

International Conference on Agricultural Wastes

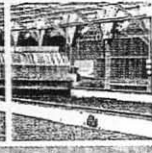
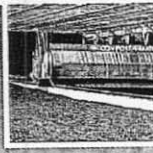
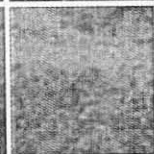
Conference Proceeding

March 21-23, 2006 • Putrajaya Marriott Hotel, Malaysia

Turning Wastes to Wealth

Editors

Wan Nor/Azmin Sulaiman • Rainer Stegmann
Mohd Ali Hassan • Ina Koerner • Nico Ogink
Azharul Sham Hamsah • Jan Huijsmans
Henrich Roeper • Chee Thiam Meng



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Chicken Manure
Treatment and Application

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Agricultural Wastes and Role of Environmental Law in Malaysia

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Abstract

The growth of agricultural sector and its significance in the overall economic development in Malaysia is becoming more evident especially in the recent years. However, agricultural practices inevitably cause various environmental issues, from the problem of land degradation to the discharge of agricultural wastes into the environment. Legal instrument has been known to be an important tool in dealing with environmental pollutants, including that of agricultural wastes. In Malaysia, Environmental Quality Act 1974 is considered to be the most comprehensive legislation pertaining to the environment, covering various aspects of environmental pollutants, and being applied to the whole of the country. However, while in reality agricultural wastes have been a relatively main component of environmental pollutants in Malaysia, this Act does not contain any specific provision on 'agricultural wastes' even though there exist several regulations under the Act pertaining to 'wastes' in general. Issues presented in this paper are possible legal factors responsible for a more effective control of agricultural wastes from the environmental point of view, and the possibilities that a more sustainable control of agricultural wastes by turning them into secondary raw materials is viable through the application of environmental law in Malaysia. For this purpose, this paper seeks to provide an overview of the existing provisions under the Environmental Act 1974 and other legislations relevant to the issue in question, to discuss limitations of the law and to highlight possible legal solution under the Malaysian environmental law towards a more sustainable regulation of agricultural wastes in the country.

Keywords: Agricultural wastes, Pollution, Environmental law

Introduction

In the Malaysian context, agriculture is an important sector since the pre-colonial period and it was the leading sector at the time of Malaysian independence in 1957. Before the industrialization process, Malaysian economy was largely based on agriculture and it has been the mainstay of the rural development. After independence, the Malaysian government realized that there were needs to rapidly advance the agricultural sector as stated in the first Malaysia Plan (1966-1970). Although at present Malaysia is heading towards becoming an industrial nation, agriculture still remains a major economic activity for the country. At present, the main agricultural components in Malaysia are food crops, commodity crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry. The food sub-sector include paddy, vegetables, fruits, meat (poultry, pork, mutton and beef) and fish while the main industrial crops are palm oil, rubber, cocoa and forestry products. In general, the agricultural sector in Malaysia is still geared towards the production of export commodities. This country is currently the world's leading