

THE BODY SHOP®

Background on Palm Oil

Palm oil is one of the world's most popular vegetable oils. It is used in countless everyday items including cosmetics, household products and foods and is regularly consumed by over a billion people worldwide. Millions of people, many of them in developing countries, depend on palm oil for their livelihoods, employment and nutrition. A huge growth in demand – a six-fold increase since the mid 1980s and still rising – has led to the clearance of vast areas of primary rainforests for plantations, particularly in South East Asia.

Our source of sustainable palm oil has been independently audited and as such confirmed as not leading to deforestation, endangering the natural habitat of wildlife, or impacting negatively on biodiversity. The plantation from which The Body Shop sources sustainable palm oil was successfully audited against RSPO (Roundtable of Sustainable Palm Oil) standards in 2008.

Recently a local land rights issue was raised in relation to a company linked to a subsidiary of our palm oil supplier in Colombia. Whilst the land in question is not an area from which The Body Shop is sourcing any ingredients, we take any such issues very seriously. The Body Shop has been working with Christian Aid, the organisation to have raised its concerns, and other key stakeholders with an active interest in this issue, to try to clarify the facts of the case and resolve the dispute. Employees from The Body Shop have visited Colombia, helping bring together the different stakeholders, in collaboration with Christian Aid, to forge a way forward in what is a very complex case.

The Body Shop has always cared about the wider impact of our business and our supply chain and is committed to engaging positively with suppliers and other stakeholders to help resolve issues such as these. We will be monitoring the situation very closely.

In October 2009, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF International) released palm oil 'Scorecards' evaluating the palm oil usage of 59 European companies. WWF rated The Body Shop as the 7th most progressive company based upon our palm oil policy, use of sustainable palm oil from Colombia and efforts to combat issues within the wider palm oil industry.