

THE BODY SHOP.®

GENERATIONS OF WISDOM

The Body Shop Introduces Community Trade Coconut Oil from Samoa

Ethical beauty retailer The Body Shop has expanded its unique Community Trade programme to include, for the first time, coconut growers from the Pacific Islands of Samoa. A Samoan cooperative is now supplying The Body Shop with organic, cold-pressed, virgin coconut oil for use in its new and improved Coconut Bath & Body range.

Thanks to two centuries of experience, the Samoans have extensive knowledge and expertise in extracting pure, natural, unadulterated coconut oil of the highest quality. So you can indulge with the deliciously fragranced, moisturising Coconut bodycare products with a clear conscience, knowing your skin is not only benefiting high-quality ingredients but your purchase is also helping to improve the lives of others.

With its golden beaches fringed with palm trees, Samoa appears to be the quintessential tropical paradise, yet the poverty it experiences has been likened to that of sub-Saharan Africa*. While lush and bountiful, it is so remote that exporting goods is expensive and Samoans can miss out on trading opportunities for their own locally-grown crops. The new Community Trade relationship with The Body Shop gives the coconut producers rare access to a stable global market for their organically certified coconut oil.

The coconut industry has been a major earner for families in the Pacific since the 1800s. However, in recent years most of the benefits of coconut production have been reaped by big businesses, making it unviable for family producers - until now. Today, around 200 people in Samoa grow, harvest and extract the pure, organically certified coconut oil used by The Body Shop.

The oil is sourced through a group called Women in Business Development Inc in Samoa, which allows producers to receive a fair wage and build a future through their trade, following many decades of mass emigration across the islands. Adi Maimaloga Tafuna' from Women in Business Development Inc says: *"Just being noticed by The Body Shop was beyond our wildest dreams. The beauty of organics and fair trade is that value is added at the farm gate, giving the farmer maximum benefits.*

I would like to thank The Body Shop for building their business by empowering vulnerable people around the world, and contributing to alleviating and eradicating poverty in such a sustainable way. Our project is beginning to bear fruit, as it now makes an impact on the rural Samoan economy.”

As well as receiving a fair wage, the producers and their families can therefore improve their self-esteem and their involvement in the community, plus build a livelihood which allows for the introduction of educational and health benefits to their communities.

Organic Virgin Coconut Oil

The tropical coconut oil used in the new Coconut range is sourced from the last place in the world to see the sun rise – just perfect for transporting you to paradise as you cleanse, scrub, soften and smooth your skin. The Body Shop believes in trading fairly with experts, to get the best from nature, to source this high-quality, organic, cold-pressed, virgin coconut oil from Samoa, through the unique Community Trade programme. At a time when consumers are more aware of the quality and provenance of the products and ingredients they put on their bodies, the direct relationship The Body Shop has with the producers in Samoa ensures 100% ingredient traceability, helping to guarantee the highest quality coconut oil.

The expertise and wisdom of the Samoan coconut growers enables them to extract an organically certified coconut oil using natural extraction processes, without the use of chemicals, thus ensuring the highest level of purity. This extraction process ensures that The Body Shop is accessing the highest quality coconut oil to care for your skin.

Perfect for enjoying every day, the new Coconut Bath & Body range containing Community Trade coconut oil comprises a comprehensive line-up of Body Butter, Body Scrub, Shower Cream, Milk Body Lotion, Foaming Bath, Soap, Lip Butter, Hand Wash and special edition Coconut Shimmer Lotion. This luxurious moisturising range with its special selection of ingredients helps to provide skin with everything it needs to look, feel and smell fantastic.

Coconut Oil Extraction

The Body Shop® Coconut Bath & Body range, fragranced with the delicious scent of coconut from tropical Samoa, can help you escape to a virtual paradise island.

The cold pressed, organic, virgin coconut oil is produced entirely by hand: first, the nuts are gathered, husked and cracked. The coconut flesh is then carefully taken out of each shell and grated. The grated coconut is then spread on drying beds, which gently separate the oil from the flesh. The oil is

finally extracted by hand-pressing the 'flesh'. There's no wastage as the husks are dried and used for fuel and heating and the coconut nuts that aren't of a high enough quality to include in The Body Shop® products are used to feed pigs. Even the coconut leaves are used to weave baskets and mats.

Generations of experience ensure that only the finest quality coconuts are used for oil production. Samoans say that a coconut has a 'smile', with the mouth being the only place that you can put a straw to drink the milk. The growers quality control the coconuts by checking these 'smile' markings, which should be brown and flat – if they are white the coconut has started to germinate and can't be used. They also ensure that there's no growth from the 'mouth' of the coconut – a white or brown raised nodule will indicate that there is a growth inside, known as an 'apple' or the 'oo', which forms from the coconut water as it solidifies. Finally, once the coconut has been cracked open, the growers check the smell of the coconut flesh and ensure that it is white, not brown or discoloured.

