

E-mail newsletter for members of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil

27 November, 2008

First Shipment of CSPO Unloaded in Rotterdam

On Tuesday 11 November, 2008, high up in a sky rise hotel in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, about forty news media reporters and RSPO members witnessed a [press conference](#) on the upcoming arrival of the first 500 tonnes of RSPO-certified sustainable palm oil to Europe. (See [press release](#).)

The first shipment, which was unloaded ten days after the announcement, was produced by United Plantations (UP) and imported by AarhusKarlhamn (AAK) UK. Among the first buyers of CSPO were Sainsbury's Supermarkets Ltd. and Unilever NV. At the press conference, the story of the Roundtable and the first shipment was told by RSPO President Mr. Jan Kees Vis, Ms. Adrie Papma (Oxfam International), Mr. Syed Mahdhar (Sime Darby), Mr. Ian McIntosh (AAK UK), Mr. Nils van Dam (Unilever) and Ms. Fiona Wheatley (Sainsbury's).



Also, a short [video](#) was shown on sustainable ways to produce palm oil and the long supply chain that delivers certified oil to European processors and consumers. A box containing RSPO-certified sustainable palm oil was symbolically handed over by AAK to representatives of Sainsbury's and Unilever, two of the first buyers (see picture).

Sixth Annual Roundtable Conference sees Record Turnout

From 18 to 20 November, 2008, more than 550 participants from 27 countries, including a delegation from China, attended the RSPO's 6th Annual Roundtable Conference (RT6) in Bali, Indonesia.

At the conference, many issues were discussed and some [conclusions](#) were drawn. For example, RSPO members will be asked to give insight into future demand for certified palm oil so as to smoothen market growth. A need was seen to further promote honest and balanced communications about RSPO-certified sustainable palm oil towards potential buyers, consumers and news media. Also, the need to further bring small holders centre stage in sustainable palm oil production was recognized, as was a necessity to work more closely with governments.

At the conference, a representative of the Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture reiterated his country's commitment to the RSPO and its objectives. He announced the creation and reviewing of laws pertaining to palm oil production, forestry, environmental and high conservation value analysis and pesticide handling. His government's 90 percent debt reduction plan for smallholders was welcomed. The conference asked a new RSPO working group to investigate the need for procedures requiring certification bodies to verify whether RSPO members' production expansion plans meet the RSPO's Principles and Criteria.

Media Report First Shipment of Sustainable Palm Oil, Greenpeace Claims

News media worldwide covered the first shipment's arrival to the Port of Rotterdam. Among the media outlets bringing stories were The Guardian (UK), Süddeutsche Zeitung (Germany), Business Times (Malaysia) and NRC Handelsblad (The Netherlands). Press agencies such as Reuters, DPA and ANP reported the story as well, just like many web-based news services focusing on food and sustainability issues. (In the picture, RSPO President Jan Kees Vis is being interviewed by Reuters news agency.)

Most media reports also mentioned a Greenpeace report, the publication of which coincided with the RSPO press conference. The report suggested that some RSPO conditions had been insufficiently checked before certification of United Plantations, the first shipment's producer. The RSPO issued a [statement](#), expressing confidence in its procedures and disclosing that the relevant certifying body was



investigating the claims on the ground. (Outcomes of the investigation are expected shortly.) United Plantations issued a preliminary statement at the press conference, followed by a more detailed [response](#) on the company's website later that same day.