



Bumitama Agri Ltd

10 Anson Road #11-19

International Plaza, Singapore 079903

Tel : +65 6222 1332

Fax : +65 6222 1336

NEWS RELEASE

Reorganised, Bigger and Better Against the Fires

Jakarta, 26 August 2020 – Responsible palm oil production requires addressing of the issues of deforestation, climate change and social injustice; with fires being one of the common threads. Contra-productive to our sustainability endeavours, fires destroy the crops and release large amounts of CO₂ and other pollutants into atmosphere, causing respiratory illnesses and fuelling global warming. To contain fires more comprehensively, Bumitama set out to identify the gaps in its processes and implement the necessary changes through a holistic fire prevention and fire management programme.



Reflecting on the impact and gaps of the last year, Bumitama had completely reorganised the operational structure of the fire management team with the appointment of a fire prevention specialist. To mention some of the changes; the fire fighting teams have been positioned at both the estate and central command level in order to improve their agility and response time, sharing of information and patrolling is conducted regularly with the various local offices and water availability has been significantly improved through additional construction of ponds, wells and water gates. On top of that, all new and existing staff was trained/re-trained in partnership with the Indonesian specialists from *Manggala Agni*. Please refer to the videos of the [training process](#) and [interview of our team specialist](#) for more information.



Bumitama strives to prevent fires, predict fires and react quickly to any emerged fires, respectively. To mitigate the risk of ignition, we have removed arid vegetation from selected fire prone lands while our teams make use of modern technologies such as intelligent weather stations, UAVs and daily satellite imagery to be able to detect hotspots earlier and to put out any fires faster.

The most frequent cause of fires occurring in our concessions has been accounted to the activities of the communities in land preparation. Although legally allowed for land of up to 2 hectares and considered to be cheaper than conventional methods, this method carries negative repercussions as it wipes off the beneficial micro flora and fauna from the soil, while often spreading out of control and impact other lands, including existing plantations or surrounding forests.



Recognising the importance of addressing this issue, Bumitama decided to change the approach of working with the community and incentivising the *Desa Bebas Api* and *Masyarakat Peduli Api* programme, bringing focus to villages in areas with reoccurring hotspots. Complementary to this programme, we began to train the local community groups on alternative methods of land preparation that can provide better results without burning. Gradually shifting the community habits away from traditional land preparation will be a long process but addressing this issue in a holistic way is necessary. Given that, we have decided to include the programme as part of our community alternative livelihood and social forestry programmes.



If the issue of annual fires is to be addressed, the solution will have to be forged in a participatory way inclusive of our local communities and government institutions. Sustainably managed land, including community land has proven to have lower fire risk than other land. Bumitama will be looking to involve wider stakeholder base and implement holistic and long-lasting solutions in fire prevention that can provide safe and healthy environment for everyone.

For further information, please email:

Christina Lim

Email: clim@bumitama-agri.com

Lim Sian Choo

Email: lim.sian.choo@bumitama-agri.com

Glenn Ho

Email: glenn.ho@bumitama-agri.com
