



Kurt G. Berger

Lifetime Award for Excellent Services to the Palm Oil Industry Recipient

His involvement in palm oil dates back to his time in the London research laboratories of a large food manufacturer. In 1953, after the British food industry was liberated from the shackles of the wartime Food Ministry control, Berger and his colleagues started to experiment with palm oil, which was then a new ingredient to them. It was the beginning of a long-term and beneficial career for Berger when they found that palm oil was functional and economic in a number of their products.

Berger was at one time attached to the Palm Oil Research Institute Malaysia (PORIM – now known as Malaysian Palm Oil Board, MPOB). The desire to share his knowledge on basic palm oil technology led him to write a series of articles in the 'Global Oils & Fats Business Magazine'. One of the objectives were to describe the parameters used to judge the quality of the product and the measures needed to ensure its good arrival at the user and to provide information on how it is used in food production around the world; giving some insight into the fascinating scientific aspect of food.

Berger contributed significantly to the start of PORIM which lasted for about eight years. During the period, he was involved in the drafting of research programmes with the technical committee of the industry. Earlier, he was involved in the preliminary chemical research conducted by the authority in 1979, the results of which were later presented at a palm oil conference organised by the Incorporated Society of Planters.

Besides heading the Technical Advisory Service staff recruitment exercise in 1980, Berger was also commissioned to investigate the potential uses of palm oil around the world for the Food Technology Unit. To disseminate better information on the advantages of palm oil-based products, Berger's advice was also sought in the publicity campaigns at international level through conventions and government-led trade missions abroad.

His most appreciated role in the development of the palm oil industry in Malaysia and worldwide perhaps is his immense contributions to 'Oil the Wheels of Palm Oil Commerce' globally through various familiarisation programmes he recommended, especially in developing nations where palm oil was less knowledgeable to them. At the backstage, he was instrumental in convincing foreign buyers through lectures, site visits and most importantly his serious personal attention.

At the age of 87, his passion for writing is reflected in his new book titled "Quality and Functions of Palm Oil in Food Applications – A Layman's Guide" which is launched at 2010 PILA Dinner.