

Firm tracks drivers to curb palm oil theft

By ELAN PERUMAL and STUART MICHAEL

PETALING JAYA: The theft of crude palm oil (CPO) in the country is alarming, forcing industry players to come up with their own mechanism to contain the problem.

The Sidhu Brothers Group, which has been in the business of transporting CPO for more than 30 years, seems to have come up with a formula to deal with the siphoning of CPO – which takes place between the time the commodity is transported from the mill to the refinery.



Movement tracker: An FMS device installed in the cab of a CPO tanker has saved thousands for at least one transport company.

The company, which has been using the Fleet Management System (FMS) since February last year to track the route of its drivers, has managed to resolve the CPO theft problem.

Its commercial director Jimmy Sidhu said the introduction of the FMS had enabled the company to save RM36,000 a month, as previously the transporter had to bear the cost if there was a shortage of CPO when their oil tankers reached the various refineries.

Sidhu said the firm also had to deal with a 10% increase in fuel cost if some of these oil tankers head for the “hot spots”, normally located in the suburbs.

“The FMS system allows us to track rogue drivers. So far, we have traced 108 cases of CPO theft and terminated the services of 18 drivers,” Sidhu told the Starprobe team in an interview.

The company, which has a fleet of 80 oil tankers, transports an average of 3,000 tonnes of CPO daily.

The FMS is a modified system from British company Minorplanet plc and is supplied locally by CSE Multimedia Technologies Sdn Bhd.

The system marks the date and time the tankers enter a hot spot and how long they stop at rest areas and eating shops.

Sidhu said the system also allowed the company to locate more than 70 hot spots in the peninsula where CPO siphoning was rampant.

There is a “panic button” installed near the driver’s seat in every oil tanker which enables the driver to alert headquarters if the tankers are hijacked or experiencing any difficulty.

“When our oil tankers go off the original route and head to one of the hot spots, the FMS system will detect it, so the drivers know the risks they are taking if they work with syndicates to steal CPO,” said Sidhu.

He urged the Government to give incentives to transport companies to curb CPO theft such as exemption from vehicle insurance or road tax.