



WHY PALM OIL MATTERS IN YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE



WHAT IS PALM OIL?

You may not realize it, but chances are good that you have already used palm oil today.

Oil palms only grow in the tropics. Today, 85% of the world's palm oil is produced in Indonesia and Malaysia. Oil palms are grown on both large-scale plantations and small-scale family farms. When combined, all palm oil plantations would cover an area almost the size of Brazil.

Palm oil is an edible vegetable oil taken from the pulp of the fruits that grow on oil palms. To extract the oil, palm fruits are pressed in palm oil mills.



WHY DO WE USE PALM OIL?



RELATIVELY CHEAP

Palm oil is used in many of the products on supermarket shelves. You can find it in about half of all packaged foods.



MOST VERSATILE

Palm oil is a unique ingredient in many products because:



HIGH YIELDING

- It has great cooking properties – it maintains its properties even under high temperatures.
- Its smooth and creamy texture and absence of smell make it a perfect ingredient in many recipes, including baked goods (such as biscuits) in particular.
- It has a natural preservative effect which extends the shelf life of food products.



MOST WIDELY PRODUCED

Palm oil has many advantages. It is the highest-yielding vegetable oil crop, which makes it very efficient. It needs less than half the land required by other crops to produce the same amount of oil. This makes palm oil the least expensive vegetable oil in the world.

It is used in a wide range of products, from margarine and chocolate to ice cream, soaps, cosmetics, and fuel for cars and power plants.

India, China, Indonesia and Europe are the main consumers of palm oil. It is estimated that a French person consumes on average 2kg of palm oil per year, or 6% of total fat consumption of an adult between the ages of 18 and 72.¹

¹Fonds Français pour l'Alimentation et la Santé, Etat des lieux, November 2012



WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF PALM FARMING ON THE ENVIRONMENT?

In some regions, oil palm cultivation has caused – and continues to cause – deforestation. This means that land, which was once predominantly covered by primary forest (forest that has never been touched by man) or which housed protected species and biodiversity, was cleared in order to be converted into palm oil plantations.

Likewise, some palm oil plantations were developed without consulting local communities over the use of their land. Some have even been responsible for

forcibly displacing people from their land. Violations of workers' rights to fair payment and safe working conditions and other malpractices have also occurred.

Despite widely-reported malpractices in the industry, a growing number of players in the palm oil industry have committed to adopting more sustainable practices. The result of this gradual transition is an increasing amount of palm oil in our products that produced and sourced in a sustainable manner.

WHY CAN'T WE SIMPLY REPLACE PALM OIL?

There is a misconception that these concerns can be addressed when companies simply stop using palm oil in their products. However, this is not as easy as it sounds for a number of reasons:

1} Replacing palm oil with other types of vegetable oil (such as sunflower, soybean or rapeseed oil) would mean that much larger amounts of land would need to be used, since palm trees produce 4-10 times more oil than other crops per unit of cultivated land. This would result in serious environmental damage, with the risk that more forests would need to be converted into agricultural land.

2} In producing countries, millions of farmers and their families work in the palm oil sector. Palm oil plays an important role in the reduction of poverty in these areas. In Indonesia and Malaysia, a total of 4.5 million people earn their living from palm oil production. Stopping the production of palm oil altogether would create significant problems for these people who support their families by working in this industry.

3} Replacing palm oil with other types of oil is not always feasible due to palm oil's unique properties as food ingredient. Using other oils would not give the products the same texture and taste that palm oil offers.

Although using other vegetable oils seems like a practical solution, it would actually create similar – if not even larger - environmental and social problems.

Therefore, the best solution is to ensure you buy products that contain **sustainable palm oil**.



**CAN YOU
LIVE WITHOUT
PALM OIL?**

Take this online quiz developed by the RSP0 to discover how many products you own contain palm oil: www.rspo.org/quiz

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL?



Fulfills increasing global food demand



Supports affordable food prices



Supports poverty reduction



Safeguards, social interests, communities and workers



Protects the environment and wildlife

14%+

Amount of palm oil globally that is certified by the RSPO

In 2008, the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) developed a set of environmental and social criteria which companies must comply with in order to produce Certified Sustainable Palm Oil (CSPO). When they are properly applied, these criteria can help to minimize the negative impact of palm oil cultivation on the environment and communities in palm oil-producing regions.

One of the most important RSPO criteria states no primary forests or areas which contain significant concentrations of biodiversity (e.g. endangered species) or fragile ecosystems, or areas which are fundamental to meeting basic or traditional

cultural needs of local communities (high conservation value areas), can be cleared. Other RSPO principles stipulate a significantly reduced use of pesticides and fires; fair treatment of workers according to local and international labour rights standards, and the need to inform and consult with local communities before the development of new plantations on their land. To learn more about RSPO's principles and criteria, visit: www.rspo.org/en/principles_and_criteria_certification.

Only by being RSPO-certified by an independent auditor approved by the RSPO can producers claim that is produce, use and/or sell sustainable palm oil.



HOW DO I KNOW IF A PRODUCT CONTAINS SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL?

You can recognize products made from sustainable palm oil because they carry the RSPO Trademark. Purchasing products with the **RSPO Trademark** assures you that the palm oil used in the product was produced using sustainable practices that address both social and environmental concerns.

HOW CAN I ENCOURAGE COMPANIES TO USE SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL?



As a consumer, you have an important role to play. Your purchasing power can encourage companies to meet their societal and environmental responsibility. You can support these efforts by making sure that you only purchase products (for example, food or cosmetics) that contain certified sustainable palm oil.

You can download and print a Shopping Guide that gives more information on RSPO-certified products, as well as a list of some available on supermarket shelves: www.rspo.org/en/rspo_trademark_shopping_guide

WHAT IS THE ROUNDTABLE ON SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL?



The RSPO is a not-for-profit association that unites stakeholders from the seven sectors of the palm oil industry - oil palm producers; processors or traders; consumer goods manufacturers; retailers; banks and investors; and environmental or social non-governmental organisations (NGOs) - to develop and implement global standards for sustainable palm oil.

In 2004, a group of palm oil producing companies, industry associations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) joined together to improve the industry's approach to palm oil production in the context of workers, local communities and the environment. This cooperation resulted in the creation of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO).

In cooperation with environmental and social NGOs such as the WWF and Oxfam, in 2005 the RSPO agreed to a set of rules intended to ensure responsible and sustainable palm oil production. These rules, known as the RSPO Principles & Criteria, set the standards against which companies can claim their palm oil production processes are sustainable. Every link in the palm oil supply chain (from the plantation where it is grown to the local shops where the product is sold) must respect such principles.

Today, RSPO has more than 1,000 members worldwide which represent all links along the palm oil supply chain. They have committed to produce, source and/or use sustainable palm oil certified by the RSPO.



1,000+

RSPO members

*as of November 2012



For a full list of RSPO members, visit www.rspo.org/en/rspo_members.