



## Materials for “Palm Oil Panic” Presentation:

- “Palm Oil Panic” poster
- Leaflets with QR code
- Various names of palm oil graphic
- Photos of animals that are being impacted
- Brands that use sustainable palm oil

### Elevator Speech:

*[Tell this to everyone that comes by at least:]*

*The greatest threat to many species that live in the rainforests of Sumatra and Borneo is deforestation due to agriculture. The main product in question is palm oil. Palm oil is used in so many products we eat and use every day. The easiest thing you can do to help save the rainforest, and the species that call them home, is to support companies that use sustainable palm oil in their products. Follow this QR code that helps you shop responsibly and support businesses that care!*

*[Give them leaflet with QR code on it].*

*Script for more interested individuals:*

### What is Palm Oil?:

*[Greet the person who comes up to the table and engage them with the question:]*

**“Do you know what palm oil is?”**

*[Let them answer and then follow up with:]*

**“Palm oil is a form of vegetable oil that is derived from the fruit of the African Oil Palm trees. It’s a very popular food preservative because it’s natural and has no trans-fat. Most palm oil is produced in Sumatra and Borneo (*point to map*) and has been introduced for purely agricultural reasons, and thus, is not native to the rainforest.”**

*[Point to photos of the Oil Palm and the fruit and explain that this is what they look like.]*

### Palm Oil Products:

**“Now you might be thinking ‘but how often do I really use palm oil?’. Well, the answer might be a bit staggering!”**

**“As the most extensively produced edible oil product, you eat it and use it every single day! Palm oil is found in lots of food, bath products, cosmetics, and cleaning supplies.”**

*[Reference "A Day in Your Life with Palm Oil" graphic while you go through what the graphic is saying]*

"And to make it even harder to determine whether YOUR products have palm oil in them, there are more than 50 different names that can be used to label "palm oil".

*[Reference the "Various Names of Palm Oil" sheet (on table)]*

"So, a preservative that has no trans-fat? How fantastic is that? Well, it gets better!"

"Palm oil could actually be the key to stopping deforestation, so long as it is grown sustainably!"

"Of all oil crops, oil palms are the most productive! They produce about 4 to 10 times more oil than other oil crops such as canola, soy, and coconut. Switching to one of these other oil crops would use a lot more land and would lead to further deforestation. So, palm oil is the best oil crop choice when it is grown sustainably. Not to mention, it's a much healthier option when compared to the alternative crops as well."

## So What's the Problem?:

"That all sounds pretty great, doesn't it?"

"That's because palm oil itself isn't what is causing the problem! It's how it has been grown historically."

"Essentially, companies are choosing to cut down perfectly healthy rainforests for their plantations, rather than use land that has already been cleared."

"Each year, millions of acres of rainforest are cleared in Sumatra and Borneo to plant more oil palm. After the land is logged, it is then burned to further clear the land. This process kills tens of thousands of animal's who live in the rainforest each year."

"But why are companies choosing to do this?"

"Purely because they get the added profits of the timber and they do not have to adhere to the regulations that are required of sustainable plantations."

"Here are just a few of the animals that are impacted by deforestation in these countries."

*[Reference the animals on the trifold that are being impacted by this.]*

*[List off a few of these and point at a few of their photos, while referencing what country they are from:*

*Sumatra: Sumatran elephants, Sumatran rhinos, Sumatran orangutans, Malayan sunbears, and Sumatran tigers*

*Borneo: Bornean Orangutans, Borneo pygmy elephants, sunda clouded leopards, proboscis monkeys, Bornean sun bears, and several species of Bornean hornbills.]*

**"You may even recognize a few of these species from our zoo! For instance, our Malayan Sunbear (Fong)."**

**"And these maps show you just how dire the situation is."**

*Reference the map of Borneo and make these points for each figure:*

*A) The forest cover in 1973*

*B) Forest clearance from 1973-2010*

*C) Point out the logged and intact forest areas, the plantations, and compare with the 1973 forest cover.*

## **Sustainable Options:**

**"So, how do you know if the palm oil in your product is a sustainable option?"**

**"There are many companies that have joined the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (or RSPO) that have met the criteria to achieve certification as a "sustainable supplier" of palm oil. We have some to look at out here on the table and there is also a shopping app you can use to help make it easier to support and buy from companies that are doing their part by using sustainable palm oil in their products."**

[Show them the brands on the table, offer them the QR code that links them to the app]

## **What Can You Do?**

**"So what can YOU do to help?"**

**"Because palm oil soars above other options when it comes to health and production, it wouldn't be realistic or effective to ban it or boycott it all together."**

**"So shop responsibly and support the companies that care."**

## Supplemental Info:

(Do not need to know or memorize, just for those who want to know more)

Summarizing the Crisis.

