



## Unicorn Statement on Palm Oil

We are very aware of the enormous social and environmental impact caused by the production of palm oil, particularly in Malaysia and Indonesia where 30 square miles of wildlife-rich rainforest is being felled every day to make way for palm oil plantations. The destruction of this rainforest is not only threatening the survival of many species of wildlife (orangutans, tigers, bears etc.) but also displacing indigenous people and destroying their way of life. The felling of rainforest is also contributing alarming amounts to climate change – deforestation is responsible for 18% of worldwide CO2 emissions.

Many companies have, in theory, recognised the serious nature of this issue and have responded by signing up to the RSPO (Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil), a global initiative involving manufacturers, suppliers and wildlife and development NGOs. As of recently, the 'best' plantations can now be certified as 'sustainable' under RSPO criteria. However, from evidence we have seen, we are doubtful that membership of the RSPO offers any guarantee of a truly sustainable product.

Much of the palm oil in our products is certified organic, which means it is produced and hopefully sourced more responsibly than conventional palm oil. Several of our suppliers also buy from 'sustainable' sources (for example Clive's Pies use oil from Columbian farmer co-operatives). However we're not convinced that this negates all the negative impacts of production.

Overall, we do not believe the continued use of palm oil has a future in our products, although we know that change will be slow and alternatives will take time to emerge. Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace say palm oil use should be reduced or phased out altogether, some companies are already doing so.

Unfortunately, delisting all products containing this oil would leave unacceptably large gaps in our product range (all vegan margarines contain palm oil for example<sup>1</sup>, and alternatives do not seem to be available at present), and for now does not appear to be a viable option. We have therefore written to all our suppliers whose products contain palm oil, making the following points:

- **To bring to their attention the fact that from now on we will be seeking to avoid sourcing any new products containing palm oil.**
- **To enquire what their position is on the palm oil in their products.**
- **To request that they take decisive action to find an alternative.**

We will continue to encourage our suppliers to look into more sustainable alternatives and we encourage our customers to do the same.

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<sup>1</sup> Since writing this we're very pleased to have found one – Pure Margerine