



## DEBATE PACK

Number CDP 2018-0272, 7 December 2018

# Debate on an e-petition relating to the sale of products containing palm oil

A debate will be held on [e-petition 219758](#) relating to the sale of products containing palm oil on Monday 10 December 2018 in Westminster Hall at 4.30pm. The debate will be opened by Luke Hall MP.

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The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

# 1. Palm Oil: Overview

[E-petition 219758](#) on banning the sale of products containing unsustainably sourced palm oil in the UK received 89,802 signatures after closing on 16 November 2018. It will be debated in Westminster Hall on Monday 10 December 2018 after being selected for debate.

Palm Oil is commonly used in a wide range of food and household products in the UK. Most production of the oil is in South East Asia, and production has risen rapidly in recent decades, raising concerns around the environmental impact, including on endangered species.

UK Government policy on palm oil is to work towards 100% sourcing of palm oil from sustainable sources and it supports a number of international initiatives, but also recognises that 'more remains to be done' at this level. It does not currently propose to bring forward a ban on unsustainably sourced palm oil.

## 1.1 The petition

The text of [E-petition 219758](#) is as follows:

### **Ban the sale of products containing unsustainably sourced palm oil in the UK**

Global production of and demand for palm oil is increasing rapidly. But this is at the expense of tropical rain-forests which form critical habitats for many endangered species and a lifeline for some human communities. Palm oil can be found in many foods and other household items.

Did anyone see the Orangutan Diary on BBC 2? The destruction of this species as well as many others is well underway and their already declining population will decrease by a further 1/3 by 2020 unless action is taken. Thousands upon thousands of orangutans have been killed and the destruction of the rain-forests is increasing at an exponential rate. We cannot control what happens in these countries but we can refuse to accept palm oil sourced via an unsustainable method in the UK. We can all help.

## 1.2 Government position

The following [Government response](#) to the petition was published on 22 November:

Government and signatories of the UK Statement on Sustainable Production of Palm Oil have achieved a high level of success in working towards 100% sourcing of credibly certified sustainable palm oil.

In October 2012, Defra published the UK Statement on Sustainable Production of Palm Oil. The statement set out that the UK would work towards 100% sourcing of credibly certified sustainable palm oil by the end of 2015. The statement pulled together new and existing commitments on the sourcing of sustainable palm oil which have been made by key organisations representing businesses within the palm oil supply chain in the UK.

The market for sustainable palm oil is dominated by the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), and so 'sustainable' in this context is commonly understood to mean products certified to RSPO standards and criteria.

Consumption analysis figures in 2015 demonstrated the substantial progress that UK signatories had made since the launch of the UK Statement in October 2012, getting them close to their ambition of sourcing 100% sustainable palm oil.

However, palm oil is often embedded as an ingredient in refined goods, making it very difficult to trace how it is sourced and processed. The UK Round Table on Sustainable Palm Oil convened by the UK government is working to improve reporting, traceability and understanding of supply chains to ensure continuous improvement and increased use of certified palm oil.

The UK has also recognised that more remains to be done at the international level. We are a member of the Amsterdam Declarations Partnership that aims to eliminate deforestation from agricultural commodity chains with European countries and support a 100% sustainable palm oil supply chain in Europe. As part of this initiative the UK is supporting the development of a strategy which focuses on shared learning across signatory countries and different commodity user groups in those countries, as well as encouraging further action on eliminating deforestation. The UK is also a signatory of the New York Declaration on Forests, a voluntary declaration pledging to halve the rate of deforestation by 2020, to end it by 2030, and to restore hundreds of millions of acres of degraded land.

At the programming level, the UK supports the Tropical Forest Alliance (TFA), a public-private initiative with over 90 member organisations, which is taking deforestation out of supply chains for palm oil, pulp and paper, beef and soya. The TFA Africa Palm Oil Initiative recently secured the Marrakesh Declaration on palm oil, under which seven countries and major companies have agreed principles for responsible palm oil in the region. These include respect for human and community rights and no deforestation.

Through the Partnership for Forests Programme (DFID, BEIS), the UK is supporting public-private partnerships focused on sustainable agricultural production. Relevant initiatives under P4F included support to the TFA Africa Palm Oil Initiatives, which is working with ten governments in the region, companies and NGOs to encourage the development of a sustainable African palm oil industry, as well as support to the High Carbon Stock approach, which has developed operational guidelines which allow companies to implement zero deforestation commitments.

Through BEIS' investment in the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility Carbon Fund, we are providing results-based finance to countries which put in place large-scale programmes to address deforestation and forest degradation and deliver emission reductions against an agreed base-line. The Republic of Congo's programme is largely focussed on sustainable palm oil production. Programmes in Indonesia and Ghana also, to some extent, include activities related to palm oil production.

[Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs]

The Government said in answer to a [PQ on 4 December](#) on whether it would bring forward legislation to ban non-sustainable palm oil that:

The UK is determined to make good on commitments to support companies to implement zero-deforestation supply chains, including in respect of palm oil. Through the Amsterdam Declarations and the Tropical Forest Alliance 2020, we are working with businesses and other governments to strengthen governance, promote market-based solutions and put in place incentives, policies and actions that support sustainable production of palm oil alongside forest protection. While we are not proposing to bring forward a ban, we recognise that more remains to be done and will continue to explore opportunities to improve the sustainability of palm oil production.<sup>1</sup>

Defra has published progress reports on meeting its 100% sustainable palm oil target set in 2012 for data up to 2015. A different set of data provides information on 2016 onwards.

The Government's [final Palm Oil report](#) covering up to 2015 was published in February 2017. This states that:

...collectively, the imports of segregated and mass balance CSPO and purchases of GreenPalm certificates,<sup>2</sup> by UK companies in 2015 were equivalent to an estimated proportion of 87% or 108% of UK palm oil imports (excluding derivatives and finished goods), depending on the baseline trade data used. This represents an increase from 72% or 93% respectively in 2014, and from 50% and 59% respectively in 2012.<sup>3</sup>

The Government notes that:

...the results clearly demonstrate that signatories have achieved a high level of success in delivering the Statement's ambition of working towards 100% sourcing of credibly certified sustainable palm oil by the end of 2015. This represents a positive transformation in the UK market for sustainable palm oil over the period since the Statement was agreed.<sup>4</sup>

Efeca (Emily Fripp and Associated Consultancy) produces for the Government [annual progress reports on the UK Round Table on Sustainable Palm Oil](#). The latest was published in October 2018 and notes that 75% of total palm oil imports to the UK were certified by the RSPO (through the mass balance, segregated or identity preserved models). This is a slight decrease from 78% in 2016 and 77% in 2015. Total palm oil usage has increased by 14,000 tonnes overall but was still lower than in 2010.<sup>5</sup> These figures do not directly correspond with the data to 2015, which included credit certificates. Credit certificate use has fallen in recent years.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [PQ 194149 \[on Palm Oil Sales\] 4 December 2018](#)

<sup>2</sup> Segregated - The Segregation supply chain model assures that RSPO certified palm oil products delivered to the end user come only from RSPO certified sources. It permits the mixing of RSPO certified palm oil from a variety of sources. The Mass Balance system allows for mixing of RSPO and non-RSPO certified palm oil in the supply chain provided that overall site quantities are controlled. It works through a supply chain certification system with 3rd party auditing.

