

I wish to make a submission regarding the Food Standards Amendment (Truth in Labelling - Palm Oil) Bill 2009.

As an Australian citizen concerned about climate change I feel that the current practice of deforestation in countries that produce palm oil to clear land in order to plant palm oil crops is not only unsustainable and damaging to the environment and global climate but also morally objectionable on the grounds of animal welfare. Orang-utans are being driven to extinction because of a product no one needs or that could be sourced from sustainable plantations.

Deforestation is a major contributor to climate change. Despite the massive misinformation campaign run by industries and climate change sceptics a large percentage of the Australian public recognise the need for change in the way we live our lives and the choices we make.

Misleading and inadequate labelling prevents us from making ethical, moral, informed choices.

I request the mandatory labelling of palm oil for the following reasons:

Consumers should be provided with accurate and truthful information to enable them to make an informed choice about the food products they are eating and purchasing.

The current listing of palm oil as "vegetable oil" on food packaging is misleading to consumers.

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;

As a nurse I am deeply concerned about preventative measures as opposed to curative measures. I am firmly convinced that the health care system is not in need of more nurses or doctors or more hospitals - but better prevention strategies such as removal of foods directly linked to poor health outcomes from availability to consumers. Saturated fats, (like meat and dairy products), are poor components of a healthy diet. Not all vegetable oils are equal and the consumer should be made aware of this.

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

We have a moral and ethical imperative to protect the species we share this world with. It is their world too. Their only world. And their world is limited to small areas of the planet, whereas human-animals appear almost unlimited.

There comes a point where business must be called to account.

Sustainable palm oil can be produced with low impact on the environment and wildlife and with better labour laws on plantations.

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.

Do not make the mistake of thinking that a large majority of people don't care. They do.

Kind Regards,

Linda Dicmanis