

Dear Community Affairs Legislation Committee,

Re: Inquiry into Food Standards Amendment (Truth in Labelling – Palm Oil) Bill 2009

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a written submission although I understand that the due date has passed.

I support the following principle issues:

The rights of consumers to be provided with accurate and truthful information to enable them to make an informed choice about the food products they are eating and purchasing;

That allowing palm oil to be listed as "vegetable oil" on food packaging is misleading to consumers;

That palm oil is considered high in saturated fats and consumers should be made aware if it is used in foods they are eating for health reasons;

That the impact of palm oil production on wildlife, specifically Orang-utan's in South East Asia is significant unless it is done sustainably;

That sustainable palm oil can be produced with low impact on the environment and wildlife and with better labour laws on plantations; and

That manufacturers should be encouraged to use sustainable palm oil in their production process and can subsequently use the status of "Certified Sustainable Palm Oil" as a business benefit.

Clearly one of the main ways to effect change in the production and distribution of palm oil is via a sustained consumer push for the use of palm oil substitutes or certified palm oil. This requires consumer education and awareness. Two major changes should occur:

- All products produced or sold in Australia containing palm oil should be labeled as such.
- Manufacturers and retailers should label their product as containing CSPO (Certified Sustainable Palm Oil), only if they are using sustainable palm oil that has been certified in accordance with the RSPO's Principles and Criteria.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Mike Forrester

Dr Mike Forrester
Consultant Paediatrician,