<sup>3</sup> Department for Environment [Food and Rural Affairs, UK statement on sustainable palm oil: final progress report](#), February 2017

<sup>4</sup> Department for Environment [Food and Rural Affairs, UK statement on sustainable palm oil: final progress report](#), February 2017

<sup>5</sup> Efeca, [Annual Progress Report on UK Roundtable on Sourcing Sustainable Palm Oil](#) November 2018

<sup>6</sup> This briefing does not seek to provide a detailed analysis of the measurement systems.

Others have assessed UK company performance: for example the WWF produced in [2016 a scorecard](#) on the sustainability of palm oil used by major companies in the UK, while the [Zoological Society of London](#) published in November 2018 a report on company performance on sustainable sourcing.<sup>7</sup>

## 1.3 Palm oil usage and production

### Palm oil use in the UK

Palm oil is today used in a vast range of food and household products used in the UK. Oil palm trees (*Elaeis guineensis*) are native to West Africa but were introduced to tropical regions of Southeast Asia and Latin America in the late 19th century. Oil extracted from the fruit was traditionally used in Africa for cooking but has now found a wider range of uses: as a substitute for animal fats such as butter in baked products, soaps and cosmetics, or as a basis for biodiesel.<sup>8</sup> The Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) claims that “around half of packaged products in supermarkets contain palm oil”.<sup>9</sup> The WWF’s [Which everyday products contain palm oil](#) webpages [Accessed 3 December 2018] contain information on some common products containing palm oil such as chocolate, margarine and detergents.

Palm oil has advantages as an ingredient in products which makes it a popular choice for manufacturers. The [Food and Drink Federation \(FDF\)](#) notes that palm oil is a key ingredient for the food industry due to its “superior sensory characteristics and technical attributes. No alternative edible vegetable oil that is naturally solid at room temperature and provides the same functional properties, exists in sufficient quantity”.<sup>10</sup>

Producing palm oil requires less land and fewer inputs than other vegetable oils which makes it a cheaper option for manufacturers in comparison. The oil palm tree is harvested all year round and produces an average of 10 tonnes per hectare. This means it needs ten times less land than the other three major oil producing crops (soya, rapeseed and sunflower).<sup>11</sup>

As a country, the UK has however reduced its imports of the raw product over a number of years (although it is not possible to identify the volume of palm oil in imported products). From a peak in 2003 of just over 800,000 tonnes, the UK’s net imports have approximately halved to 400,000 tonnes in 2016, as shown in the graph below.<sup>12</sup> The UK now accounts for 0.6% of annual global consumption.

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<sup>7</sup> The report (SPOTT report) assesses commodity producers and traders on the public disclosure of their policies, operations and commitments related to environmental, social and governance issues. SPOTT scores companies annually against sector-specific indicators, to benchmark their progress over time

<sup>8</sup> UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) [African oil palm webpages](#) [Accessed 5 December 2018]

<sup>9</sup> WWF “[Which Everyday Products Contain Palm Oil?](#)” [accessed 3 December 2018]

<sup>10</sup> Food and Drink Federation, [Sustainable Palm Oil Q&A](#), 24 September 2015

<sup>11</sup> Greenpalm, [Certified Sustainable Palm Oil webpages](#) [Accessed 5 December 2018]

<sup>12</sup> Source: UN Food and Agriculture Organization [FAOSTAT Crops and livestock products dataset](#), accessed 5 Dec 2018.

### Net imports of palm oil and palm kernel oil to the United Kingdom, 1986 to 2016

Thousand tonnes



Source: UN Food and Agriculture Organization FAOSTAT Crops and livestock products dataset - UK imports minus exports

While Palm Oil is not used as a biofuel in the UK, the biofuel sector worldwide is a significant user of palm oil. In June, the EU [agreed plans](#) for revisions to the Renewable Energy Directive to cap the use of palm oil in transport biofuels at 2019 levels until 2023 and to reduce it to zero by 2030.<sup>13</sup>

### Where is palm oil produced?

Over 80 million metric tonnes of palm oil and palm kernel oil are produced annually, making it the world's biggest oil crop.<sup>14</sup>

The oil palm is grown in tropical climates within 10° of the equator. It is cultivated in lowland areas from South America to Africa and Asia. Until the 1960s oil palms were mainly grown in Africa, but since then production has shifted to Southeast Asia: according to the US Department of Agriculture, Palm Oil production in 2018/19 will be made up of Indonesia (56% of global output) and Malaysia (28%), followed by Thailand (4%), Colombia (2.1%) and Nigeria (1.3%). It is also worth noting that Indonesia (the largest producer) is also the largest consumer of Palm Oil.<sup>15</sup>

Production has grown rapidly, for example a [2016 study](#), found that the area for oil palm production has increased in recent decades, from 6 million hectares in 1990 to 17 million hectares worldwide in 2012, with it accounting for around 10% of global permanent crop land at the time of the study.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> See for example, Reuters, [EU to phase out palm oil from transport fuel by 2030](#), 14 June 2018

<sup>14</sup> US Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, [Oilseeds: World Markets and Trade \(Nov 2018\)](#) Table 3

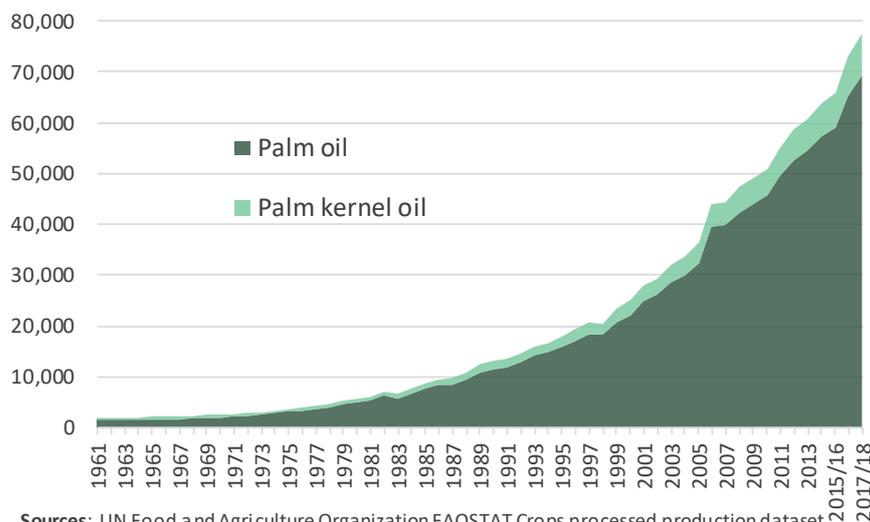
<sup>15</sup> Ibid. Table 11.

<sup>16</sup> Johannes Pirker et al, [What are the limits to oil palm expansion?](#) Global Environmental Change 40 (2016) 73–81

The graph below charts the increase in global palm oil production up to 2017/18 and shows the particularly steep rise from the 1990s onwards. In 2017/18 palm oil production was 69.3 million tonnes and palm kernel oil a further 8.2 million tonnes.<sup>17</sup>

### Global production of palm oil and palm kernel oil, 1961 to 2017/18

Thousand tonnes



Sources: UN Food and Agriculture Organization FAOSTAT Crops processed production dataset (to 2014); US Dept of Agriculture (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service Oilseeds: World Markets and Trade (Nov 2018) table 03: Major Vegetable Oils World Supply (from 2015/16 to 2017/18)

According to a recent report from the IUCN Oil Palm Task Force, demand for vegetable oils will continue to grow to 2050, at a predicted rate of 1.7% a year (just over a third of the growth rate between 2001 and 2013).<sup>18</sup>

## 1.4 Environmental impact of palm oil production

The growth of demand for palm oil has driven the expansion of oil palm plantations, raising concerns over the impact of deforestation on biodiversity and the climate. For example, a 2013 European Commission study (2013) found that 5.5 million hectares of forest were lost to oil palm plantations between 1990 and 2008.<sup>19</sup>

Establishing new plantations has environmental and socio-economic impacts. Tropical areas suitable for oil palm cultivation are species rich habitats and, despite being the most land-use efficient among vegetable oils, production is land-intensive. However, the impacts of this expansion will depend on the former land use of the planted areas.

