

Ivory Coast Palm Oil Industry

TRAILER

Ivory Coast's palm oil industry is one of the country's economic lifelines. But concerns over the sector's effects on the environment are prompting companies to look at ways of recycling waste and reducing pollution.

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FILMING LOCATION: TOUMANGUIE, ABIDJAN

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SCRIPT

COMMENTARY

Jeremy Yoibare is hunting for ripe palm kernels at the Palmci plantation in Toumanguie. The kernels will be used to make palm oil. Ivory Coast is Africa's top producer with an output of about 390,000 tonnes per year.

It's a job he's been doing for several years, ever since he came here from neighbouring Burkina Faso looking for work.

It's also a physically demanding job that requires workers to spend long hours in the hot and humid plantations. But Yoibare says it's worthwhile for those who can take the heat.

ITV, JEREMY YOIBARE, Plantation Worker (French)

"Even if you don't put in a lot of work, you can make between 85 to 100 US dollars a month. If you work really hard you can make 200 to 300 dollars per month."

COMMENTARY

Ivory Coast's palm plantations create tens of thousands of jobs across the country, but are criticized for damaging the environment.

Large scale plantations are a primary reason for deforestation in the region. Only 2% of Ivory Coast is still covered by its original indigenous forest.

Plantations also tend to have very low levels of biodiversity and require a lot of chemicals to prevent the spread of disease.

Sania, Ivory Coast's largest oil refinery, is trying to change the environmental perceptions about palm oil. Instead of expanding their plantations which causes more deforestation, they replace the current trees every 25 years.

Ibo Yaya, who oversees planting and care for new trees, says they recycle most of their waste material.

ITV, IBO YAYA, Nursery Caretaker, SANIA (French)

“We spread the husks of the palm nuts around the nursery to prevent soil erosion. We also use the palm husks as fertilizer, they provide the seedlings with the nutrients they need.”

COMMENTARY

But the major criticism made by environmentalists, is that the refining process for the palm oil industry, relies largely on fossil fuels that release harmful greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

Sania is cleaning up here as well – by running its boilers mostly by burning the shells of palm kernels rather than fossil fuels.

They expect to curb their yearly greenhouse gas emissions by just over 45,000 tonnes - that's the equivalent of taking about 8,200 cars off the road for a year.

ITV, KOULIBALY DRAMANE, Manager, SANIA's (French)

“The palm fibers contain roughly 2500 kilocalories/kilogram and the palm kernel shells contain roughly 3500 kilocalories/kilogram, so the kernel shells contain energy. The shells are also more easily transported and conserved, because they aren't affected by rain or sun. That's why SANIA has chosen to use the kernel shells for biomass in their central boilers in Abidjan.”

COMMENTARY

SANIA's palm oil refinery – the biggest in the country – is located in Abidjan, the nation's commercial capital. Under global climate agreements, such “green” projects are able to get special funding and technical help from other countries.

ITV, ABDEL KARIM TRAORE, Environmental Analyst (French)

“Africa represents less than 3% of the global market for clean energy, mainly because of a lack of technical know-how as well as a lack of understanding of the market place. Because of this, European countries who are looking to expand their involvement in clean energy prefer to deal with China, India and Brazil, which represent more than 97% of the global market for clean energy.”

ITV, SERGE MATHIEU KACOU, Senior Project Engineer, SANIA (French)

“The biomass boiler will enable us to produce steam for about 20 dollars per tonne. Before, with natural gas we were paying 40 dollars per tonne. So for us, we are saving money. Changing to a greener energy is also helping us cut our production costs and become more competitive in the marketplace.”

COMMENTARY

Construction on the new boiler is still in progress, but the plant will be ready for commission in November.

It's a complicated and expensive process but ultimately it's a win-win for Ivory Coast which keeps a lucrative industry alive while protecting the environment for future generations.

SHOTLIST

TOMANGUIE, IVORY COAST (RECENT) (REUTERS – ACCESS ALL)

1. VARIOUS OF JEREMY YOIBARE, A WORKER AT THE PALMCI PLANTATION HUNTING FOR RIPE PALM KERNELS

2. VARIOUS OF YOIBARE WHEELING AWAY RIPE PALME KERNELS\

3. (SOUNDBITE) (French) JEREMY YOIBARE OF THE PALMCI PLANTATION SAYING:

“Even if you don’t put in a lot of work, you can make between 85 to 100 US dollars a month. If you work really hard you can make 200 to 300 dollars per month.”

4. VARIOUS OF PALM TREES GROWING ON THE PLANTATION

5. VARIOUS OF FOREST COVER

6. VARIOUS OF PALM OIL SEEDLINGS MAINTAINED BY SANIA, IVORY COAST’S LARGEST OIL REFINERY

7. VARIOUS OF NURSERY CARE TAKER IBO YAYA TENDING THE NURSERY

8. (SOUNDBITE) (French) NURSERY CARETAKER IBO YAYA SAYING:

“We spread the husks of the palm nuts around the nursery to prevent soil erosion. We also use the palm husks as fertilizer, they provide the seedlings with the nutrients they need.”

9. WIDE SHOT OF PALM OIL PROCESSING FIRM

10. VARIOUS OF BLACK SMOKE EMITTED FROM THE FACTORY’S CHIMNEY

11. VARIOUS OF FACTORY WORKER STOKING PALM OIL KERNELS

12. (SOUNDBITE) (French) SANIA PLANTATION MANAGER, DRAMANE COULIBALY SAYING:

“The palm fibers contain roughly 2500 kilocalories/kilogram and the palm kernel shells contain roughly 3500 kilocalories/kilogram, so the kernel shells contain energy. The shells are also more easily transported and conserved, because they aren’t affected by rain or sun. That’s why SANIA has chosen to use the kernel shells for biomass in their central boilers in Abidjan.”

13. VARIOUS OF WORKERS LOADING RIPE PALM KERNELS OUTSIDE THE FACTORY

14. (SOUNDBITE) (French) ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYST ABDEL KARIM TRAORE SAYING:

“Africa represents less than 3% of the global market for clean development, mainly because of a lack of technical know-how as well as a lack of understanding of the market place. Because of this, European countries who are looking to expand their involvement in clean development prefer to deal with China, India and Brazil, which represent more than 97% of the global market for clean development.”

15. (SOUNDBITE) (French) SENIOR PROJECT ENGINEER AT SANIA SERGE MATHIEU KACOU SAYING:

“The biomass boiler will enable us to produce steam for about 20 dollars per tonne. Before, with natural gas we were paying 40 dollars per tonne. So for us, we are saving money. Changing to a greener energy is also helping us cut our production costs and become more competitive in the marketplace.”

16. VARIOUS WIDE SHOTS OF FACTORY

17. VARIOUS OF MEN WORKING ON BOILERS

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