



Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil

WWW.RSPO.ORG
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
T +60-3-6203-5969
rspo@rspo.org

Contact:
Rebecca Schoon
T +31-70-318-4444
rebecca.schoon@schuttelaar-partners.com

PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGOED until Monday, 10 November 2008, 16:00 CET (15:00 GMT)

WORLD'S FIRST SUSTAINABLE PALM OIL TO ARRIVE IN EUROPE

Sainsbury's Supermarkets and Unilever among the first buyers

ROTTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS (11 November, 2008) — This month, the Port of Rotterdam will have a world premiere. At one of the Port's docks, an oil tanker will deliver the first-ever shipment to Europe of palm oil that was certified as having been produced with respect for both people and the environment.

In Port Klang, the ship's Malaysian port of departure, one of its tanks had been filled with 500 tonnes of 'RSPO-certified sustainable palm oil' a few weeks ago.

"The upcoming arrival of this first batch of oil is a small but significant step towards having all the world's palm oil produced in a socially and environmentally sustainable way," says Jan Kees Vis, President of the worldwide Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) and Sustainable Agriculture Director at Unilever NV.

Palm oil: world's most important vegetable oil

Palm oil is currently the world's primary vegetable oil. Last year, palm plantations yielded more than 38 million tonnes of oil, making it one of the world's biggest commodity products. In Europe, palm oil is now used as an ingredient in about half of all packaged consumer products, including margarine, ice cream, chocolate, detergents, soap and cookies.

Through the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil, oil palm growers, processors, food companies, retailers, investors and leading NGOs such as WWF and Oxfam International have been working together for years to create a supply chain of palm oil that is guaranteed to be produced in a socially and environmentally responsible way.

More >>

The Roundtable promotes production practices that help reduce deforestation, preserve biodiversity, and respect land-owning communities, smallholder suppliers and plantation workers. For example, its principles prescribe that no primary rainforest or other high conservation value areas may have been sacrificed for oil palm plantations since November 2005 and that plantations apply best practices aimed at conserving natural resources and biodiversity. They also stipulate that millions of people whose lives are affected by palm oil production are consulted about land use changes, decent labor conditions and fair prices for the palm oil fruits they supply.

The Roundtable has set rules for audits and certification of sustainable palm oil producers and companies that carry the oil to product manufacturers and consumers. These rules ensure that all the oil that is sold as 'RSPO-certified' indeed corresponds with oil that was produced sustainably.

The first shipment of sustainable palm oil was produced by United Plantations Bhd (unitedplantations.com, Ipoh, Malaysia) and imported into Europe by Aarhus Karlshamn UK (aak.com, Hull, U.K.). It is projected to arrive in the Port of Rotterdam next week. Other companies that currently have plantations certified include New Britain Palm Oil (nbpol.com.pg, West New Britain, Papua New Guinea) and Sime Darby Bhd (simeдарby.com, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia).

Among the buyers of the first batch of sustainable oil were Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd. (sainsburys.co.uk, London, U.K.), and Unilever NV (unilever.com, Rotterdam, The Netherlands).

By the end of this year, RSPO-certified plantations are projected to produce 1.5 million tonnes of RSPO-certified sustainable palm oil annually, about 4 percent of current global production capacity. Supply is expected to double in 2009 and will continue to grow after that. In coming years, a growing number of consumer product manufacturers will be able to purchase and process RSPO-certified sustainable palm oil.

- - -

About the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (www.rspo.org)

The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) was created in 2003 by seven organizations wanting to create a supply of sustainably produced palm oil. Today, almost 250 member organizations—together representing about half of the world's palm oil supply—subscribe to the RSPO's principles.

Membership is growing and now includes 67 oil palm growers, 96 processors and traders, 18 NGOs (such as WWF and Oxfam International), 36 consumer good manufacturers and 24 retail companies.

More information

More information on the first shipment and the Roundtable will be presented at a press conference in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, on 11 November 2008. Fact sheets and answers to frequently asked questions (FAQ) are available in the 'Download Center' of the RSPO website (www.rspo.org). Printable images are available at <http://files.schuttelaar.nl/rspo/pics>.