- Supply and demand pressures are driving the production of palm oil up to an all-time high. Found in cookies, crackers, frozen dinners, shampoo, lotions, cosmetics, pet food, and many other products, palm oil is now the most widely produced edible oil. It is also found in a wide array of products sold in natural food stores, and it is being used as a possible fuel alternative.
- Millions of acres of rainforest in Borneo & Sumatra are cut down each year to plant more oil palm. After logging rainforest habitat, palm oil companies often use uncontrolled burning to clear the land or peat swamp. In 1997-98 a devastating fire killed almost 8,000 orangutans in Borneo.
- Instead of using already cleared land, some companies choose to cut down healthy rainforest. They gain added profits from the timber, and they can ignore the regulations that sustainable plantations abide by.
- The increased demand for palm oil is fueling destruction of the rainforest where Sumatran and Bornean orangutans live. Estimates show that if something isn't done soon to stop the spread of non-sustainable palm oil plantations, orangutans and many other endangered species will go extinct.
- There are so many things you can do to help turn back the tide of this crisis and make a difference for wild orangutans.

Get the details on what palm oil is, where it's grown, and more.

- It is a form of edible vegetable oil obtained from the fruit of the African oil palm tree (*Elaeis guineensis*). .
- African oil palms originated in West Africa, but can flourish wherever heat and rainfall are abundant. The majority of all palm oil is grown and produced in Borneo and Sumatra, although this crop is expanding into Africa and South America.
- Palm oil plantations are NOT part of the rainforest. Palm oil is an introduced agricultural crop.
- Palm oil is the most widely produced edible oil.
- Over 44 million metric tons are produced in Indonesia and Malaysia per year (2009) and this is increasing.
- You probably eat and use palm oil every day. It is found in many foods, cosmetics and bath products. When you look for it on product labels it is also called palm kernel oil and its derivatives, palmitate and palmitic acid. Actually, there are more than 50 names for palm oil that may be used on product labels.
- Demand for palm oil is rapidly increasing because of trans-fat health concerns and bio-fuel development.



**Where in the world is this happening?**

- Borneo and Sumatra are islands in Southeast Asia.
- Three countries occupy parts of Borneo: Indonesia (the largest part), Malaysia and the small country of Brunei.

## Map of Indonesia



Responsible choices involve Sustainable Palm Oil.

1. Oil palms are the most productive type of all the edible oil crops. Oil palms produce 4-10 times more oil per acre than other crops like soy or canola. In this way, palm oil can be a more environmentally friendly oil, because less land is needed to produce the same amount of oil.
2. Indonesia and Malaysia are countries that struggle with poverty and palm oil is a huge part of the economy. Without it, millions of additional people would be unemployed.
3. There will always be a demand for edible oil, and demand is growing due to worldwide population growth. Palm oil is in many of the items we eat and use every day. If we boycott palm oil, another crop will take its place.
4. If grown the right way – sustainably – palm oil can be the best choice for vegetable oil.
5. It does not seem effective or realistic to boycott. Palm oil and its derivatives have more than 50 different names on product labels (see Palm Oil Names & Derivatives in next expandable below). This makes it difficult for consumers to know if products contain palm oil.



The WAY Palm Oil is Grown Makes all the Difference.

- Palm oil plantations and mills that are certified as sustainable by the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) have met many criteria to achieve certification.
- Palm oil plantations and mills that are NOT certified as sustainable by the RSPO do not have to adhere to RSPO regulations. Therefore, consumers can't be sure whether or not the palm oil coming from non-RSPO producers has harmed native wildlife, violated the rights of indigenous people, or had other negative environmental impacts.

