

By Dennis Wong

KUCHING: Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) will be conducting an 18-month study on Shell (Middle Distillate Synthesis) MDS bio-sludge as a soil conditioner.

The RM500,000 partnership study is to have a thorough survey on the opportunities and the benefits of bio-sludge on various horticultural applications," said Unimas Associate Professor Dr. Kopli Bujang to a press conference after the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between Unimas Centre of Technology Transfer and Consultancy (CTTC) and Shell MDS (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd at its campus yesterday.

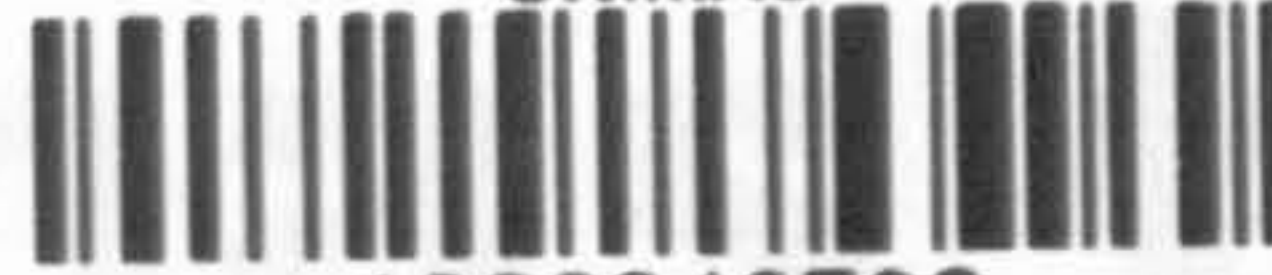
Bio-sludge is a mixture of biomass, water and soot, where the method of composting is by a technology called turned windrow.

"The compost will be applied inside an experimental site in Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM),

Unimas study bio-sludge as soil conditioner

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Bintulu Campus."

In 1993-94, Unimas did an early exploration study in UPM, Bintulu Campus, which was also led by Dr. Kopli.

"During that time, our findings have found that bio-sludge can encourage plant growth and now we will do a thorough study on a larger scale," he added.

He also mentioned that they had only use some 400 to 500kg of bio-sludge at that time.

"We only did a quoted trial where we mixed soil with the composted bio-sludge for three to four weeks."

"Now we are looking at a larger piece of land, about half to one acre of land which we are going to plough with about

seven to nine tones of composted bio-sludge," he added.

Dr. Kopli also disclosed that, they were also going to utilise another piece of land nearby, which would be ploughed with normal top soil for comparison of results.

Earlier, during the presentation, Shell MDS Managing Director, Heng Hock Cheng said the partnership is a win-win situation.

"This joint study between Unimas and Shell MDS (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd to turn the bio-sludge into useful by-products in an environmentally sustainable manner is fully in line with our commitment to ensure the balance of social, economic and

environmental benefits from the company's activity," said Heng.

Shell MDS (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, a joint-venture company formed by Shell, Diamond Gas Holding, Sarawak State and PETRONAS in 1986, owns and operates the Shell Middle Distillate Synthesis plant in Bintulu.

Shell MDS products are extremely pure and free from sulphur and aromatics, and the ultra-clean fuels produced surpass the world's toughest environmental standards.

Unimas CTTC was represented by Dr. Kopli, while Shell MDS (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd. was represented by Heng.

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