Jejak Akademia

CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE AND FIELDTRIP IN CAMBODIA

By

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The Third International Sustainable Agricultural Intensification and Nutrition Conference (SAIN3) was held on June 27-28, 2022 at the Angkor Paradise Hotel in Siem Reap. The conference venue was very well organised and suitable for the event in the heart of Siem Reap city. The SAIN3 conference was jointly organised by CE SAIN – Royal University of Agriculture, Cambodia with support from various organisations such as FEED THE FUTURE, USAID, Kansas State University American Soybean Society (ASA), World initiative for soy in human health (WISHH) and Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA). Within two days, the conference was organised into a total of 6 sessions, including 6 general plenary presentations by 6 invited speakers, three parallel sessions and one poster presentation. The conference was attended by about 100 participants from eight countries. The aim of the conference was to provide a platform for researchers, students and professionals to learn about and discuss sustainable agricultural intensification and nutrition while addressing the importance of food security.

The main theme of the conference was sustainable agricultural practises. One of the key takeaways from this conference was the conservation agriculture approach (CA), which appears to be successful in Cambodia. Conservation agriculture (CA) is a cropping system that can prevent the loss of arable land while regenerating degraded land. It promotes the maintenance of permanent land cover, minimal soil disturbance, and crop diversification. It promotes biodiversity and natural biological processes above and below the soil surface that contribute to more efficient water and nutrient use and improved and sustainable crop production. The principles are universally applicable to all agricultural landscapes and land uses with locally adapted practises. Soil interventions, such as mechanical tillage, are reduced to an absolute minimum or avoided, and external inputs, such as agrochemicals and plant nutrients of mineral or organic origin, are used optimally and in a manner and quantity that does not interfere with or disrupt biological processes.

Photo 1 and 2:
Azrimi during the conference presentation session

Since my research focuses on the use of agricultural wastes, i.e. empty fruit stalks of oil palm, for mushroom cultivation, it was classified in the Horticulture, Cover Crops and Conservation Agriculture Science Institute (CASI) sections. The submitted paper was classified in the last session of the conference.

In this session, my research paper titled "Recycling of oil palm empty fruit bunch (EFB) fibres based on spent mushroom compost for expanded cultivation of Volvariella volvacea (Bull)" was presented as the fifth paper. In general, the paper discussed about the utilization of spent mushroom compost (SMC) from *Volvariella volvacea* cultivation for second mushroom growing. The main idea of the paper was to highlight the potential of SMC as substrate or co-substrate for mushroom cultivation. It received good feedback from academic researchers and experts from about 20 participants. Some of the questions were really interesting and should be taken up by other experts as additional suggestions. The event provided an excellent opportunity to meet, interact, and share insights and views during the conference sessions, coffee breaks, and during the conference report. As a result, I met a number of academics and professionals from different countries who share similar research interests. I also learned a lot about conservation agriculture practises in Cambodia during the lectures and discussions.

From June 29 to July 1, I have participated the workshop at three different locations in Cambodia: CESAIN Agricultural Technology Park, Kampong Thom, Conservation Agriculture Paddy Field in Stoeng Chinit, Kampong Cham, Bos Knor Field Research Station, and Royal University of Agriculture in Phnom Penh. The field trip and workshop were very enlightening for everyone, especially to enhance the knowledge of conservation agriculture through practical application. In the last event, we were taken to the office of CE SAIN in Royal University of Agriculture in Cambodia. We had a fruitful discussion with Dr. Manny Reyes and the director of CESAIN, Dr. Lydia Hok. I look forward to the concrete activities in Malaysia, especially with regard to the dissemination of conservation agriculture. I would like to thank SEARCA for the opportunity and support to participate in this conference and workshop. My appreciation also goes to my supervisory committee led by Dr. Sumaiyah Abdullah and others for guiding the research work. Finally, special thanks to my host
institution UiTM Negeri Sembilan for allowing me to participate.

Photo 3. Azrimi together with the SEARCA delegates

Photo 4, 5 and 6. Great experience gained