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This monthly news bulletin is produced by Sarawak Timber Association (STA) to disseminate information to our counterparts on training, research and other relevant areas.

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Seminar on the Properties and Processing of *Acacia mangium*

A seminar on Basic and Working Properties of Planted *Acacia mangium* was jointly organised by Sarawak Forestry Corporation (SFC) and Sarawak Timber Association (STA) on 19 November 2013 at Wisma STA in Kuching. The papers presented in this Seminar are the second year's output of a three-year research project entitled "Basic and Working Properties of Juvenile *Acacia mangium* Timber for Products Development in Sarawak", undertaken by SFC.

The half-day seminar was attended by approximately eighty (80) participants from major forestry stakeholders i.e. the Ministry of Resource Planning & Environment (MRPE), Forestry Department Sarawak (FDS), Sarawak Timber Industry Development Corporation (STIDC), SFC, government linked company namely Sarawak Planted Forest Sdn Bhd, and STA members.

Ms Lucy Chong, the Acting Deputy General Manager of Applied Forest Science and Industry Development (AFSID) of SFC, in her opening remarks informed that this seminar was organised with the objective to disseminate the research findings of its second year study and thereafter to discuss and gather feedback/inputs from all stakeholders for further improvements to the on-going research project.

The Seminar was divided into two (2) sessions where a total of nine (9) papers were presented by speakers from AFSID. The papers presented

were as follows:

- (i) *Wood Anatomy and Quality* by Mr Yang Min Chin
- (ii) *Physical and Mechanical Properties* by Dr Alik Duju
- (iii) *Chemical Composition* by Ms Siti Hanim Sahari
- (iv) *Accelerated Durability Assessment* by Mr John Sammy
- (v) *Treatment Properties* by Mr Lai Jiew Kok
- (vi) *Drying Properties* by Mr Tan Jui Liah
- (vii) *Machining Properties: Planing Characteristics* by Mr Teng Xin Yao
- (viii) *Finger-jointing and Bonding Properties* by Mr Ting King Boh
- (ix) *Wood Colors* by Mr Willie Chin

Dr Peter Kho in his closing remarks, informed all participants of the seminar that *Acacia* species being the major species planted in Sarawak will be an important source of raw material in the near future and he hoped that the results presented in this seminar can provide useful information to the forest plantation industry in Sarawak which could determine the end usage of this resource. He added that forest plantation industry in Sarawak is still in its developing stage and he hopes to see more of such research being conducted on other species.

The PEFC Stakeholder Dialogue 2013

The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) Stakeholder Dialogue 2013: Linking Sustainable Forest Product Supply Chains through Asia was held in conjunction with the PEFC Forest Certification Week 2013 from 14 to 15 November 2013, at the Istana Hotel, Kuala Lumpur. The Dialogue was jointly organised by PEFC and Malaysian Timber certification Council (MTCC) to gather all stakeholders across the forest sector landscape to take stock and identify opportunities to catalyse the uptake of sustainable practices within the region. Approximately three hundred (300) participants from Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), companies, industry associations, inter-governmental organisations, national certification systems and government attended this dialogue.

In the joint welcoming address, Mr William Street Jr, Chairman of PEFC mentioned that PEFC is the world's largest forest certification system in promoting Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) through third-party certification and PEFC works by endorsing national forest certification systems including Malaysian Timber Certification Scheme (MTCS) which was developed through multi-stakeholder processes and tailored to local priorities and conditions. Dato' Dr Freezailah B Che Yeom, Chairman of MTCC added that it is important to ensure that the forests in Asia are managed in sustainable manner for our future generations and the consultation process with all stakeholders needs to be done by respecting the norms and cultures in a country towards a successful SFM implementation.

Mr Emmanuel Ze Meka, Executive Director of International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO) and Mr Ben Gunneberg, Secretary General, PEFC International shared their views on regional perspectives of forest resources, sector development and sustainability trends. Mr Emmanuel Ze Meka mentioned that besides forest certification, producing country also needs to fulfill the market requirements such as the Lacey Act, the European Union Timber Regulation and the Australian Illegal logging

Prohibition Act. ITTO will continue to play a significant role in promoting SFM in tropical forests through forums, information sharing, funding and ITTO Guidelines. Mr Ben Gunneberg assured the participants of the Dialogue that PEFC will consider all types of studies and Guidelines provided by ITTO and NGOs to enhance confidence levels among the consumers with regard to SFM.

During the Dialogue, producers, manufacturers, traders across the chain of custody shared their experiences on forest certification. The Dialogue noted that progresses on forest certification are more driven by the market demands on certified timber and the premium imposed on these timbers. Participants of the Dialogue urged PEFC to carry out more awareness programme on forest certification especially for small farmers and entrepreneurs. Several international organisations such as the European Forest Institute, Building and Woodworkers International as well as New Forests Asia also shared their views on ways to influence the forestry industry to go for sustainability practices such as the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade-Voluntary Partnership Agreements (FLEGT-VPA), green building, providing capacity building and knowledge sharing on the benefits of certification.

Mr Yong Teng Koon, MTCC mentioned that the MTCC was established in 1998 as an independent organisation to develop and operate a voluntary national scheme in Malaysia, which is known as the Malaysian Timber Certification Schemes (MTCS). Currently more than 4.65 million ha or 32% of the total Permanent Reserved Forest (PRFs) in Malaysia are PEFC-certified under the MTCS and around 263 companies which are Chain of Custody certified.

The organisers also hosted the following side events during the Dialogue to enable more in-depth discussion amongst participants. More information on PEFC can be found in PEFC portal at <http://www.pefc.org>



Did you know that.....