Outcomes of Palm Oil Plantation Practice Choices	SUSTAINABLE	NON-SUSTAINABLE
Clear-cutting rainforest when there is degraded land available for palm oil plantations.		✓
Harming orangutans and other wildlife that enter palm oil plantations.		✓
Using chemicals such as pesticides safely and responsibly.	✓	
Ensuring that plantation employees and their families have adequate housing, schools, healthcare, and a decent wage.	✓	
Monitoring greenhouse gas emissions in mills and disposing of waste responsibly.	✓	
Using the land as productively as possible. This includes using all the loose palm fruits that fall to the ground, and quickly replacing any plants that die.	✓	
*Getting HCV (high conservation value) assessments done on their land.	✓	

\*HCV assessment is conducted in order to make sure that a plantation is not cutting down forest where endangered species live or taking away land with social significance from indigenous people to plant oil palm.

**Please note:** This is a very simplified explanation of certified sustainable palm oil. For more information go to [www.rspo.org](http://www.rspo.org)

Understand how palm oil farming affects indigenous people.

The increase in demand for palm oil has far-reaching implications for the indigenous people of Borneo and Sumatra.



- Palm oil is a huge industry, employing millions of people. On certified sustainable plantations and mills the workers have decent housing and wages; schools and health clinics are also available. At plantations and mills that are NOT certified, conditions for workers and their families are not regulated.
- Native people often lose their land and livelihoods to large palm oil manufacturers. Most of the money from non-sustainably produced palm oil does not trickle down to local people.
- Local people can and should be trained in environmentally sustainable agriculture, reforestation techniques, ecotourism, and other sustainable trades, crafts and professions. This is happening in some areas which is very exciting.

Learn what's happening to the orangutans' habitat.

- Indonesia is facing the highest rate of tropical rain forest loss in the world.
- There are millions of acres of degraded land available that could be used for palm oil plantations. Instead, many companies choose to use high conservation value rainforests in order to gain the additional timber profits.

- Sumatra has 201 mammal species, 580 birds, 217 reptiles, over 70 amphibians, 272 fish and 15,000 plant species. Flagship species include elephants, rhinos, orangutans and tigers.
- Borneo has 222 species of mammals, 420 birds, 180 reptiles, 150 amphibians, 394 fish, and 15,000 plants. Borneo is home to orangutans, elephants, clouded leopards, proboscis monkeys, sun bears, and hornbills.
- A major problem facing many of these species is habitat fragmentation. Some conservationists are analyzing and attempting to acquire land in areas where reforestation can create forested corridors between areas of isolated habitat.

Examine the plight of the Indonesian orangutans.

Borneo and Sumatra are the only islands in the world where wild orangutans exist.

Orangutans give birth once every 6-10 years, the longest inter-birth interval of any mammal, resulting in a slow reproductive rate.

They are the largest arboreal mammal on earth, and the only Asian great ape.

Orangutans are amazingly intelligent.

They create and use tools.

Orangutans memorize intricate maps in the rainforest of how to move to fruiting trees at the proper times when the fruit is ripe, and without needing to descend to the ground (as long as they live in healthy intact forests).

Orangutan researchers have observed evidence of cultural transmission of behavior. Orangutans in different geographical areas will have different methods of doing similar behaviors, or will display unique behaviors that are not seen in other orangutan populations.

Extinction for these great apes could be just around the corner if the palm oil industry, deforestation, and burning of peat forest do not change.

Discover why we shouldn't use palm oil for biofuel.

Some have proposed that palm oil be used as a source of biofuel to decrease greenhouse gasses and mitigate global warming. This strategy would further increase the demand for palm oil—and cause further destruction of orangutan habitat.

In addition, using palm oil for biofuel could produce the opposite effect on green house gasses and global warming. That's because:

- Rainforests remove massive amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- When palm oil is produced through deforestation, the burning peat soil and loss of rainforest causes an increase in greenhouse gasses, which contributes to global warming.
- Demanding fuel-efficient vehicles and enabling the majority of consumers to afford them may be a better environmental direction for solving the energy crisis.



Learn about the RSPO – The Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil.

