

## Presentation

The National Federation of Oil Palm Growers – Fedepalma, hereby delivers the Proceedings of the 17th International Oil Palm Conference, under the title of “Oil Palm: a Source of Opportunities, Progress, and Development”, which was held at the Cartagena de Indias Convention Center, Colombia, between the 25th and the 28th of September, 2012.

This event, which is held every three years, had the presence of 73 keynote speakers, of which 68 were foreigners and 5 national. For the first time, it exceeded 2,000 attendees, from 32 countries, including Colombia. There was the presence of 615 foreigners, 439 of them coming from various American countries, which consolidates this conference as the continental reference for oil palm.

The Conference, as in previous occasions, had a plenary session that addressed issues of general interest, including the sustainability of the oil palm industry in different areas, the progress in health and sanitary research, the vision of multilateral banking on the future of the activity, and global market and price situation and forecasts. Subsequently, three specialized modules were carried out, addressing innovations in oil palm cultivation, the optimization and novelties in processes, uses and products, and the new trends and opportunities in the oils and fats market. These conferences were all presented by outstanding professionals on a worldwide scale on each of the topics they addressed, and we herein publish those that were authorized by their authors.

The first module covered themes related to integrated pest and disease management, seed improvement and production, integrated management of soils, water and nutrition, and progress in the cultivation and management of the OxG inter-specific hybrid.

The second module addressed the latest progress in palm oil mill technologies, the production of bioenergy and its sustainability in the oil palm

agroindustry, and the alternatives for managing and handling solid and liquid biomass in palm oil mills.

For its part, the third module addressed the following topics, among others: world market trends for oilseeds; market opportunities for palm oils; oil palm in America and competitiveness of the oil palm agroindustry; innovation and convergence for competitiveness in the productive chains; biodiesel and energy development of oil palm crops; and the palm and its social commitment.

Coinciding with the Conference, Expopalma 2012 was held at the Cartagena de Indias Convention Center, where 89 national and foreign exhibitors showcased samples of their products and services. The attendees had the opportunity to see field and fruit processing machinery, irrigation equipment, inputs for the various stages of cultivation, banking, information and academic services, among others.

In the days prior to the Conference, technical visits were performed in order to show the progress in the development of inclusive businesses in palm, the results of the technologies applied for increases in productivity and sanitation management, good agricultural practices to achieve high yield crops, new technologies for the extraction of palm oil, and the continuous production of biodiesel from palm oil. The Second Symposium on Human Health and Nutrition was also held, organized by Fedepalma and Cenipalma, which addressed the importance of fats in the diet and the nutritional benefits of high oleic oil.

Once the Conference ended, the International Seminar on plant breeding for resistance to oil palm diseases was held.

With the publication of the proceedings, we seek to make a contribution so that these presentations become a document for permanent access and a tool for work and analysis, as well as a support document for decision-making by the actors related with or interested in the oil palm agro-industry.

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