

To the Honourable Niall Blair,

Something moves through the bushes but stops at the slightest noise. It is an orangutan and it is looking for food. Click! Something echoes through the leafy trees and stops the orangutan and her baby from making a move towards a dusty clearing full of men with guns and bulldozers. A gunshot shoots through the clearing to scare away the watchful mother. As soon as she has bounded away, a bulldozer chases her and carefully thwacks down a perfect row of jungle wilderness to clear a space for palm oil trees. The orangutan watches on with frightened and disturbed eyes. Should she trust these creatures? Why are they ruining her playground? And most importantly, what do they want with her home?

Unfortunately, we can answer those questions. No, orangutans should not trust us, for we are destroying their homes everyday. What we want with her home is more space for palm oil plantations. Many orangutans are losing their homes everyday, and it's all because of us.

Palm oil is an ingredient in most foods but is commonly named vegetable oil so customers are oblivious to the fact that when they eat this particular food, they are destroying an orangutan's home. And it's not just about orangutans. The Sumatran tiger, elephant and rhino are all critically endangered. The sumatran elephant is threatened by illegal palm oil production. The sumatran rhinos' population is unstable and is also threatened by poaching as well as destruction of habitat by unsustainable palm oil production. While poaching kills most Sumatran tigers each year, deforestation is still a serious threat. Sumatra has lost 85% of its forests in the last 500 years, mostly because of deforestation for palm oil and pulp plantations.

Because of us, so many animals are losing their homes. But not all companies are using palm oil in a bad way. Sprinters chips are using palm oil but on their packets they say; sustainable palm oil used. And that's just one. Other companies like Nestle, Starbucks, Hershey's, Kelloggs and others have committed to only using sustainable palm oil. So let's look up to them and think, what can we do?

We can start to label palm oil. Customers like to know that their food has been well produced. For example how about chicken eggs? People have bought mainly the ones that are labeled free range or organic. So why can't we do that with palm oil? If we begin to label palm oil, then maybe more customers will

start to realise that every time they buy this product, it is costing them more than money and it is costing them an orangutan's home and even their life.

So, if all those people out there who love animals tell their friends about this and then they tell their friends then maybe, just maybe we can start to label palm oil.

Thanks

Amira