<sup>17</sup> US Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, [Oilseeds: World Markets and Trade \(Nov 2018\)](#) Table 3

<sup>18</sup> Meijaard, E. et al. (eds.), [Oil palm and biodiversity. A situation analysis by the IUCN Oil Palm Task Force](#), 2018

<sup>19</sup> European Parliamentary Research Service, [At a glance: Palm oil, Economic and Environmental Impacts](#), February 2018

Socio-economic impacts will depend on the industry organisation and the extent to which economic gains are distributed but can include loss of resources for local indigenous populations.

In [2006 Defra published a case study on palm oil](#). This summarised the main environmental and socio-economic impacts of palm oil production:

The main environmental and socio-economic impacts from palm oil production are associated with the establishment of the plantation. Oil palms can only be cultivated in tropical areas and the original habitat on the land most suitable for oil palm production is lowland evergreen tropical rainforest. Worldwide, this is the most species rich terrestrial habitat type. These factors, together with oil palm production being a land-intensive industry result in significant impacts to biodiversity. Habitat conversion to monoculture and threats to key species are the greatest environmental concerns associated with large-scale palm oil production.<sup>20</sup>

Deforestation is a major concern as it can lead to species and biodiversity loss, can release carbon emissions as well as a lower capacity to absorb carbon dioxide. For example, on the island of Borneo, at least 50% of all deforestation between 2005 and 2015 was related to oil palm development according to the recent ICUN report.<sup>21</sup> Forest fires resulting from agricultural land used for Palm Oil amongst other things have also been reported as an environmental concern.<sup>22</sup>

[Some studies](#) have reported that in Indonesia, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea only 4% of the expansion of oil palm plantations between 1990 and 2010 was on land derived from undisturbed forest, although a further 32% and 34% came from disturbed forest or plantations and agroforest respectively.<sup>23</sup>

The recent [POSTnote Trends in Agriculture](#) (8 November 2018) considers the intensification of farming and includes a box on Palm Oil production.

A number of wildlife and sustainable development charities have campaigned for some time to improve the sustainability of palm oil production and/or limit its use. For example, WWF [webpages on palm oil](#) [Accessed 4 December 2018] note that:

Large-scale conversion of tropical forests to oil palm plantations has a devastating impact on a huge number of plant and animal species. Oil palm production also leads to an increase in human-wildlife conflict as populations of large animals are squeezed into increasingly isolated fragments of natural habitat. The habitats destroyed frequently contain rare and endangered species or serve as wildlife corridors between areas of genetic diversity. Even national parks have been severely impacted. Forty-three percent of Tesso Nilo National Park in Sumatra—which was established to

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<sup>20</sup> Defra, Science and Research Projects: [Review of Sustainable Commodities, Final Report: Palm Oil](#), December 2006 [Accessed 21 November 2018]

<sup>21</sup> Meijaard, E. et al. (eds.), [Oil palm and biodiversity. A situation analysis by the IUCN Oil Palm Task Force](#), 2018

<sup>22</sup> The Guardian, [Indonesia forest fires](#), 1 December 2015

<sup>23</sup> Petrus Gunarso, Manjela Eko Hartoyo, Fahmuddin Agus and Timothy J. Killeen, Tropenbas International, [Oil palm and land use change in Indonesia, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea](#), 2013 [Accessed 4 December 2018]

provide habitat for the endangered Sumatran Tiger—has now been overrun with illegal palm oil plantings.

## Impacts on key endangered species

Campaigns to protect key endangered species highlight the problems raised by the conversion of species-rich rainforest to oil palm plantation (and other uses). The [WWF endangered species webpages](#) list the following key species which, according to the WWF, are endangered or critically endangered and whose habitats are under threat from oil palm development:

### **Sumatran elephant** (*Critically Endangered*)

While Sumatra is home to several of the country's largest national parks, many areas in these parks are still being torn down—illegally—to produce palm oil. Fewer than 3,000 elephants survive on the island, threatened by illegal palm oil production.

### **Bornean Pygmy Elephant** (*Endangered*)

Only 1,500 or so of these baby-faced animals still live on Borneo, an island where palm oil production continues to encroach on their habitat.

### **Sumatran Rhino** (*Critically endangered*)

These smallest rhino are also the closest living relatives to the now-extinct woolly rhinos. Their population is unstable, threatened by poaching as well as the destruction of their habitat by unsustainable palm oil production

### **Sumatran Tiger** (*Critically endangered*)

The last of Indonesia's tigers—now fewer than 400—are holding on for survival in the remaining patches of forests on the island of Sumatra. While poaching claims most tigers each year, deforestation remains a serious threat. Sumatra has lost 85 percent of its forests in the last half-century, primarily due to conversion for palm oil and pulp plantations

### **Orangutans** (or *Bornean Orangutan- Endangered; Sumatran Orangutan – Critically Endangered*)

Indonesia and Malaysia produce more than 85% of the world's palm oil and are the only remaining home to orangutans. Fewer than 80,000 of these animals survive today, their habitats under constant threat of deforestation.

The ICUN report notes that palm oil production features in assessments of 193 threatened species (according to The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species).<sup>24</sup>

## Orangutans

This petition refers specifically to orangutans. There have been varied reports of the decline in the number of orangutans, for example in Borneo.<sup>25</sup> A range of factors impact on populations as orangutans live in areas subject to various pressures including logging and hunting.

<sup>24</sup> Meijaard, E. et al. (eds.), [Oil palm and biodiversity. A situation analysis by the IUCN Oil Palm Task Force](#), 2018

<sup>25</sup> The Guardian, [Dramatic decline in Borneo's orangutan population as 150,000 lost in 16 years](#), 15 February 2018

The [Orangutan Foundation International in its FAQ webpages](#) [Accessed 3 December 2018] estimates that 1,000 to 5,000 orangutans are killed in palm oil concessions each year. An [academic study](#) found that between 1999 and 2015 the orangutan population in Borneo had halved – a reduction of some 100,000 animals.<sup>26</sup> The study noted that, although land use change played a role in this, including from oil palm plantations being developed in rainforest habitat areas, other factors had a significant role (for example, hunting of orangutan by local populations). However, the study notes that the change in land use itself could be a factor in increasing the number of orangutan hunted since loss of their habitat could have driven the animals towards more populated areas, making them more likely to be killed.<sup>27</sup>

Scientists have criticised the Indonesian Government's assessment published in 2018 that the orangutan population in its forests increased by 10% between 2015 and 2017. Criticisms include inappropriate extrapolations of data across the country from studies of a small number of sites and using data from sites where orangutans have been introduced or translocated from other sites.<sup>28</sup>

## 1.5 Sustainable production

Production of other vegetable oils also has an environmental impact. Palm oil production uses land efficiently in comparison to other oils and is therefore supported as a product by Government policies and NGOs (see below) provided the oil is produced sustainably. The [FDF notes](#) that:

Oil palm produces 10 times more oil per unit area than soybean, 7 times more than sunflower and 6 times more than rape. Oil palm trees provide nearly 40% of the world's production of vegetable oils while using only 5.5% of the total area planted with oil crops. This means that, to produce the same volume of oil, oil palm requires significantly less land.<sup>29</sup>

Key environmental campaign groups note the value of palm oil in producing high yields of oil on less land than other vegetable oils but want to reduce the impact of palm oil production on the environment and biodiversity. Many, including WWF, for example, support the use of goods produced using environmentally-friendly palm oil. [WWF states](#) that:

Palm oil is a very productive crop. It offers a far greater yield at a lower cost of production than other vegetable oils. Global production of and demand for palm oil is increasing rapidly. Plantations are spreading across Asia, Africa and Latin America. But such expansion comes at the expense of tropical forests— which form critical habitats for many endangered species and a lifeline for some human communities.