- The RSPO is a multi-stakeholder group with many members from palm oil growers and producers to businesses, social organizations, conservation NGOs and government institutions.
- The RSPO was formed in 2004 in response to the urgent and pressing global call for sustainably produced palm oil.
- Objective of the RSPO: promoting the growth and use of sustainable oil palm products through credible global standards and engagement of stakeholders.
- Companies who are members of the RSPO are required to abide by RSPO principles and guidelines.
- The seat of the association is in Zurich, Switzerland, while the secretariat is currently based in Kuala Lumpur with a satellite office in Jakarta.
- In November 2007, the RSPO launched a certification system, establishing a definition and criteria for certified sustainable palm oil.
- We believe it is critical for consumers to support the RSPO's efforts, and show consumer preference for products made by RSPO members, and ultimately demand certified sustainable palm oil.
- Visit [www.rspo.org](http://www.rspo.org) to learn more about certified sustainable palm oil



## YOU Can Make a Difference!

If you are concerned about the effects of NON-sustainable palm oil production on orangutan habitat, we encourage you to:



- **Shop responsibly.** Use this Palm Oil Shopping App (available in [Google Play](#) or the [App Store](#)) when you go to the store. Support companies that have joined the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO).
- **Use your power as a consumer!**
  - **Write to your favorite restaurants and companies.** Let them know that you care about orangutans and the environment, and that your concern is reflected in products you are willing to buy. Ask them to join the RSPO if they haven't done so already. We have a [sample letter](#) you can use and a [send a letter page with hyperlinks](#) to non-RSPO companies' contact information.
  - **Promote better labeling.** Encourage RSPO companies to label products with the RSPO trademark, just like the "Dolphin Safe" tuna labeling. Ask them to indicate how much (%) of the palm oil is certified sustainable.
  - **Ask them** to use only 100% segregated certified sustainable palm oil (CSPO) that is deforestation-free in their products.
- **Go see wild orangutans.** Your tourist dollars make the rainforests worth more standing than cut down for plantations. Check out [Ecotourism](#).
- **Learn more.** Spread the word. Send the link for our video [Make a Difference for Wild Orangutans](#) to your friends and family.



- **Write to your [local legislators](#) and [The President](#).** Ask them not to explore palm oil as a biofuel option. Cutting down rainforests to grow palm oil is not a “green” substitute for gasoline.
- **Write to [Indonesian and Malaysian government officials](#).** Ask them to preserve their precious natural resources. They are the only countries in the world that have wild orangutans!
- **Help with reforestation projects.** Go to [forests4orangutans.org](http://forests4orangutans.org) for more information.
- **[Buy Orangutan Art](#)** – 50% of each purchase goes to orangutan conservation.

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**Get involved today and remember, each person CAN make a difference!**

**Demand 100% Segregated Certified Sustainable Palm Oil that is deforestation-free, and Product Labeling.**

**Make a Difference for Wild Orangutans.**

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Cheyenne Mountain Zoo releases all information on this web page into the public domain in an effort to promote the timely dissemination of knowledge surrounding palm oil. This applies worldwide. In some countries this may not be legally possible; if so: Cheyenne Mountain Zoo grants anyone the right to use this work for any purpose, without any conditions, unless such conditions are required by law.

**For more information on the palm oil crisis, visit:**

Ape TAG Conservation Initiative Awardees – <http://www.apetag.org/Awardees.html>

Forest Stewardship Council – [www.fscus.org](http://www.fscus.org)

Great Ape Trust – [www.greatapetrust.org](http://www.greatapetrust.org)

Hutan – Kinabatangan Orangutan Conservation Programme – <http://www.hutan.org.my/>

Nyaru Meteng Orangutan Rehabilitation Center – <http://redapes.org/bos-projects/nyaru-menteng/>

[The Oil for Ape Scandal](#) – collaborative report: Friends of the Earth Trust, Ape Alliance, Orangutan Conservancy, Orangutan Foundation (UK) and the Sumatran Orangutan Society

Orangutan Conservancy – [www.orangutan.com](http://www.orangutan.com)

Orangutan Information Centre – [www.orangutancentre.org/](http://www.orangutancentre.org/)

Orangutan Land Trust – [www.forests4orangutans.org](http://www.forests4orangutans.org)

