

18 April 2010

Sam de Silva

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs
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Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia
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Dear Sir or Madam:

I wish to make a submission to the *Inquiry into Food Standards Amendment (Truth in Labelling – Palm Oil) Bill 2009*.

I fully support the requirement for the mandatory labelling of palm oil. I have personally witnessed the clearing of forests rich in culture and biodiversity for oil palm plantations. I have witnessed the impact this has on the lives of the people living in these areas, specifically in parts of Papua New Guinea.

As a responsible citizen, I wish to be fully informed about the source and substance of the products and services I purchase. I strongly believe that the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) has a responsibility and duty of care to properly label palm oil in all food products.

Further, I would encourage FSANZ to provide geo-location information as to where palm oil contained in food products originates from. This enables me, as a responsible citizen and responsible consumer to make an informed decision on my purchasing – especially related to brands and suppliers that may carry products containing palm oil. There are many innovative digital strategies that FSANZ could investigate and implement that would enable consumers to trace ingredients back to source communities and discover for themselves the impact on natural habitat and livelihood condition of people living in those communities and the surrounding areas.

I wish the committee to consider public information video I produced relating to palm oil plantations and impact on land, culture and people. It is available to the public and is located at <http://vimeo.com/5330739> and shows the impact palm oil plantations are having on forests, waterways and people.

Knowing what we put into our bodies is an obvious necessity. However, the specific ingredients are often hidden behind numbers, codes and general descriptions such as 'vegetable oil'. I urge FSANZ to ensure that foods that have palm oil are clearly labelled with this detail, so we can make an informed decision about what we put in to our bodies, and give us the choice on whether our purchasing choices will result in the damage to community and environment.

Thank you for considering this submission, and I look forward to the mandatory labelling of palm oil.

Best wishes, Sam de Silva