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Research institute makes non-food based biodiesel

KUALALUMPUR: The Forestry Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) has developed biodiesel from alternative and non-food based resources such as oil from jatropha and the forest trees bintangor laut and perah as well as industrial wastes.

FRIM director-general Datuk Dr Abd Latif Mohmod said its biodiesel has low fatty acid content and releases far less carbon dioxide (CO₂) than palm oil biodiesel, plus its combustion gives off a sweet smell.

The biodiesel was developed by FRIM's Bioenergy Programme scientists working with Xtra Tech Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of the FMBioSis project, with commercialisation funds from

the Malaysian Technology Development Corporation.

Abd Latif said using a litre of diesel will release 2.67kg of CO₂ to the Earth's atmosphere.

"In the short term FRIM plans to use B5 biodiesel blend for diesel-engined vehicles and an estimated 120,000 litres of B5 biodiesel blend a year will be used at FRIM.

"This will save nearly 6,000 litres of fossil diesel fuel and reduce CO₂ emissions by four per cent or 16,000 tons of CO₂ a year," he told reporters after the launch of FRIM's biodiesel use programme at its headquarters here yesterday by Forestry Research and Development Board chairman Nancy Shukri.

FRIM established a pilot plant for producing biodiesel blend

from jatropha and bintangor oil and industrial effluents in December 2010 with a capacity of 20,000 litres a month.

He said FRIM has also started an experimental jatropha farm on the poor 'bris' (sandy) soil at its field research station in Setiu, Terengganu.

"Other forest species will also be explored as part of efforts to develop areas with poor soil and produce the raw materials for environmentally-friendly biodiesel," he added.

FRIM's tests on its tractors, four-wheel drive vehicles and buses show encouraging performance from its biodiesel, with low black smoke emissions and no pollution, he added.

—Bernama