Orangutan Species Survival Plan – [www.orangutanssp.org](http://www.orangutanssp.org)

"Raising Palm Oil Awareness" CMZ Case Study for [Sustainable Palm Oil Platform, ZSL](#)

Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) – [www.rspo.org](http://www.rspo.org)

RSPO Principles and Criteria for the Production of Sustainable Palm Oil – 2018 [.pdf](#)

RSPO Certified Sustainable Palm Oil Supply Chain: How to take part (source: RSPO) – 2018 [.pdf](#)

Sustainable Oil Palm Development on Degraded Land in Kalimantan – [PDF Document](#)

SAWIT Watch – [www.sawitwatch.or.id](http://www.sawitwatch.or.id) (“Palm Oil Watch” in Indonesia)

Sumatran Orangutan Society – [www.orangutans-sos.org](http://www.orangutans-sos.org)

United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – [www.usaid.gov/](http://www.usaid.gov/)

World Wildlife Foundation – [www.wwf.org](http://www.wwf.org) (Search on palm oil, Borneo or Sumatra)

WWF Palm Oil Buyers Scorecard Measuring the Progress of Palm Oil Buyers – 2016 <http://palmoilscorecard.panda.org/>

Palm Oil FAQ

### **Inquiring Minds Promote Change.**

We have been getting some great questions and want to share them!

Please feel free to [contact us](#) with any comments.

**Q: Are the companies considered safe for orangutans and the rainforest on the [Palm Oil Shopping Guide App](#) labeling their products as containing palm oil only from sustainable plantations? If not do they plan to do so?**

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Answer:

**A:** Not all companies are labeling their products as containing certified sustainable palm oil (CSPO) for several reasons. First, their products do not necessarily contain 100% CSPO. While that is the goal within the RSPO, some companies are further along in their journey than others to source 100% CSPO. When a company joins RSPO, they have to commit to using CSPO or buying credits (subsidizing farmers who are growing CSPO even if the company is not yet able to purchase the physical CSPO), with a goal date by which they will use 100% CSPO. The second reason this is not included on packaging, as we found out through working closely with a local company that does use sustainable palm oil, the word “sustainable” has not yet been defined by the FDA. We were also surprised to find out that it can cost \$40,000 every time a small company changes their packaging. However, we are still encouraging companies to use the RSPO trademark on their product packaging when it is feasible for them to do so. As far as detailed updates go, it would be great for companies to post this type of information on their websites.

We have tried to make it easy for consumers to figure out which companies are RSPO members and using CSPO. You can download our Sustainable Palm Oil Shopping app (look for the green orangutan) and scan the barcodes of your favorite products to learn whether the companies who make them are orangutan friendly.

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**Q: How do you know if an RSPO member company is using certified sustainable palm oil?**

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Answer:

**A:** If you go to <https://www.rspo.org/members/all>, you can look up RSPO members and view their reports year to year. The CSPO commitments or percentages being purchased are listed in these reports. The RSPO uses third party auditors to verify the information submitted in the reports.

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**Q: Who is certifying the sustainable plantations or is the RSPO just going on their word?**

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Answer:

**A:** Becoming certified by the RSPO is a rigorous process. There are many criteria a plantation has to meet in order to be certified. Ultimately, the RSPO is certifying the plantations, but neutral agencies are hired to do the inspections. One

example would be the HCV (high conservation value) forest assessments that a plantation must have done in order to be certified. An HCV assessment determines whether or not there are endangered species, indigenous people, waterways, etc. that will be impacted if a plantation exists in a certain way. We met with some scientists from Flora and Fauna International who are performing these assessments in Indonesia. You can find out more about the RSPO's principles and criteria at [www.rspo.org](http://www.rspo.org)

For more information:

<https://rspo.org/members>

<https://rspo.org/principles-and-criteria-review>

[https://www.rspo.org/files/resource\\_centre/CoC.pdf](https://www.rspo.org/files/resource_centre/CoC.pdf)

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**Q: Why are there mixed messages, depending on which conservation organization you talk to, about the best way to help orangutans?**

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Answer:

**A:** Palm oil is such a huge issue and the reason people are so passionate about it is that it affects something we all care deeply about – orangutans and other wild species. Everyone should make their own decisions about what they are doing in their personal lives, or with their organizations.