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<sup>26</sup> Voigt M et al, Current Biology Volume 28, Issue 5, [Global Demand for natural resources eliminated more than 100,000 Bornean orangutans](#), 5 March 2018

<sup>27</sup> Centre for International Forestry Research report of study by Voigt M et al, [Current Biology Volume 28, Issue 5, [Global Demand for natural resources eliminated more than 100,000 Bornean orangutans](#), 5 March 2018]

<sup>28</sup> Current Biology, [Orangutan populations are certainly not increasing in the wild](#), Volume 28, Issue 21, November 5, 2018

<sup>29</sup> Food and Drink Federation, [Sustainable Palm Oil Q&A](#)

WWF envisions a global marketplace based on socially acceptable and environment-friendly production and sourcing of palm oil. We aim to encourage increased demand for, and use of, goods produced using such practices.<sup>30</sup>

Other groups have made similar points encouraging the use of sustainable sources:

- [Oxfam](#),<sup>31</sup>
- [Greenpeace](#),<sup>32</sup>

An event in Westminster in June 2018 by [EFECA](#) (a consultancy) and Chester Zoo highlighted issues around sustainable palm oil. The EFECA website reports:

Public awareness of deforestation and the subsequent impacts on biodiversity including key species such as orangutans has grown, leading to some calls to move away from palm oil and use other vegetable oils. However, when grown sustainably, palm oil is the most productive crop with Cat Barton, Field Programmes Manager at Chester Zoo stating, "*To boycott palm oil and increase the demand for other, less efficient oils could have a negative impact on wildlife in other areas of the world... Palm oil has the potential to be very environmentally friendly if it is grown sustainably.*"

The UK market has a target of importing 100% certified sustainable palm oil by 2020. Currently total palm oil imports to the UK stand at 78% RSPO certified, so Efecca is focussing on helping the sectors that need support to reach that target, including the food service sector.<sup>33</sup>

## Certification of sustainable palm oil

Industry organisations in eight EU countries (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom) have already committed to using only sustainably produced palm oil.<sup>34</sup>

There are a number of voluntary schemes for certifying production as sustainable. The most widespread is the international [Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil \(RSPO\)](#). This has established certification processes to provide assurance to the customer that the standard of palm oil production is sustainable.

13.2 million tonnes or 19% of production, grown on 3.6 million hectares of land, is certified by RSPO under its scheme.<sup>35</sup>

The [RSPO Certification webpages](#) (Accessed 3 December 2018) state that:

There is an ever-urgent need and growing global concern that commodities are produced without causing harm to the

<sup>30</sup> [WWF Industries/palm oil webpages](#) [Accessed 4 December 2018]

<sup>31</sup> Oxfam Discussion Paper, [Fair Company: Community Partnerships in Palm Oil](#), May 2014

<sup>32</sup> See Greenpeace International, [The Final Countdown](#), September 2018, and Greenpeace [webpages Palm Oil FAQs](#) [Accessed 4 December 2018]

<sup>33</sup> Efecca webpage, [Efecca helps launch world's first sustainable palm oil city event at Westminster](#) [Accessed 4 December 2018]

<sup>34</sup> Food and Drink Federation, [Sustainable Palm Oil Q&A](#)

<sup>35</sup> [RSPO Impact Update webpages](#), data as at 31 October 2018 [Accessed 4 December 2018]

environment or society. RSPO certification is an assurance to the customer that the standard of palm oil production is sustainable.

Palm oil producers are certified through strict verification of the production process to the stringent RSPO Principles & Criteria for Sustainable Palm Oil Production by accredited Certifying Bodies, and can be withdrawn at any time in case of infringement of the rules and standards. All organisations in the supply chain that use RSPO certified sustainable oil products are audited to prevent overselling and mixing palm oil with conventional (or non-sustainable) oil palm products. These organisations can claim the use of RSPO certified sustainable oil palm products “on pack” by using the RSPO Trademark.

Among other things, RSPO standards include commitments not to clear primary forest, set off fires, or plant oil palms on land whose ownership is disputed. However, environmental groups have argued that such commitments do not go far enough, as they do not ban deforestation in general. The standards in place up to November 2018 prohibited the clearing of primary, or virgin, forest to make way for palm plantations, but allowed for the cutting of secondary forests and peat forests with a peat layer less than 3 metres (10 feet) deep.

In [November 2018 the RSPO agreed new principles](#) to address concerns about shortcomings in commitments on deforestation. The principles now include a commitment to no deforestation and a steering group has been set up to produce guidance on how this should be incorporated into the revised certification standard.<sup>36</sup> The new standards mean palm oil growers must ensure future land clearing does not cause deforestation or damage areas especially rich in carbon, including peatlands and [high carbon stock \(HCS\) forests](#). This means no more planting of oil palms in peat of any depth.<sup>37</sup> This move was greeted with “cautious optimism” by green NGOs, such as the Rainforest Action Network, which also noted that rigorous enforcement was essential to make the standard effective.<sup>38</sup>

UK research has supported the development of standards to support biodiversity on plantations which is being used by the RSPO.<sup>39</sup>

Some concerns have been raised on certification, such as by the European Parliament ([where a resolution has argued for higher standards](#))<sup>40</sup> while in less developed countries there may be less interest in using certified goods.<sup>41</sup> There have also been criticisms of the RPSO

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<sup>36</sup> RSPO news release, RSPO and HCSA collaborate to implement no deforestation in high forest cover landscapes, 15 November 2018

<sup>37</sup> RSPO news release, RSPO and HCSA collaborate to implement no deforestation in high forest cover landscapes, 15 November 2018

<sup>38</sup> Eco business, RSPO adopts total ban on deforestation under new standards, 15 November 2018

<sup>39</sup> NERC, [Protecting biodiversity in palm oil](#), 15 November 2018

<sup>40</sup> [European Parliament resolution of 4 April 2017 on palm oil and deforestation of rainforests \(2016/2222\(INI\)\)](#)

<sup>41</sup> European Parliamentary Research Service, [At a glance: Palm oil, Economic and Environmental Impacts](#), February 2018

approach arguing that it does not have a strong impact locally and that national Governments could do more to regulate the use of palm oil.<sup>42</sup>

Another issue is that around 40% of palm oil production is by smallholders, who may find certification more challenging.<sup>43</sup>

One part of the RSPO scheme allows the purchase of credits which commentators such as Ethical Consumer Magazine have criticised since companies, such as US confectionary company Mondelez (owners of Cadbury, Bel Vita etc), bought credits rather than sourcing certified products directly. Researchers found that only 1.2% of palm oil categorised by Mondelez as coming from sustainable sources was from fully segregated sustainable supplies.<sup>44</sup> This meant that the company was able to “tick the Certified Sustainable Palm Oil box” without “ensuring that the palm oil is from a deforestation-free supply.”<sup>45</sup>

### Industry view on certification

The [Food and Drink Federation](#) (FDF) notes that:

Some people perceive the RSPO to be too slow and limited in scope to achieve desired change. However, FDF believes that credible and effective progress can only be made through a legitimate multi-stakeholder organisation like the RSPO, which takes account of all relevant factors impacting on the supply chain and commands market confidence in its approach to sustainability certification.

