



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL EMISSIONS OF GREEN HOUSE GASES  
FROM A PINEAPPLE (*Ananas comosus* L. Merr) TROPICAL PEAT SOIL***

**ALICIA VANESSA JEFFARY**

**FSPM 2017 1**



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By

**ALICIA VANESSA JEFFARY**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

**January 2017**

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## DEDICATION

*Dedicate to my families and friends.*

*Thank you for everything*



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**Chairman : Professor Ahmed Osumanu Haruna, PhD**  
**Faculty : Agriculture and Food Sciences (Bintulu Campus)**

Peat soils are important natural resources. Peat soils have been cleared, developed, and cultivated for large scale plantations such as oil palm due to their positive contribution to Malaysia's economic growth in agriculture sector. However, these developments contribute to the emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs). However, concerns by NGOs have been expressed that increasing cultivation of pineapples on peat soils lead to increase in the emissions of harmful greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O). To date, there were limited information of GHGs emissions from pineapple cultivation and also inadequate data on horizontally and vertically soil GHGs emissions in peat soil profile. Thus, this study was carried out to determine GHGs emissions horizontally and vertically and to quantify horizontal and vertical GHGs emissions from a drained tropical peat soils from a drained tropical peat soils cultivated with pineapple (*Ananas comosus* (L.) Merr. Horizontal and vertical movements of GHGs were measured from a drained tropical peatland with *Ananas comosus* (L.) Merr. at Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI) Saratok, Sarawak, Malaysia. Soil GHGs flux sampling via closed chamber method (I and L-shaped closed chambers) and was carried out for 24 hours at a 6 hour interval (between 0600 hr to 0600 hr). Soil GHGs flux sampling were carried out once a month in July and August 2015 which represent dry seasons and September and December 2015 which represent wet season. The GHGs concentration was measured using a Gas Chromatography (GC – Agilent 7890A). Tropical peat soils cultivated with *Ananas comosus* (L.) Merr. contributed to 79.7 % of CO<sub>2</sub>, 20.1 % of N<sub>2</sub>O, and 0.2 % of CH<sub>4</sub> based on the yearly basis regardless of the differences in diurnal transportation; horizontal and vertical emission. Soil GHGs were emitted the most through horizontal transportation with 70.84 % CO<sub>2</sub>, 18.72 % N<sub>2</sub>O, and 0.19 % CH<sub>4</sub> compared to 8.85 % CO<sub>2</sub>, 1.38 % N<sub>2</sub>O, and 0.02 % CH<sub>4</sub> in vertical transportation. The emission of CO<sub>2</sub> was influenced by depth of water table and temperature. It is generally believed that lowering of peats water table leads to emission of higher CO<sub>2</sub> emission because this process leads to exposure of peat soils to oxidation. Factors influencing N<sub>2</sub>O production include peat temperature, soil

moisture, water-filled pore space, and nitrogen status of the peat. Seasonal variation in CH<sub>4</sub> flux was higher in the wet seasons due to rainfall; this might have increased the water table of the peat soil. Therefore, it is hoped that from the findings of this study, farmers have an idea regarding the appropriate approach and methodology in managing GHG emissions especially from peat soils and so as to improve the accuracy and subsequently minimize controversies. It is also hoped that through this study, it will provide insights on farm management procedures in dealing with the emission of the GHG such as the appropriate peat soil land management, fertilization, types of crop to be cultivate and others. Last but not least, information obtained from this study will also give awareness not only to the farmer but also to the societies regarding the controlling of GHG emissions from a drained tropical peat soils cultivated with pineapples.





