

Have will, can get clean rivers

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KUCHING: Sungai Siniawan and Sungai Sarawak Kanan in Bau district have an image to protect — they are considered among the cleanest rivers in Sarawak. Their water is now crystal clear.

The pig farms that polluted the rivers in the past have toed the line drawn by the Natural Resources and Environmental Board (NREB).

There are between 20,000 and 30,000 pigs in Siniawan.

Sungai Siniawan, which flows into Sungai Sarawak Kanan, is an example how a river can be rehabilitated. It used to be heavily polluted.

NREB officials took samples of water discharged from Yin Yan Pig Farm into Sungai Siniawan on Monday, and found the Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) over five days was recorded at 51.2mg per litre of water. This is well below the maximum 250mg/l under the water quality standard for the country.

The Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) of the samples taken from the river on Monday indicated that it was 299.8mg/l as against the maximum of 1,000mg/l under the Malaysian standard.

The Total Suspended Solid (TSS) was recorded at



Enforcement has ensured that Sungai Siniawan remains pollution-free despite the presence of pig farms nearby.

141.7mg/l, which was below the 300mg/l permitted by the Malaysian standard.

“Talk that Sungai Siniawan is heavily polluted is untrue,” state government environmental adviser Datuk Dr James Dawos Mamit said yesterday.

Samples taken from Sungai Sarawak Kanan also showed that its water was free from pollution.

Results of analyses from samples taken on June 28 at five different points in Sungai Sarawak Kanan showed that

the BOD, COD and TSS were below the permitted quality levels.

Dawos, who is the Mam-bong MP, and some NREB officials had gone to the Yin Yan Pig Farm on Monday to take samples of its discharge.

He said the farm had followed the guidelines issued by the NREB, such as construction of four lagoons and other facilities to keep its premises clean and tidy.

The lagoons are used to separate waste from the water.

“You can see that the water at the fourth lagoon is clear and ready to be discharged into the river.”

Dawos said the state government had realised the need to regulate livestock farms in Sarawak because many of them were found to be discharging waste into the rivers.

As a result, the Veterinary Public Health Ordinance was enacted by the state legislative assembly in 1999.

Dawos said the state government gave the livestock

breeders a grace period of five years to meet the requirements and conditions stipulated by the ordinance.

“Although we knew that many pig farms, for example, in Siniawan, were polluting the rivers, we did not take action against them. We gave them time to meet the requirements and, at the same time, we told them what they should do with their farms.”

Nevertheless, he said some farms were fined when they were slow in meeting the requirements.

“Now, however, all of them have toed the line.”

Under Part V of the ordinance pertaining to livestock farming, any farm with 100 head of cattle, pigs or goats and any farm with 1,000 chickens, ducks or geese is required to have a licence issued by the state veterinary authority to operate.

Any person operating a farm without the licence faces a penalty of RM5,000 or two years’ jail or both.

On regulations concerning the environment, the ordinance gives powers to the NREB to act.

Dawos said based on these powers, the NREB required all pig farms to submit a half-yearly report to it pertaining to the pig population, among others.