A key challenge is that many food manufacturers use certain parts of palm oil, known as fractions as well as blends. Some of these complex fractions or blends are not currently available as Certified Sustainable Palm Oil (CSPO). FDF therefore supports the continuing efforts by the global marketplace to establish a solution that will deliver sufficient supplies of competitively priced CSPO across all complex fractions.<sup>46</sup>

### Manufacturer and retailer action

The FDF published a [policy position on Sustainable Palm Oil](#) in May 2018.<sup>47</sup> It states that:

FDF members are concerned about the destruction of rainforests and peat fields in South East Asia caused by the creation of palm oil plantations and the effect this is having on the environment, particularly in terms of greenhouse gas emissions and loss of biodiversity.

That is why many FDF members are committed to working with their supply chain partners to achieve 100% use of certified

<sup>42</sup> Friends of the Earth International webpage dated 2009 [Certified palm oil is not a solution](#) (accessed 21 November 2018)

<sup>43</sup> Brandi, C., et al, 2015, Challenges for Smallholder Certification Under the RSPO, *Journal of Environment and Development*, 24(3), 292-314

<sup>44</sup> A segregated supply means that the palm oil is kept separate from other supplies and can be fully traced back to the mills who processed it and the producers who grew it.

<sup>45</sup> Ecologist, [The Real problem with palm oil](#), 18 July 2018

<sup>46</sup> FDF [Sustainable Palm Oil policy position](#), 25 May 2018

sustainable palm oil (CSPO) – using various mechanisms from GreenPalm certificates to segregation.

FDF supports the work of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) to promote the growth and use of sustainable palm oil and to bring CSPO to the market through a multilateral process that includes all stakeholders in the palm oil supply chain.

Some people perceive the RSPO to be too slow and limited in scope to achieve desired change. However, FDF believes that credible and effective progress can only be made through a legitimate multi-stakeholder organisation like the RSPO, which takes account of all relevant factors impacting on the supply chain and commands market confidence in its approach to sustainability certification.

A key challenge is that many food manufacturers use certain parts of palm oil, known as fractions as well as blends. Some of these complex fractions or blends are not currently available as CSPO. FDF therefore supports the continuing efforts by the global marketplace to establish a solution that will deliver sufficient supplies of competitively priced CSPO across all complex fractions. [...]

A number of companies which use palm oil have published policies on improving palm oil sustainability, for example:

- [Unilever](#)
- [Nestle](#)
- [Tesco](#)
- [Sainsbury](#)
- [Asda](#)
- [Morrisons](#)
- Retail company [Iceland](#). In April 2018 Iceland stated that

By the end of 2018, 100% of our own brand food will contain no palm oil. We are the first UK supermarket to commit to removing palm oil from all own brand food." [...] "Until Iceland can guarantee palm oil is not causing rainforest destruction, we are simply saying 'no to palm oil'. We don't believe there is such a thing as 'sustainable' palm oil available to retailers, so we are giving consumers a choice about what they buy".<sup>48</sup>

A major current public focus on palm oil is linked to reports of the ['banning' of an Iceland supermarket advert](#) which includes information on the impact of palm oil on rainforests.<sup>49</sup>

## 1.6 Product labelling

Consumers can be supported in buying sustainable palm oil products through clear labelling. New EU rules introduced in 2014 mean that

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<sup>49</sup> BBC News, [Banned Iceland palm oil Christmas ad 'too political'](#), 9 November 2018

food labels must include palm oil more specifically in ingredient lists. Previously generic terms such as 'vegetable oils' could be used.

Defra Minister [George Eustice explained in a PQ answer on 12 March 2018](#) that:

Products containing palm oil must be labelled as such – the vegetable oil ingredient of food must now indicate the vegetable origin of the oil.

See [Annex VII part A 7-8 of the 1169/2011 Regulation](#) on the provision of food information to consumers for more information. Further information

The regulations do not require detail on whether the source is sustainable, but it has been argued by the RSPO that labelling in itself encourages use of sustainable palm oil.<sup>50</sup>

## Further Reading

- [Sustainable production of palm oil statement \(UK Government\)](#)
- [UK Round Table on Sustainable Palm Oil](#) (Efeca)
- [Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil \(RSPO\)](#)
- [ZSL's Sustainable Palm Oil Platform](#)
- [Guardian Sustainable Business Palm Oil Debate](#)
- [European Palm Oil Alliance \(EPOA\)](#)
- Meijaard, E. et al. (eds.), *Oil palm and biodiversity. A situation analysis by the IUCN Oil Palm Task Force*, 2018
- [WWF](#)
- [Greenpeace](#)
- [Rainforest Alliance](#)

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<sup>50</sup> The Guardian, [EU labelling changes force industry action on palm oil](#) 12 December 2014

## 2. News items

Business Green

### **Palm oil bar codes launched to help consumers spot unsustainable supply chain**

26 November 2018

<https://www.businessgreen.com/bg/news/3066934/palm-oil-bar-codes-launched-to-help-consumers-spot-unsustainable-supply-chain>

Guardian

### **Iceland's Christmas TV advert rejected for being political**

9 November 2018

<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2018/nov/09/iceland-christmas-tv-ad-banned-political-greenpeace-orangutan>

Independent

### **Orangutans declining despite 'impossible' Indonesian government report claiming they are on the rise, scientists say**

5 November 2018

<https://www.independent.co.uk/environment/orangutans-indonesia-government-endangered-species-borneo-deforestation-report-science-a8618441.html>

FT

### **Nestlé warns palm oil trade over rainforest destruction**

8 October 2018

<https://www.ft.com/content/019a7c68-c8b8-11e8-ba8f-ee390057b8c9>

Guardian

### **Iceland to be first UK supermarket to cut palm oil from own-brand products**

10 April 2018

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/apr/10/iceland-to-be-first-uk-supermarket-to-cut-palm-oil-from-own-brand-products>

Guardian

**UK defies EU over Indonesian palm oil trade, leaked papers show**

9 March 2018

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/mar/09/uk-defies-eu-over-indonesian-palm-oil-trade-leaked-papers-show>

## 3. Recent Press releases

### WWF

#### **British companies have led the way in palm oil sustainability – but are they doing enough?**

**28 November 2018**

Demand for food and agriculture poses one of the biggest dangers to the planet. It is the leading cause of deforestation, responsible for clearing huge areas of valuable habitat and threatening wildlife to the point of extinction.

Palm oil is a globally important vegetable oil found in an enormous range of food and non-food products that we use on a daily basis. It is a very productive crop, producing more oil per land area and requiring fewer inputs than any other equivalent vegetable oil crop. Grown only in the tropics, Indonesia and Malaysia produce around 85% of the world's palm.