Women in Business Development Inc, Samoa

The Samoan not-for-profit group Women in Business Development was formed in 1991 to create trading opportunities for Samoan farming and handicraft activities, thus helping to improve the everyday quality of life. This forward-thinking group has been instrumental in encouraging women's involvement in coconut oil extraction.

Women in Business Development also supports its members with practical advice and training, such as financial management. Samoa has only recently entered the cash economy and the disappearance of the barter system and the need to handle money has required training at the family level. The cooperative also, importantly, helps the islanders prepare for the cyclones that hit Samoa every four or five years.

The Community Trade partnership between The Body Shop and Women in Business Development currently provides significant income for around 200 people, but the community beneficiaries are in the thousands.

"The rural farmers of Samoa truly meet our definition of a marginalisation. Working with The Body Shop has the potential of really putting this beautiful, remote island nation on the map. We are thrilled to be embarking on this new partnership," says Graham Clewer, Head of Community Trade for The Body Shop International.

Life as a Coconut Oil Producer

People are as important to The Body Shop as ingredients and lotions.

The Body Shop searches far and wide for the best, most effective ingredients and accessories, but also for the best people to produce them - people who have an expertise that goes beyond farming, who care for their land and respect the environment. Through the Community Trade programme The Body Shop ensures fair trade and respect, in exchange for generations of expertise. The Community Trade programme in Samoa, has had significant impact on the lives of the Samoan coconut growers, as exemplified by these farmers and their families:

Sila Family From The Village of Falelatai

Life in their traditional village would be a struggle for married couple, Esera Sila and Makerita Sila, were it not for their first year of profits from coconut oil extraction. Through a lifetime of hard work they have built up a successful farm but constant demands on their income have resulted in minimal benefits for themselves. Their village Matai or high chief demands that every family make regular donations – either cash or pigs - and villagers can be punished or expelled if they're unable to pay. Now, thanks to Women in Development Inc and coconut oil, they have money set aside in a savings account, for the first time in their lives, and don't have to worry about paying their children's school fees.

The Silas and one of their sons, 20-year-old Esera, dedicate around half their week to collecting the coconuts, using their horse for transport, and working from 7am until sunset. They also buy additional coconuts from their neighbours and extended family to supplement their oil production, and thus provide others with a much-needed income. Once collected, the family and their two workers dry and press the coconut with Makerita, the mother, in charge of the process. She is skilled in knowing exactly when the coconut is dry enough to extract the oil through its look, touch and weight.

Gasu Family From The Village of Satupaitea

Married for 44 years with five children, the Tuaifaiva Gasu and Faatuiavae Gasu have seen a huge improvement in their income and working conditions since their involvement with Women in Business four years ago. Although they have been cultivating coconuts on their farm since 1973, they previously only collected and dried the nuts before selling them to the government processing plant for oil extraction. Now, they are in charge of the whole process from start to finish and freely admit that it's "much easier, less work but good money" and that the quality of the oil has greatly improved.

The couple are delighted that one of their sons, Isaako, who is in his 40s, has followed in their footsteps and is running a successful coconut oil extraction business, employing several workers. Indeed, Isaako admits that, instead of worrying about having a regular income, he's now concerned that he might not be able to meet the high demand for his organic oil.

Isaako is clearly a role model for his workforce, inspiring a new generation of Samoan farmers. Twenty-year-old Faioso Vauoti, who has worked with him for two years, aspires to his own prosperous farm run along the same lines as his employer, and building his own house. Whilst another worker, Lotu Lalomati, in her 50s, is planning to use her regular wage to give her youngest daughter a better education.

Faiumu Family From The Village of Taga

For Faimafiu Faiumu and Faifsea Faiumu, the regular income from coconut oil production means that two of their children who've had to seek work in the capital city, Apia, can now afford to return to the farm that's been in the family for generations.

The Faiumu family has been producing coconut oil since 2007, in addition to growing a selection of tropical crops and keeping pigs, chickens and a horse. Together with a relative who helps on the farm, they spend two days a week collecting coconuts and three days producing the oil. A typical working day involves rising at 5am, walking the half-hour walk to the plantation to gather the coconuts, returning to the farm at 11am for food and a rest then working with their crops and animals until 5pm.

The extra income generated by the coconut oil is being used to improve their house and fund the obligatory church and village contributions – the village is planning to build a strong house underground for safety during the cyclone season. The family aspires to be able to take-on more workers, to help extend the farm, and building a comfortable and secure future.

