

SUSTAINABLE FARMING

Digitisation can help agricultural sector reap better gains

PALM oil can be found in a variety of products like soaps, cosmetics and biscuits. It is an important commodity in Southeast Asia, particularly in Malaysia.

Back in 2018, Malaysia produced over 19.5 million tonnes of crude oil palm from a planted area of 5.8 million hectares. The total export of palm oil and palm-based products was 25.2 million tonnes, which generated export earnings of RM67.5 billion.

But palm oil has encountered a lot of negative headwinds regarding how its farming practices have resulted in deforestation.

Expanding plantations lead to deforestation, which is a great threat to biodiversity in Malaysia. The need of the hour is sustainability.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad believes strongly in Malaysia's commitment to sustainable development and reiterated at the Malaysia Sustainable Development Goals Summit in 2019 that it will remain central to the government's policies and strategies.

The best way to ensure and maintain sustainability practices in agriculture is through digitisation. Digital management of agriculture helps plantations become more efficient, easy to supervise and less dependent on manual labour.

When technologies are incorporated across the value chain, productivity increases over the various stages of growth and terrain.

FarmERP, a future-ready agricultural ERP platform, has always had a sustainable framework and is aligned with the Sus-



New technology can help farmers manage their crops and land better.

tainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

The aims:

SUSTAINABLE RICE DEVELOPMENT: Using climate-resilient intelligence, we can help farmers and agricultural stakeholders utilise the right amount of water and, in the long run, conserve water as well as grow rice without depleting the soil.

ZERO HUNGER: The goal is to rethink how we grow, share and consume food because, if done right, agriculture, forestry and fisheries will be able to provide nutritious food for all. Along with this, it will be able to generate decent incomes while supporting and sustaining people-centred rural development and environ-

ment protection.

CLIMATE ACTION: Climate change is affecting the lives of every individual, no matter the country or continent they are from. With dramatic weather patterns, rising sea levels and weather-related catastrophes becoming more extreme, it has become common knowledge that greenhouse gas emissions are now at its highest level in history. This affects agriculture and farmers the most.

In the Malaysian market, a digital agriculture management platform should be able to increase productivity, profitability and sustainability of the plantation companies and agricultural stakeholders.

The aim should be to digitise processes and offer climate-

smart advisory that can be customised according to requirements.

Currently, big plantation companies manage crops by relying on legacy systems like SAP, Microsoft Dynamics, and Oracle but they aren't specialised in the agricultural sector. This results in dependence on various devices and software.

With the inclusion of an advanced ERP platform, a company should be able to easily integrate with their existing legacy systems, creating a smooth and streamlined process.

An ERP platform should be able to record data from the tree level, which will help agriculture stakeholders make better decisions and manage plantations more

professionally.

They should then be able to map out the land, tree and farm infrastructure through GeoTagging. Through GeoTagging every tree and capturing their coordinates, the company will be able to maintain important tree-wise data.

Plantations are remotely located and cover a huge area — areas with little to no Internet connectivity.

A software platform with a native mobile application will allow field executives, supervisors or agricultural engineers to visit the farm and record data without relying on connectivity. The observations recorded can then be sent to an agronomist who would advise on what action needs to be taken based on the crop growth data.

Apart from agricultural data, the agriculture platform also helps in finance and accounting. With the help of this software platform and the data it captures, the company can easily create a crop and plot-wise profit and loss account.

A leading smart agriculture management ERP software platform to leverage the power of smart agriculture is necessary to achieve higher efficiency, higher yields, higher profitability and complete traceability.

Through digitisation, climate risks can be mitigated and with the help of forecast data, the profitability of Malaysian agriculture will also increase.

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