



# Croydon Conservation Society Inc.

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11<sup>th</sup> April, 2010.

Committee Secretary,  
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs,  
PO Box 6100,  
Parliament House,  
CANBERRA, ACT 2600

## Submission - Food Standards Amendment (Truth in Labelling – Palm Oil) Bill 2009

The Croydon Conservation Society is concerned that the increasing market for palm oil production is having an irreversibly negative effect on the ecologically-sensitive areas of the Amazon and Asian rainforests. We believe that it is incumbent on the palm oil industry to show environmental stewardship of the land they use. This stewardship must include protection of the native wildlife particularly endangered species.

We hope that future palm oil plantation owners will seek sustainable farming methods which will have a low impact on the environment and wildlife. We also hope that manufacturers would be encouraged to use palm oil which has been farmed sustainably in their production process and which would then be given the status of a "Certified Sustainable Palm Oil". This would give businesses a marketing edge and would certainly give integrity to their claim to have good environmental credentials.

The Croydon Conservation Society joins the growing voice throughout the world regarding the impact of palm oil production on wildlife, specifically the Orang-utans in South East Asia. Current scientific studies of Orang-utans in Borneo and Sumatra, indicate that the orang-utan population have declined by 50 to 90% over the past few decades. This severe decline is due to several causes such as hunting and the pet trade, but the *foremost reason is forest losses when the forest is cut down and converted to agriculture. The forest is primarily converted to palm oil and industrial tree plantations, particularly in Borneo and Sumatra where wild orang-utans live.* Forest conversion results in an extreme loss of biodiversity and the destruction of species like the orang-utans. Research has shown that orang-utans have not adapted to the palm oil landscape and cannot survive within the palm oil landscape in its present condition today.

The impact of palm oil production on wildlife, specifically Orang-utans in South East Asia has been significant and will continue to be devastating in the future unless it is done sustainably. Until this occurs, we ask:

- that rights of consumers must be respected with accurate and truthful information to enable them to make an informed choice about the food products they are eating and purchasing.
- that we be given sufficient information about products in our retail outlets which contain palm oil and that with this information we are able to choose alternative products which do not contain this oil.

It is important to note:

- that by allowing palm oil to be listed as "vegetable oil" on food packaging, is misleading to consumers. Discerning shoppers prefer to know what type of oil is used in food products, particularly if allergies and other medical issues are present. Palm oil is considered high in saturated fats and consumers with heart conditions should be made aware if it is used in foods they are eating.

Thank you for allowing us to add our voice of concern to the future plight of the Orang-utans in the South East Asian rainforests.

Yours sincerely,



Sandra Hardiman,  
Secretary,  
On behalf of the Croydon Conservation Society.