Discover more about The Body Shop Community Trade programme

The Body Shop takes beauty seriously, seeking out experts in every field, to source top quality Community Trade ingredients and accessories, produced by experts and artisans. The Community Trade stamp is an assurance of high quality - it also lets you know that these suppliers receive a reliable, independence-building wage, enabling them to build a stronger future for themselves, their families and their communities.

- **Community Trade from Nicaragua**

Sesame seed oil is excellent as a massage oil and bath oil, and it's easily absorbed into the skin. The Body Shop trades with sesame seed farmers in Nicaragua, through a cooperative in the town of Achuapa. This means that The Body Shop can secure high-quality sesame seed oil for use in its products, while these farmers have been able to cut-out the middleman as they earn an income, and they can plan a future for themselves and their families.

- **Community Trade from Guatemala**

The Body Shop sources aloe vera from Guatemala; where it's hand harvested, hand filleted and processed within 12 hours of being picked, to retain its precious soothing goodness. It's dermatologically tested, with no added preservatives, colour or fragrance, and proven suitable for sensitive skin.

- Community Trade from Ireland

The Body Shop uses wild growing, wild harvested Community Trade bladderwrack seaweed from the Republic of Ireland in the oil balancing Seaweed range. Perfect to balance oily and combination skin, controlling shine and adding moisture where it's needed, with this purifying Seaweed range.

- Community Trade from England

Community Trade peppermint oil is grown on family co-operative farms in the Norfolk fens, and prepared by Norfolk Essential Oils, expert distillers of natural essential oils. While the damp, cool climate of Norfolk may not seem like the dream home for peppermint, the rich soil is perfect for growing reviving, pep-me-up peppermint. You can treat your feet to cooling, smoothing and reviving Peppermint treatments.

- Community Trade from Ghana

The Body Shop sources shea butter which is hand produced by more than 400 women in Ghana. They hand prepare and crack the nuts, extracting the precious kernel which is then roasted, crushed and ground before being transformed into creamy skin-caring shea butter. More than 430 women in 11 villages in Tamale, northern Ghana, receive a life-boosting price for their expertly produced shea butter. But that's not all, their communities have also benefited from the safe drinking water, nursery schools and medical facilities our social premium has provided.

Give very dry skin a sumptuously smoothing bath time treat. Shea has been used by women in Ghana for generations to protect their skin from drying desert winds.

- Community Trade from Ghana

The cocoa beans used by The Body Shop are hand picked, prepared and dried by cocoa butter experts. They're the same high quality cocoa beans that go into chocolate, only better when applied to your hips! Each moisturizing Body Butter product from The Body Shop contains deliciously creamy, melt-on-the-skin cocoa butter made from Community Trade cocoa beans from Ghana.

Cleanse, scrub, moisturize as you boost skin's suppleness with some seriously softening, creamy bath and body care. Particularly good for stretched skin and pregnant tummies.

- Community Trade from Kenya

Naturally antibacterial* Community Trade organic tea tree oil is sourced by

The Body Shop from the foothills of Mount Kenya, in Kenya, where it's irrigated with pure glacial water, and is helping give around 270 smallholder farmers the means to boost their self reliance and self esteem. The leaves are hand picked and steam distilled for the purest, most effective oil.

Deep cleanse, control excess oil and shine, and help prevent blemishes with the Tea Tree skin clearing range, containing this organic tea tree oil.

- Community Trade from Italy

The Body Shop sources fabulous Community Trade organic olive oil from family farmers in southern Italy. The farmers catch the falling olives in nets to prevent the olives bruising, and cold press the flesh to retain the precious nutrients. Luxuriate in our super rich Italian Olive Oil range, rich in skin-smoothing essential-fatty acids. The perfect treat for normal and dry skin.

These super smoothing, nourishing Community Trade organic olive oil comes from a cooperative of farmers in Cilento, south west Italy. Once under threat from cheaper foreign oils, The Nuovo Cilento Cooperative has helped turn the fortunes around for 250 farmers, in the process helping to regenerate the area too.

- Community Trade from Namibia

The women in Namibia have produced and used marula oil for generations. Their expertise and keen eye for quality are what set their moisturising oil apart, and which ensures it's the only marula oil that The Body Shop uses in its make-up range.

This fine moisturising marula oil is rich in antioxidants and oleic acid, perfect for smoothing and protecting the skin. It's hand produced in Namibia from the pressed kernels of nuts hand selected and cracked using generations old expertise.

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*Source: Oxfam, New Zealand

Notes to Editors:

Journalists requiring more information should contact The Body Shop International, Róisín Long. Telephone: 0044 1903 844 040.