**PELEPASAN MENEGAK DAN MENDATAR GAS RUMAH HIJAU DALAM  
PENANAMAN NANAS (*Ananas comosus* L. Merr.) DARI TANAH GAMBUT  
TROIKA**

Oleh

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**Januari 2017**

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Tanah gambut tropika adalah sumber semula jadi yang penting. Kebanyakan kawasan ini telah dibersihkan untuk tujuan pertanian berskala besar seperti kelapa sawit yang ditanam disebabkan oleh permintaan yang semakin meningkat bagi pembangunan tanah dan juga disebabkan oleh pulangan ekonomi yang tinggi. Penanaman nanas di tanah gambut adalah menguntungkan. Walau bagaimanapun, kebanyakan Pertubuhan Bukan Kerajaan (NGO) melaporkan bahawa penanaman nanas yang semakin meningkat menyebabkan peningkatan pelepasan gas rumah hijau yang berbahaya. Keprihatinan terhadap fungsi tanah gambut tropika sebagai penyerap karbon timbul kerana kesan pelepasan gas rumah hijau menyumbang kepada fenomena pemanasan global. Kini, terdapat maklumat yang terhad berkenaan pelepasan menegak dan mendatar karbon dioksida, methane, dan nitrus oksida daripada penanaman nanas di tanah gambut tropika yang disalurkan. Kajian dijalankan di tanah gambut saprik di Institut Penyelidikan dan Kemajuan Pertanian Malaysia (MARDI) Saratok, Sarawak, Malaysia. Pergerakan mendatar dan menegak gas karbon dioksida ( $\text{CO}_2$ ), methane ( $\text{CH}_4$ ), dan nitrus oksida ( $\text{N}_2\text{O}$ ) dari permukaan dan dinding tanah yang ditanam dengan *Ananas comosus* (L.) Merr. diukur dengan menggunakan kaedah kebuk wasap berbentuk I dan L setiap enam jam bagi tempoh 24 jam. Kepekatan gas karbon dioksida, methane, dan nitrus oksida diukur menggunakan Gas Kromatografi (GC – Agilent 7890A) yang dilengkapi dengan pengesan kekonduksian haba (TCD). Tanah gambut tropika yang ditanam dengan *Ananas comosus* (L.) Merr. menyumbang kepada 79.7 %  $\text{CO}_2$ , 20.1 %  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$ , dan 0.2 %  $\text{CH}_4$  berdasarkan asas tahunan. Pelepasan gas secara menegak adalah 70.84 %  $\text{CO}_2$ , 18.72 %  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$ , dan 0.19 %  $\text{CH}_4$  berbanding 8.85 %  $\text{CO}_2$ , 1.38 %  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$ , dan 0.02 %  $\text{CH}_4$  secara mendatar. Pelepasan  $\text{CO}_2$  adalah yang tertinggi berbanding  $\text{CH}_4$  dan  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$  tanpa mengira perbezaan dalam pengangkutan diurnal; pelepasan mendatar dan menegak. Pelepasan  $\text{CO}_2$  dipengaruhi oleh kedalaman aras air dan suhu. Ia secara umumnya dipercayai bahawa penurunan paras air di dalam tanah gambut membawa kepada pelepasan  $\text{CO}_2$  lebih tinggi kerana proses ini membawa kepada pendedahan tanah gambut kepada pengoksidaan. Variasi

bermusim dalam pelepasan  $\text{CH}_4$  adalah lebih tinggi pada musim tengkujuh kerana musim hujan telah meningkatkan paras air di dalam tanah gambut tersebut. Faktor0faktor yang mempengaruhi pengeluaran  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$  termasuk suhu tanah gambut, kelembapan tanah, ruang liang berisi air, dan kandungan nitrogen dalam tanah gambut. Sehubungan dengan itu, melalui hasil daripada kajian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan petunjuk kepada pendekatan dan kaedah yang sesuai dalam pengukuran gas rumah hijau untuk meningkatkan ketepatan dan seterusnya mengurangkan kontroversi. Selain itu, maklumat yang diperolehi daripada kajian ini diharapkan dapat memberi petunjuk mengenai prosedur pengurusan lading dalam menangani pelepasan gas rumah hijau seperti pengendalian pembajaan, pengurusan tanah, dan sebagainya.





