

Food Standards Amendment
(Truth in Labeling – Palm Oil) Bill 2009

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to you as a concerned citizen, who has an interest in wildlife for which I believe we should take responsibility for the care and protection of – and to limit our actions that may be harmful towards them.

It has been brought to my attention that many of the products that are found on our local supermarket shelves contain a product called Palm Oil. This would not be a problem if I could exercise my right to choose to, or choose not to purchase these items, however, it seems that Palm Oil does not require the specific labelling as do many other ingredients in products. This means that it can be disguised under the name vegetable oil. The label vegetable oil does not give an accurate indication of the product or its nutritious value.

Palm Oil is reputed to be a product that is having a detrimental effect on endangered wildlife where many plantations occur, such as orang-utans. I have been to Borneo and worked with orang-utans and have personally witnessed the devastating effects Palm Oil plantations have on endangered wildlife habitat. Therefore, I would like to have the consumer power to know whether a product is utilising sustainable Palm Oil sources and so be able to decide whether I would like to purchase this product.

Therefore I agree with the proposed legislation as follows:

1. 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;
2. That allowing palm oil to be listed as "vegetable oil" on food packaging is misleading to consumers;
3. 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;
4. That the impact of palm oil production on wildlife, specifically Orangutan's in South East Asia is significant unless it is done sustainably;
5. That sustainable palm oil can be produced with low impact on the environment and wildlife and with better labor laws on plantations; and
6. Those 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.

I do not ask that Palm Oil be removed from products, merely that I be given enough information to make an informed decision regarding my purchases for my health and for my interests in assisting in protecting and potentially saving an endangered species. For this, I support the Food Standard Amendment (Truth in Labeling – Palm Oil) Bill.

Regards,

Prue Simmons