

Better to rear cattle in oil palm estates

AT current land prices, planting pasture grass and maintaining it (from ever encroaching weeds and *belukar*) for cattle grazing is not an economically feasible proposition unlike in the natural grassland of New Zealand, the prairies of North America, the pampas of South America, the steppes of Russia and the veld of South Africa.

It makes economic sense to integrate cattle rearing with the many oil palm plantations in the country.

Unlike rubber plantations where there is hardly any grass growing between rows of mature rubber trees, due to the thick leafy canopy almost completely cutting off direct sunlight reaching the ground, there is sufficient grass in between rows of mature oil palms for cattle to graze. Mature palm fronds that are periodically cut to facilitate harvesting of fruit bunches and palm kernel cake (after extraction of oil) can be processed into pellets for supplemental feeding of cattle to fatten them.

Deriving two sources of income (one from palm oil and one from cattle) from the same land optimises land usage and enhances profitability.

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