

Submission to the Senate Committee

23rd April 2010

Dear Committee

RE: Food Standards Amendment (Truth in Labelling – Palm Oil) Bill 2009

I am writing in support of the above Bill as I am very concerned about the use of palm oil in a wide variety of products. I believe as a consumer, I should have the right to choose whether to purchase a product which has palm oil in it.

My concern stems from the devastating environmental consequences that have resulted from palm plantations, including the destruction of rainforests which results in habitat loss on a huge scale. This loss of habitat has led to the orangutans of Indonesia and Malaysia to become highly endangered, with probably extinction of the entire species in the near future. According to the Australian Orangutan Project, there is further environmental damage due to peat swamps that are drained post deforestation, which releases methane into the atmosphere and which is then burnt, releasing excess carbon into the atmosphere.

Due to these reasons (and others, such as the high level of saturated fat in palm oil) I feel that I should have easily attainable information into what products contain this substance, particularly since many companies label their product as containing vegetable oil, instead of what it actually is – palm oil. This clearly, is misleading.

Regulatory Objectives of the Food Standards of Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) state that regulations must provide for:

- the protection of public health and safety; and
- the provision of adequate information relating to food to enable consumers to make informed choices.

I feel that the current standards for the labelling of palm oil on products do not meet these standards and should be rectified immediately. I would hope that by allowing the consumer to make an informed decision and choose not to buy products containing palm oil, it may have a flow on effect and force a positive change in the palm oil industry.

Please seriously consider the merits of the Food Standards Amendment (Truth in Labelling – Palm Oil) Bill 2009 and allow this Bill to pass, to protect the environment, orangutans and the health of the general Australian population.

Kind regards
Angela Overell