In Asia, the prices and volumes of timber have not changed much in recent months and the market is expected to be steady for the rest of 2013. The decline of the European market has continued. The demand in the Middle East has been moderate to good. Plywood prices have risen in all markets. China is the largest supplier, but for example in the Middle East there is growing demand for the high quality plywood from Malaysia and Indonesia. Meranti has regained ground in Europe, especially in Germany where it is used in timber window manufacturing. There have been new sales initiatives and realistic prices for meranti and the supply of sapele has been tight. In Japan, some improvements have been seen in house construction but very slow growth is expected in the economy in 2014.

Source: 19 October 2013, TTJ Timber Trades Journal

Did you also know that....

A Minister in the Sarawak Chief Minister's Office recently announced plans to gazette 20 more parks and nature reserves in the state to protect the state's diverse biological resources. This would bring the state closer to reaching its target of setting aside a million hectares of forests, out of total land area of 12.4 million hectares, as totally protected areas.



Source: ITTO Report dated 1 - 15 Nov 13

Conference on Forestry and Forest Products Research 2013

The Conference on Forestry and Forest Products Research (CFFPR) 2013 with the theme "Forestry Research, Development and Commercialisation (R, D & C): Meeting National and Global Needs" co-organised by the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) and the Forestry Department Peninsular Malaysia (FDPM) was held from on 11 to 12 November 2013 at Sunway Putra Hotel in Kuala Lumpur.

This two-day Conference being the eleventh (11th) in the series of CFFPR, was attended by over 350 participants from Government agencies, higher education institutions, forestry-related research institutions, forestry-related industries and other stakeholders in forestry. The main aim of CFFPR is for researchers from these two institutions to disseminate their latest research findings and for other forestry stakeholders to share their ideas and experiences on forestry and forests products research, as well as to strengthen networking.

Dato' Dr Abdul Latif Mohmod, the Director-General of FRIM in his welcoming remarks highlighted that in today's challenging economic environment, there is a need to produce research outcome that are relevant and applicable to the nation's development aspirations as well as for commercialisation, besides conducting excellent scientific research and publishing scientific articles.

The Conference was officially launched by the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE), Datuk Seri G Palanivel. In his opening remarks, he said that research plays an important role in ensuring the sustainable production of wood supply, a well managed natural resources and protection of forests through the discovery of new knowledge and tools. FRIM also launched their latest publication entitled "FRIM Warisan Kebangsaan" during the opening ceremony.

Dato' Professor Dr Hj Abdul Rahman Hj Abdul

Rahim, the Director-General of FDPM in his keynote address entitled "The Future of Forest Management in Malaysia: Meeting National and Global Needs" highlighted that the forests of Malaysia will continue to contribute to the country's socio-economic development provided the forest resource is managed in a sustainable way and addressed that the undertaking of SFM will continue to support the aim in ensuring our forests are managed in a sustainable way, hence fulfilling the requirements on sustainable development.

A total of fifty four (54) research papers were presented by researchers during the Conference, which were conducted in three (3) parallel sessions entitled "Forest and Environment", "Wood and Non-Wood Resources for Future Wood-Based Industries" and "Biotechnology and Natural Products".

The first session which entitled "Forest and Environment" covered the research conducted on forest biodiversity and ecosystem services; managing changed forest; forest environment and climate change; and valuation of ecosystem services. The second session entitled "Wood and Non-Wood Resources for Future Wood-Based Industries" covered research on wood and non-wood resources; green products for better future; bio-composite products; and new products development. The third session entitled "Biotechnology and Natural Products" covered research related to natural products; forest and people; forestry biotechnology; and resources for the future.

The Conference ended with the presentation by Dato' Dr Abdul Latif Mohmod on the 12-point resolutions and a prize presentation ceremony to the top three winners for the best poster presentation



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Briefing on the Financial Incentive Scheme and Roadshow on the Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Science (Sustainable Tropical Forest Management)

STA Training Sdn Bhd (STAT), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Sarawak Timber Association (STA) held a series of briefings and roadshow in Miri at Grand Palace Hotel, Bintulu at Kemena Hotel and Sibu at RH Hotel on 13, 14 and 15 November 2013 respectively. Participants who attended the briefings and roadshow comprised training coordinators and forest managers.

The objective of the briefings was to update the participants on the financial incentives schemes available to Member Companies of STA for carrying out skills training required under Section 54B of the Forests Ordinance, which is also used to defray the cost of training. Participants were also briefed on the guidelines for nominating candidates for training, assessment and re-assessment as well as the ways to conduct re-assessment.

The incentive scheme is based on first-come first-serve basis until the allocated amount is fully utilised. This fund is only applicable to Sarawakian workmen who have been trained after 31 March 2013 on the following skills sets:

- i. Certificate in Tree Felling (Natural Forests),
- ii. Certificate in Log Extraction (Tractor),
- iii. Certificate in Log Loading (Front-tyred Front-end Loader),
- iv. Certificate in Clear-fell Site Preparation, and
- v. Certificate in Mechanical Site Preparation (Excavator)

At the same time, the roadshow for the recruitment of students for the 4th Cohort of the Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Science (Sustainable Tropical Forest Management) were also held at the same locations. Associate Professor Dr Hugh Bigsby from Lincoln University, Christchurch, New Zealand introduced the background and the need for such training programme which is aimed at the supervisory and management levels. Associate Professor Dr Hugh Bigsby also explained the terms of the course structure, delivery of material and method of study.