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All glory, praise and thanks be to God for given me the opportunity, strength, and wisdom to complete this thesis. Special thanks to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Ahmed Osumanu Haruna for his guidance, encouragement, comments, suggestions, and commitment throughout my study. Thank you for never given up on me. Your kindness, support, and care for me, forever I will appreciate. Thanks also to Dr. Roland Kueh Jui Heng, my co-supervisor for helping and coordinating me to finish my work. I am grateful to all the staff of Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI) Saratok, Sarawak, Malaysia especially to Miss Liza Nuriati Lim Kim Choo and Madam Shamsiah Sekot for the assisting, help, and guidance during my field and laboratory work. I would like to thanks my parents, Jeffary Jim and Jeti anak Jembai, late grandparents, siblings, and my relatives for their prayers, guidance, support, and endless love in assuring my success. Last but not the least, my appreciation also goes to all friends for their unfailing support and encouragement which made it all possible. Thanks for those wonderful moments, wishes, and support.



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
CEC	Cation Exchange Capacity
CH <sub>4</sub>	Methane
CO <sub>2</sub>	Carbon Dioxide
HSD	Tukey's Studentized Range Test
DOC	Dissolved Organic Carbon
GC	Gas Chromatography
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
MARDI	Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute
N <sub>2</sub> O	Nitrous Oxide
POC	Particulate Organic Carbon
SAS	Statistical Analysis System
TCD	Thermal Conductivity Detector
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Peat soils are important natural resources. Peat soils have been cleared, developed, and cultivated for large scale plantations such as oil palm due to their positive contribution to Malaysia's economic growth in agricultural sector. Cultivation of pineapples on peat soils has now become profitable and popular in Malaysia. Malaysia is known to be the only country in the world that uniquely and largely cultivates pineapples on peat soils. This practice has been in existence for nearly a century. However, concerns by NGOs have been expressed that increasing cultivation of pineapples on peat soils lead to increase in the emissions of harmful greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O). Previous study on drained peat soil cultivated with pineapple done by Liza (2104) showed that CO<sub>2</sub> were emitted the most with 93.4% followed by 6.2% N<sub>2</sub>O with a lower CH<sub>4</sub> at 0.35%.

Globally, agriculture contributed to 24% of the greenhouse gases emission (IPCC, 2014). Tropical peatland with high organic matter content is naturally a conducive environment for greenhouse gas emissions especially under agriculture which is characterized by alternate high and low water table. Methane as an example can be consumed by aerobic microbes during its transportation to the soil surface besides dissolving in water, thus, being transported away from peatlands.

CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, and N<sub>2</sub>O are the main greenhouse gases emitted from pineapple cultivation on peat soils where these gases have been implicated in the global warming (Chen *et al.*, 2014; Jassal *et al.*, 2011; Florides and Christoudoulides, 2008). Peat soils contains approximately 15% to 25% of the terrestrial soil carbon and nitrogen worldwide (Bajtes, 1996). The organic carbon and nitrogen of peat soils undergo natural decomposition, causing the loss of mass and release by-products such as nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), and carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) (Hadi *et al.*, 2005). Carbon in peat soils are lost in the forms of CH<sub>4</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub>. Naturally, these gases are produced under anaerobic and aerobic conditions.

Concern of the function of peatlands as a major carbon sequestration arises because greenhouse gases (GHGs) contribute to global warming (Daud, 2009). Cultivation of different crops has different impact on the environment (Azqueta and Sotelsek, 2007). Tropical peat soils' carbon and GHG balance is determined largely by the net balance between carbon uptake in photosynthesis and carbon release through ecosystem respiration by: (a) vegetation (autotrophic respiration and resulting in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from both plant foliage and root systems) and (b) by the organisms involved in organic matter biological decomposition. In addition, carbon is leached out from the system in drainage runoff as dissolved organic carbon (DOC) or particulate organic carbon (POC) (Moore *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, cycling of N has the tendency of rendering

tropical peatlands as source of  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$ , especially if fertilizers are used to promote agricultural or plantation productivity (Jauhiainen *et al.*, 2011; Murdiyarso *et al.*, 2010; Germer and Sauerborn, 2008; Melling *et al.*, 2007).

