

13 April 2010

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Dear Committee Secretary

Re: Food Standards Amendment (Truth in Labelling-Palm Oil) Bill 2009

I am writing this letter to inform you of my concern with the use of Palm Oil in our foods.

The production of Palm Oil is causing serious environmental consequences in Indonesia and Malaysia. The equivalent of 300 football fields are deforested every hour for Palm Oil in SE Asia alone and as a result the lives of up to 50 Orang-utans are lost every week, along with many other highly endangered species and the adverse affects of climate control.

My Biggest concern however was to find that Palm Oil is not clearly labelled in any of our foods that we purchase in our local Supermarkets. Australians unknowingly consume on average 10kg of Palm Oil per year because we do not have the ability to exercise consumer choice.

Disguising Palm Oil under the listing of Vegetable Oil is sneaky. It is far to misleading to a consumer considering 40% of food products contain the Palm Oil ingredient. I recently obtained many signatures for the mandatory labelling of Palm Oil. Most people I spoke to had no idea, and were horrified to discover the implications behind the production of Palm Oil.

I would also draw your attention to the Heart Foundation's concern about the health consequences of Palm Oil which is high in Saturated fat.

Biochemical research indicates that consumption of Palm Oil increases the risk of heart Disease.

There is obviously a serious issue to be addressed, large well known companies such as KFC and Cadbury wouldn't have announced the recent removal of Palm Oil in there foods otherwise.

Once Palm Oil is labelled sustainable Palm Oil plantations are a possibility. Consumers could actually drive a market for proper certified sustainable Palm Oil because they can demand it of manufacturers (as we've seen with fair trade and rainforest alliance products)

Australia and New Zealand can make these positive changes happen, We don't have much time left to save these beautiful rainforests and the awesome creatures that inhabit it

As I write this letter I feel an over whelming sadness for the future of the Orang-utan, I fear if rapid changes are not made these majestic creatures may only be viewed at zoos in a simulated environment.

Is this how we want future generations to view our animals? This is the way its heading Changes must happen.....

As a consumer we have a right to choose what we are purchasing. Please Urgently address the Mandatory Labelling of Palm Oil. I would appreciate an explanation as to what actions will take place.

Yours Sincerely

KELLY STEWART