But its proliferation has led to extensive and ongoing deforestation in these precious tropical regions, threatening wildlife such as orangutans, elephants and tigers. Production is expected to double between 2009 and 2050, putting even greater pressure on the vulnerable habitats of these iconic species.

The [2016 edition of WWF's Palm Oil Buyers Scorecard](#), looks at 137 major retailers, consumer goods manufacturers and food service companies from the around the world including key UK brands like Tesco, Sainsbury's, Marks & Spencer, Waitrose and Morrison's among others.

British retailers, manufacturers and food service companies scored among the best in this edition, against some of the expectations that WWF has on business following over 10 years of campaigning. Much loved British companies such as Marks and Spencer and Boots are 'leading the way' on sourcing sustainable palm oil. But whilst there's welcome progress from some, a number of important global brands are not acting or are hiding from the issue.

Palm oil is in 50% of the packaged products that we buy, from pizza to lipstick, so we won't stop fighting until we can record 100% sustainable palm oil being used. Switching to another vegetable oil isn't the answer, as alternatives can use 4 to 10 times the amount of land, stimulating even more deforestation in other parts of the world.

We will be re-assessing these companies in 2019 to report on their progress to meet their 2020 commitments to remove deforestation from their supply chain and use only sustainable palm oil in their products. We want to make it easier for consumers like you to be able to shop sustainably so we don't have to choose between good and bad palm oil.

We've also been working closely with the industry on strengthening the RSPO (Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil) standard, with a vote having been approved on 15th of November to ensure there are stronger safeguards on issues including deforestation, expansion on peat and exploitation of labour.

WWF sees the newly adopted RSPO Principles and Criteria as a big step forward in addressing the weaknesses in the previous version and believes it now represents an essential tool that can help companies achieve their commitments.

You can do your bit and help in making palm oil sustainable too. Firstly, it's key to understand what products you can genuinely trust. [Giki](#), an app which acts as your 'sustainable shopping companion,' have just launched a 'palm oil badge.'

The badge tells you whether there is palm oil in the product or not. It also indicates whether it's sustainable, taking into account whether the parent company are making the right decisions, based on both the WWF scorecard and RSPO data.

To find out more about palm oil, see our ['8 things to know about palm oil'](#)

*About the 2016 Palm Oil Buyers*

*Scorecard: [palmoilscorecard.wwf.panda.org](http://palmoilscorecard.wwf.panda.org)*

The 2016 Palm Oil Buyers Scorecard, the fourth WWF has published since 2009, scored 94 companies that were also assessed in the 2013 Scorecard. 75 of these companies have shown progress, while 13 seem to have stalled and 6 gone backwards. Whilst the overall direction of the sustainability journey is good for the majority of companies, WWF wants to see all brands taking responsibility for the palm oil they use.

As in previous years, the WWF Palm Oil Scorecard measures how companies performed on basic steps such as joining the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), committing to and buying sustainable palm oil, and transparency. The Scorecard focuses on the year 2015, by which many companies pledged to consumers that they would be using 100% certified palm oil.

The RSPO shows that palm oil can expand sustainably - and the role of retailers and manufacturers is to support that by joining the RSPO and buying RSPO certified sustainable palm oil.

## **Department for International Development**

### **UK closes global wildlife conference with UK aid pledge to protect critical forest habitats**

**12 October 2018**

The International Development Secretary has committed £35 million of UK aid to protecting critical forest habitats and species threatened by extinction

The UK has signalled its global leadership and commitment to tackling the Illegal Wildlife Trade with a landmark announcement of UK aid money to draw this week's conference to a close.

Today, the International Development Secretary has committed £35 million of UK aid to protecting critical forest habitats and species threatened by extinction, including the chimpanzee, gorilla, orangutan and tiger.

The further package comes after a week of eye-catching commitments from DFID, which has pledged to tackle the scourges of the Illegal Wildlife Trade, deforestation and wildlife extinction while supporting the world's poorest communities to thrive.

International Development Secretary, Penny Mordaunt said:

Around the world 1.2 billion people rely on forests and natural habitats for their livelihoods. For the thousands of such communities which benefit from industries like tourism, protecting the natural environment is a crucial development issue.

UK aid-backed projects happening right now across the world, such as those we can announce today, are leading the global fight to protect the natural environment that we all love so much.

We owe it to future generations to work together to end wildlife crime, to protect essential forest habitats and to bring the world's poorest communities out of poverty.

Through UK aid, the UK is driving new, sustainable approaches in some of the world's richest natural environments and most beautiful areas, which both protect the environment and provide quality, sustainable jobs to local communities.

Today's announcement echoes the International Development Secretary's comments earlier this week, when she encouraged the private sector to "lean in" and support the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

The fresh funding will secure the support of leading businesses and investors to back environmentally friendly business practices, which protect wildlife habitats and do not cause deforestation, including:

- In Ghana, UK aid is increasing sustainable cocoa production, benefiting up to 150,000 people while protecting the 31,000-hectare Bia National Park. We are supporting local communities through training to female farmers and providing start-up kits for local businesses. The Bia National Park hosts 62 species of mammal and 160 species of bird, including the Forest Elephant, Chimpanzee and Lovebird.
- In Ethiopia, DFID's support is helping to develop sustainably produced wild forest coffee, with potential to double the incomes for up to 23,000 farmers. Ethiopia's wild coffee region is the range of the endemic and endangered Ethiopian wolf, Nyala antelope and African lions.

Projects like these are illustrative of the 'win-win' approach championed by DFID, encouraging sustainable livelihoods whilst conserving some of the world's iconic and endangered species, which benefits us all.

Forests provide precious habitats for many critically endangered wildlife species. Loss of tropical forests is being driven by the cultivation of crops like palm oil, soya, cocoa and coffee, which account for over 70% of deforestation in developing countries. These crops provide jobs and livelihoods in poor rural areas in developing countries, but forest clearance is often illegal and damaging to the local environment.

Palm oil is used in many of our processed foods, soaps and cosmetics, soya is used to feed animals reared for our meat and cocoa is used to make the chocolate we love, and coffee is obviously a hugely popular drink across the world. The UK is now leading an approach where British consumers can continue to enjoy these products and resources, by supporting sustainable practices, jobs and businesses which protect forests.

A separate funding package will support a number of projects targeting the trade of wildlife products destined for Asia, where demand for illegally trafficked wildlife products such as Pangolin scales, furs and ivory are driving the illegal trade, causing wildlife to be slaughtered, forests to be felled and communities to be devastated.

These measures, part of an overall package of £2.5 million, will include a project which will expose illegal activities and drive investigations in the Congo Basin. Previous projects have already jailed over 1,500 significant wildlife traffickers to date.

#### *NOTES TO EDITORS*

- This announcement constitutes a new funding commitment of £33.5 million to DFID's Investments in Forests and Sustainable Land Use (IFSLU) programme, and £2.5 million of funding allocated from existing budgets in DFID's Forest Governance, Markets and Climate Programme (FGMC).
- DFID committed £60m to the IFSLU programme from 2015-20. Today's funding will extend the programme for a further three years (2020-23).
- DFID's FGMC programme is a ten-year (2011-2021) programme which contributes to UK efforts to end illegal deforestation, ensure that forests contribute to sustainable development and tackle climate change. The final phase of funding (2018-2021) totals £87 million.

