

Media Release

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Australia one step closer to sustainable palm oil

Australian shoppers will soon be able to know whether or not the products they buy contain palm oil, thanks to the passage of the legislation through the Senate today.

“This is a huge step forward as Australia moves towards using environmentally sustainable palm oil,” said Andrew Rouse, Head of Sustainability for WWF-Australia.

“The incredible expansion of palm oil plantations has all too often come at the cost of pristine rainforest in places like Borneo and Sumatra. These forests are home to some of the world’s most endangered and iconic species including orang-utan and tigers.”

WWF is calling on Members of the lower house of Federal Parliament to approve the *Food Standards Amendment (Truth in Labelling – Palm Oil) Bill* as soon as possible.

“Greater transparency will not only help educate Australian shoppers, but also encourage palm oil producers to move towards creating sustainable products. We look forward to working with growers, producers, buyers and users to make this a reality and conserve precious rainforests.”

Since 2003 WWF has been working around the world to help producers create sustainable palm oil through the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO). International brands including Unilever and Cadbury are already using certified sustainable palm oil in many of their products.

In 2010, WWF supported the commitment of Australian companies such as Coles and Woolworths to using 100 per cent certified sustainable palm oil in their private label products by 2015.

Nearly 85 per cent of the world’s palm oil is produced in Indonesia and Malaysia and the UN has identified palm oil plantations as the leading cause of deforestation in these countries.

Currently, products containing palm oil only need to label the ingredient as “vegetable oil” making it hard for shoppers to make informed choices. The new law means Australians will now be able to know which products contain palm oil and support those companies using sustainable palm oil.

“This new legislation is another great step towards giving shoppers an environmentally friendly option,” said Mr Rouse.

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