It is important to note that: (a) carbon cycle and GHG processes are highly dynamic and vary at all spatial and temporal scales owing to regional and local variations in macro- and micro-climate and hydrology, as well as localised variations in vegetation and peat decomposition dynamics (Hooijer *et al.*, 2011; Jauhiainen *et al.*, 2005, 2010); and (b) in terms of emissions and global warming potential,  $\text{CO}_2$  is the most important gas emitted from drained peatlands, contributing 98% or more of the total combined global warming potential (GWP) of  $\text{CO}_2$ ,  $\text{CH}_4$ , and  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$  (Jauhiainen *et al.*, 2011).

Currently, there is limited information on soil  $\text{CO}_2$ ,  $\text{CH}_4$ , and  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$  emissions from pineapple cultivation on drained peat soils. According to Couwenberg (2011),  $\text{CH}_4$  emissions from paddy ecosystem on peat soils are within uncertainty range of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)  $\text{CH}_4$  default emission factor. Current practices in the measurement of  $\text{CO}_2$ ,  $\text{CH}_4$ , and  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$  emissions from the surface of peat soils are controversial. Besides, the emissions of  $\text{CO}_2$  and  $\text{CH}_4$  have recently attracted considerable attention because of their contribution to the global climate change. The losses of these gases are also important because soil carbon and nitrogen must be stored for sustainable crop production. In spite of intensive international research efforts, the newest global  $\text{CO}_2$ ,  $\text{CH}_4$ , and  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$  balances still have considerable uncertainties in evaluating the specific sources for enhanced  $\text{CO}_2$ ,  $\text{CH}_4$ , and  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$  (IPCC 1996; Mosier 1996). Uncertainties mainly are because of the variability in soil and environmental conditions, time, and method used for the measurement of  $\text{CO}_2$ ,  $\text{CH}_4$ , and  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$  (Mosier 1996; Firestone and Davidson 1989).

Research findings on  $\text{CO}_2$ ,  $\text{CH}_4$ , and  $\text{N}_2\text{O}$  emissions in tropical peats planted with pineapples are usually controversial due to few or lack of standard information (Ahmed and Liza, 2015). Greenhouse gas emissions are commonly measured using closed chamber method in a very limited area and time (Zulkefli *et al.*, 2010; Abdul *et al.*, 2005). This leads to inconsistent and sometimes controversial issues which are related to lack of rigid information. Although pineapples are cultivated on tropical peat soils, there is little information on GHG emissions from peats cultivated with pineapples.

The contribution of pineapples cultivation on tropical peat soils to GHG emissions is important. For example, 90% of pineapples are widely grown on peat soils of Malaysia (Raziah and Alam, 2010). Kuzyakov (2006) reported that it was important to partition the GHG emissions into respiration components such as microbial and root respirations before deciding on whether peat soils are net sinks or net sources of atmospheric GHG. Failure to account for these GHG losses from drained tropical peatlands could underestimate future rates of increase in atmospheric greenhouse gases and their effects on global environmental change processes (Page *et al.*, 2007).



Based on the foregoing discussion, the objectives of this study were:

- i. To determine CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, and N<sub>2</sub>O emissions horizontally and vertically from a drained tropical peat soil cultivated with pineapple (*Ananas comosus* (L.) Merr
- ii. To quantify horizontal and vertical CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, and N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from a drained tropical peat soil

In this study, it was hypothesized that the emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, and N<sub>2</sub>O into the atmosphere from peat soils cultivated with pineapple (*Ananas comosus* (L.) Merr are affected by horizontal and vertical transportations. This hypothesis is based on the assumption that the mechanism of transportation where gases can lost to the environment in many ways outside or within the soil profile; horizontally and vertically. The results from this study could be used to give ideas on appropriate procedure in CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, and N<sub>2</sub>O emissions measurement on a drained tropical peat soil cultivated with (*Ananas comosus* (L.) Merr. Besides, information obtained from different emissions measurement method will also provide insights on the possible future measures in controlling CO<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, and N<sub>2</sub>O emissions on a drained tropical peat soil cultivated with (*Ananas comosus* (L.) Merr.

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