#### *Notes on the further package of 'Demand Reduction' programmes*

A separate support package will support a number of projects targeting the trading of wildlife products into South East Asia, including:

- Exposing illegal activities and driving investigations in the Congo Basin - UK aid will expand the work of the Eagle Network in the Congo Basin (Cameroon, Gabon and Rep. of Congo) whose work has jailed over 1,500 significant wildlife traffickers to date. They will work with governments and civil society monitors to drive investigations,

prosecutions and expose criminals publicly. This can reduce illegal logging and protect Chimpanzees, Forest Elephants and Mandrills.

- Strengthen international regulations governing the trade in endangered species – working with Forest Trends and the Environmental Investigation Agency to link efforts tackling IWT with the successful tactics, which have cracked down on the trade in illegal timber to support the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
- Training law enforcement and boosting cooperation between South East Asian and African countries – working with the Global Environmental Institute (GEI), WWF UK, and Traffic to train enforcement officers in Cameroon, Gabon and the Republic of Congo, to allow information sharing and joint enforcement operations for both the timber and wildlife trade in areas with Gorilla, Leatherback Sea Turtle and Bonobo habitats.
- Tackling illegal deforestation and wildlife crime in the Mekong, Central Africa and Indonesia – working with the Wildlife Conservation Society to sustainably manage over 8 million hectares of forests and 50,000 forest-dependent households by supporting tougher standards on the timber trade and improving the governance of forests and wildlife, including by working with agricultural companies to support sustainable jobs. Wildlife such as the Asian Elephant, Asian Rhino and Sun Bear depend upon habitats in the Mekong.
- Tracking illegal trade networks between Africa and South East Asia – with the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), we will research and map trade networks from African countries to South East Asia, and work with local civil societies and anti-corruption institutions to expose illegal routes and practices. In 2016 the EIA exposed \$1.9 billion of illegal trade in Siamese Rosewood.

## **Greenpeace**

### **UK brands will fail palm oil promise**

**19th September 2018**

The world's largest consumer brands are using palm oil from producers that have destroyed an area of Indonesian rainforest the size of Greater Manchester in three years, a new report by Greenpeace International shows.

Greenpeace has investigated 25 of the most notorious palm oil producers in Indonesia and found links to 17 major food and cosmetics brands. [\*The Final Countdown\*](#) report reveals that, between them, the 25 producers cleared over 130,000ha of rainforest since the end of 2015. 40% of that clearance (51,600ha) was in Papua – one of the most biodiverse regions on earth, untouched by the palm oil industry until recently. The report is the most comprehensive account of deforestation in Papua to date.

Fiona Nicholls, Greenpeace UK Forests Campaigner said:

Not content with destroying precious orangutan habitat in Borneo and Kalimantan, the palm oil industry is now expanding onto the Island of New Guinea, home to 37 of the 41 known Birds of Paradise as well as thousands of other species of rare plants and animals.

These birds may not be endangered just yet but nor was the orangutan 60 years ago. Rather than pushing more species to the brink, companies like Nestlé, Unilever and Mondelez have the power to stop these devastating losses BEFORE they happen by sticking to their promise to stop buying palm oil from companies that destroy the rainforest.

The world's largest palm oil trader, Wilmar International, is buying from 18 of the 25 palm oil producers and supplies 16 of the 17 brands. Brands include Nestlé (makers of Kit-Kat), Colgate-Palmolive (Colgate toothpaste), Johnson & Johnson (Baby Lotion), Unilever (Dove), Kellogg's (Pop Tarts) Mondelez (Cadbury), Mars (M&M's) and Proctor and Gamble (Head & Shoulders). All products in brackets contain palm oil.

In 2013, following a Greenpeace's exposé that revealed Wilmar and its suppliers were [responsible for deforestation, illegal clearance, fires on peatland and extensive clearance of tiger habitat](#), Wilmar announced a groundbreaking '[no deforestation, no peat, no exploitation](#)' policy. Yet Greenpeace's new analysis exposes the total failure of Wilmar to break its links to rainforest destruction.

Kiki Taufik, head of Greenpeace's global Indonesia forests campaign said:

Palm oil can be produced without destroying rainforests. But our investigation shows the palm oil Wilmar trades still comes from forest destroyers. Household brands like Unilever, Nestlé, Colgate-Palmolive and Mondelez promised their customers they'd only use clean palm oil but they haven't kept that promise. To fix this, it's simple – brands must cut Wilmar off until it can prove all of its palm oil is clean.

In addition to deforestation, the 25 producers profiled in the report show evidence of exploitation and social conflicts, illegal deforestation, development without permits, plantation development in areas zoned for protection and forest fires linked to land clearance.

Taufik continued:

Papua is one of the most biodiverse places on earth, and its pristine forests had until recently been spared the destruction happening elsewhere in Indonesia. But now the palm oil industry is moving in and clearing forest at an alarming rate. If we don't stop them, Papua's beautiful forests will be destroyed for palm oil just like Sumatra and Kalimantan.

#### *Palm oil impacts on environment, people and climate*

Papua holds around a third of Indonesia's remaining rainforest, but those forests are increasingly under threat. Deforestation in Papua has been [steadily increasing](#) over the last five years, more than tripling between 2011 and 2016. [GFW, Dec 2017]. NGO Conservation

International has qualified both Indonesia and Papua New Guinea as “[megadiverse](#)” countries.

[Half of the Bornean orangutan population has been wiped out in just 16 years](#), with habitat destruction by the palm oil industry a leading driver. More than three-quarters of Tesso Nilo national park, home to tigers, orangutans and elephants, [has been converted into illegal palm oil plantations](#). Globally, 193 Critically Endangered, Endangered and Vulnerable species are [threatened by palm oil production](#).

The plantation sector – palm oil and pulp – is the single largest driver of deforestation in Indonesia. Around 24 million hectares of rainforest was destroyed in Indonesia between 1990 and 2015, according to official figures released by the Indonesian government [1].

Deforestation and peatland destruction are major sources of greenhouse gas emissions which contribute to climate change. This has pushed Indonesia into the [top tier of global emitters, alongside the United States of America and China](#).

Plantation development is a root cause of Indonesia’s forest and peatland fires. In July 2015, devastating blazes spread in Sumatra, Kalimantan and Papua. These fires produced a haze that affected millions of people across Southeast Asia. Researchers at Harvard and Columbia Universities estimate that the [smoke from 2015 Indonesian fires may have caused 100,000 premature deaths](#). [The World Bank calculated the cost of the disaster at US\\$16bn](#).

Wilmar International and other palm oil companies are regularly [accused of exploiting workers, children and local communities](#).

ENDS

FULL

REPORT: <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/publication/18455/the-final-countdown-forests-indonesia-palm-oil/>

Photos and video are available

here: <https://media.greenpeace.org/CS.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&ALID=27MZIFJWPRPRP&PN=1>

Footage available

here: <https://media.greenpeace.org/Share/l640vh63a31188o7x73a116twb752d31>

NOTES

[1] Figures cover loss of natural forest. Sources:

1990–2012: MoEF (2016b) Table Annex 5.1, pp90–1 – gross deforestation 21,339,301ha

2012–2013: MoEF (2014) Lampiran 1, Table 1.1 – gross deforestation 953,977ha

2013–2014: MoEF (2015) Lampiran 1, Table 1.1 – gross deforestation 567,997ha

2014–2015: MoEF (2016a) Lampiran 1, Table 1.1 – gross deforestation  
1,223,553ha

## 4. PQs

### [Palm Oil. Sales](#)

**Asked by: Furniss, Gill**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, whether he plans to bring forward further legislative proposals to ban the sale of non-sustainable palm oil in the UK.

**Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department:  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

The UK is determined to make good on commitments to support companies to implement zero-deforestation supply chains, including in respect of palm oil. Through the Amsterdam Declarations and the Tropical Forest Alliance 2020, we are working with businesses and other governments to strengthen governance, promote market-based solutions and put in place incentives, policies and actions that support sustainable production of palm oil alongside forest protection. While we are not proposing to bring forward a ban, we recognise that more remains to be done and will continue to explore opportunities to improve the sustainability of palm oil production.

**HC Deb 04 December 2018 | PQ 194149**

### [Palm Oil. Regulation](#)

**Asked by: Gill, Preet Kaur**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what recent assessment the Government has made of the potential merits of introducing a ban on non-sustainable palm oil.

**Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department:  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan sets out our ambition to support and protect the world's forests, supporting sustainable agriculture and zero-deforestation supply chains, including for palm oil.

Through the Amsterdam Declarations and the Tropical Forest Alliance 2020 we are working with businesses and other governments to strengthen governance, promote market-based solutions and put in place incentives, policies and actions that support sustainable production of palm oil alongside forest protection.

In 2012, Defra published the UK Statement on the Sustainable Production of Palm Oil which was signed by trade associations, NGOs and Government and aimed to achieve 100% sourcing of credibly certified sustainable palm oil. The latest report from the UK Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil indicates that based on their revised baseline data and methodology, the UK achieved 75% certified sustainable palm oil in 2017. The Roundtable has agreed to report annually on progress

and work with other signatories to the Amsterdam Declaration on increasing the uptake of sustainable palm oil. While we are not proposing to bring forward a ban, we recognise that more remains to be done and will continue to explore opportunities to improve the sustainability of palm oil production.

**HC Deb 03 December 2018 | PQ195648**

[Fuels: Palm Oil](#)

**Asked by: Grady, Patrick**

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of the EU decision to phase out the use of palm oil in transport fuels by 2030.

**Answering member: Jesse Norman | Department: Department for Transport**

The revised Renewable Energy Directive includes a provision restricting biofuels with a high risk of causing indirect land use change (ILUC) from counting towards EU renewable energy targets. Details of the provision are to be determined by the Commission in a delegated Act by February 2019.

The Government's position is that all biofuels should deliver genuine greenhouse gas savings compared to fossil fuels. In the UK we ensure that measures to promote a market for biofuels, including rewards provided through the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO), avoid supporting biofuels with high ILUC impacts. The latest verified data for 2016/17 shows the average greenhouse savings of biofuels supplied under the RTFO is 71% compared to fossil fuels, even when emissions from indirect land use change are taken into account.

**HC Deb 22 November 2018 | PQ 192921**

[Malaysia: Primates](#)

**Asked by: Grady, Patrick**

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment the Government has made of the effect of palm oil production on the orangutan population in Malaysia.

**Answering member: Mark Field | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

The UK supports sustainable trade of agricultural commodities associated with deforestation, including palm oil. We are a signatory to the Amsterdam Declaration in support of a fully sustainable palm oil supply chain and are a member of the Tropical Forest Alliance 2020 and have endorsed the New York Declaration on Forests.

In Malaysia the British High Commission is working with Malaysian government enforcement agencies and NGOs to tackle the illegal wildlife trade. During HRH the Prince of Wales' visit to Sarawak in

November 2017 the state government reiterated its full commitment to protect the orangutan. Both Sabah and Sarawak states have invested in two rehabilitation centres for displaced orangutans. The UK is an active member of the Great Ape Survival Partnership (GRASP), a UN body dedicated to the conservation of great apes, including orangutans.

**HC Deb 22 November 2018 | PQ 192920**

[Palm Oil](#)

**Asked by: Brake, Tom**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make an assessment of the implications for his policies of the report by Imperial College London, entitled Palm oil supply chain complexity impedes implementation of corporate no-deforestation commitments, published in May 2018.

**Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

We are aware of the report by Imperial College London entitled '*Palm oil supply chain complexities impedes implementation of corporate no-deforestation commitments.*'

Although we have no plans to formally assess the report, the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan makes clear the UK's commitment to supporting the implementation of deforestation-free supply chains for key commodities, including palm oil, working with a broad range of stakeholders.

We are a co-signatory to the Amsterdam Declarations, which are political agreements that aim to support the implementation of private sector commitments on deforestation and sustainable palm oil. We are also a member of Tropical Forest Alliance 2020; a public-private co-operation working to help organisations achieve their deforestation-free commitment, eliminate illegality from supply chains and improve the quality and availability of deforestation and supply chain data.

**HC Deb 06 September 2018 | PQ 168885**

[Palm Oil: Labelling](#)

**Asked by: Siddiq, Tulip**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy to ensure that the labelling on products containing palm oil specifies whether that palm oil was produced sustainably.

**Answering member: George Eustice | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

Defra is committed to supporting the implementation of deforestation-free supply chains for key commodities, including palm oil. We are a signatory to the Amsterdam Declarations and have endorsed the New

York Declaration on Forests which support a fully sustainable palm oil supply chain from 2020. We are also a member of Tropical Forest Alliance 2020; a public-private co-operation working to help organisations achieve their deforestation-free commitments.

In 2012 Defra published the [UK Statement on the Sustainable Production of Palm Oil](#); which was signed by trade associations, NGOs and Government. The [2017 review](#) notes that signatories have achieved a high level of success in delivering the Statement's ambition of working towards 100% sourcing of credibly certified sustainable palm oil by the end of 2015. There are no plans to implement a separate policy requiring products containing palm oil to be labelled to specify sustainable production.

**HC Deb 07 June 2018 | PQ 149688**

[Palm Oil Imports](#)

**Asked by: Wiggin, Bill**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that (a) palm oil imports are sustainably sourced and (b) the effect of those products on deforestation is assessed effectively.

**Answering member: Dr Thérèse Coffey | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

In 2006, the Government published a [study](#) into the environmental impacts of a number of commodities; it noted that the principle environmental impact of palm oil was deforestation.

In 2012 we published the [UK Statement on the Sustainable Production of Palm Oil](#); which was signed by trade associations, NGOs and Government. The [2017 review](#) notes that signatories have achieved a high level of success in delivering the Statement's ambition of working towards 100% sourcing of credibly certified sustainable palm oil by the end of 2015.

The government is committed to supporting the implementation of deforestation-free supply chains for key commodities, including palm oil. We are signatory to the Amsterdam Declarations and have endorsed the New York Declaration on Forests which support a fully sustainable palm oil supply chain from 2020. We are also a member of Tropical Forest Alliance 2020; a public-private co-operation working to help organisations achieve their deforestation-free commitments, eliminate illegality from supply chains and improve the quality and availability of deforestation and supply chain data.

**HC Deb 18 April 2018 | PQ 134980**

[Palm Oil: Labelling](#)

**Asked by: Jones, Helen**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, if he will make it his policy that all products containing palm oil should be labelled as such to enable consumers to decide whether they wish to buy products containing that ingredient.

**Answering member: George Eustice | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

Products containing palm oil must be labelled as such – the vegetable oil ingredient of food must now indicate the vegetable origin of the oil.

See Annex VII part A 7-8 of the 1169/2011 Regulation on the provision of food information to consumers for more information:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32011R1169>

**HC Deb 15 March 2018 | PQ 131912**

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