbukit bukau seperti di Pahang, Terengganu, Negeri Sembilan, dan di Sarawak membabitkan kawasan Bintulu dan Miri," katanya.

Beliau berkata, dengan penghasilan baja ini dapat membantu pekebun kecil mendapatkan baja yang betul dengan harga yang berpatutan.

Penggunaan baja MPOB F4 dapat mengurangkan perbelanjaan penanam sawit dan sekali gus pulangan yang lebih kepada mereka.

Dengan baja MPOB F4 juga, penanam sawit bukan saja dapat mengurangkan kos pembajaan sebaliknya berupaya meningkatkan produktiviti hasil buah tandan segar (BTS) kebun mereka.

PENGARAH Urusan Syarikat All Cosmos Sdn Bhd, Dato' Tony Peng memegang sampel baja MPOB F4 semasa ditemu bual di pejabatnya baru-baru ini.

Ahmad Tarmizi Muhamad

BUTIRAN Baja Organik MPOB F4 menggunakan bahan zeolite yang berupaya mengawal pelepasan nutrien seiring dengan keperluan pokok kelapa sawit.