Here is an explanation for why we believe in supporting sustainable palm oil:

In 2010, Cheyenne Mountain Zoo staff took their first trip to Indonesia and Malaysia to learn all they could about the palm oil industry and how it affects orangutans and the planet. Since then, Cheyenne Mountain Zoo staff take an annual trip to Indonesia and/or Malaysia where they are able to talk with many people, from oil palm plantation managers to scientists who have studied orangutans in-situ for many years and conservationists who are fighting to preserve orangutan habitat but who know a palm oil boycott would be disastrous.

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**Q: Why do you say that boycotting palm oil is not the answer?**

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Answer:

Palm oil itself isn't the problem, it is where and how it has historically been grown. In fact, palm oil could very well be the solution to deforestation if it is grown sustainably.

Environmentally, oil palms are the most productive of all oil crops—producing 4-10x more oil than common alternatives such as soy, canola, and coconut. To switch to one of these alternatives would require far more land and ultimately cost more deforestation. When grown sustainably, palm oil is the best choice of edible vegetable oils.

Socially, Indonesia and Malaysia, the two countries that produce the majority of the world's palm oil, are currently going through an important period of economic growth. Without the palm oil industry, millions of people who rely on these economic opportunities and struggle with poverty would be unemployed. Additionally, palm oil is a natural preservative

with no trans-fat which is why it can be found in many prepackaged food items. As the human population has grown, so too has the demand for products that are safe to consume and have a long shelf life.

Practically, it does not seem realistic or feasible to effectively boycott palm oil. Palm oil and its derivatives have more than 50 different names on product labels, sometimes even being labeled generically as 'vegetable oil.'

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**Q: Can we use Cheyenne Mountain Zoo's palm oil information, graphics, or website content to help promote palm oil awareness in our community and/or at our organization?**

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Answer:

**A:** Yes. Cheyenne Mountain Zoo releases all information on this web page into the public domain in an effort to promote the timely dissemination of knowledge surrounding palm oil. This applies worldwide. In some countries this may not be legally possible; if so: Cheyenne Mountain Zoo grants anyone the right to use this work for any purpose, without any conditions, unless such conditions are required by law.

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**Q: Can you give me an idea of what is required to become a RSPO member and what our zoo would be bound to if we do become a member? Cost logistics would be helpful also.**

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Answer:

**A:** Cheyenne Mountain Zoo offers a downloadable "How to Apply for RSPO Membership" PDF to help further assist you. RSPO website: [www.rspo.org](http://www.rspo.org).

Other important links:

<https://www.rspo.org/members#membership-categories>

<https://www.rspo.org/members/apply>

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**Q: Many companies (like Whole Foods and Kroger) claim that they source all of their palm oil from suppliers who are members of RSPO. Why are they not on your [Palm Oil Shopping Guide App](#)?**

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Answer:

**A:** If you read closely these companies do not say they are members of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), and they are not listed as members of the RSPO on the RSPO's website. These companies talk a lot about the RSPO and they are well-versed (which is good), but if they are committed to sustainable palm oil they should be willing to apply for RSPO membership.

We feel any company using palm oil should be a member of the RSPO in order to promote transparency and accountability through the required annual reporting of their palm oil purchasing. Without reporting on actual purchasing, a company is able to make claims or promises on palm oil use and not be held accountable to those statements. We hope if you are a fan of companies who are not members of the RSPO that you will consider reaching out to them and encourage them to learn more about the palm oil crisis ([www.cmzoo.org/palmoil](http://www.cmzoo.org/palmoil)) and join the RSPO.

We do not feel that boycotting (or avoiding) palm oil is a constructive way to move sustainability forward. The RSPO is moving things in the right direction—and will be more effective if we are supportive. The RSPO's Principles & Guidelines were recently ratified with greater environmental and social protections including no planting on peat regardless of depth, banning fire as a method for land preparation, and strengthened labor rights such as increased living wage and decent housing.

The GREAT thing we see happening more and more is that consumers are asking companies these important questions, showing them that their customers are interested in certified sustainable palm oil, which is crucial. So thank you for writing to these companies