

WBeauty range first to bear RSPO sustainable palm oil certification in SA

Woolworths has launched South Africa's first locally-made, WBeauty soap range bearing the certification logo of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO). This moves the retailer closer to its 2020 Good Business Journey target to only offer products made with certified sustainable palm oil.



Woolworths was the first local company to become a member of the RSPO in 2011, and now is one of only seven* retailers worldwide permitted to use the RSPO certification logo on their products. RSPO, a non-profit organisation, maintains the global standards for companies throughout the palm oil supply chain so that the legal, economic, social and environmental impacts of palm oil manufacture are responsibly addressed.

Environmental impact

Palm oil is used widely in food, beauty, cosmetic and cleaning products resulting in global consumption that catapulted from around 14.6 million tons in 1995 to [over 61 million tons in 2015](#). The ramifications of this demand have included tropical deforestation, the loss of habitat of critically endangered species such as the iconic Sumatran orangutan, tiger and rhino; the displacement of indigenous communities and the overpowering of small-scale family farmers; as well as a release of carbon dioxide that intensifies climate change.

Over the past years, social media and organisations like WWF & Greenpeace have played an important role in raising consumer awareness and urging consumer action when it comes to the palm oil used in their favourite shampoos, soaps and toothpastes, chocolates and snacks.

Woolworths says that despite the evidence of damage caused by the surge of palm oil production, there are good reasons not to boycott palm oil but to rather champion the certified sustainably-produced option. Per hectare, oil palms are the most abundant and effective producers of quality vegetable oil. Where RSPO standards are upheld, palm oil production can reduce additional deforestation, lift vulnerable rural families out of poverty and significantly change the course of their

future generations.

Good Business Journey

“Our range of WBeauty soap bars bearing the RSPO certified logo represents a fantastic milestone. Sourcing sustainable key commodities like palm oil is a key component of our Good Business Journey. It ensures that our customers enjoy all the benefits of palm oil while having the peace of mind that their purchases are contributing to sustainable solutions,” says Feroz Koor, Woolworths Holdings group head of sustainability.

When it comes to foods, Woolworths says it has made significant strides. Sustainable palm oil has been sourced for the making of Woolworths pies and pastries. All Woolworths pies have been audited and certified by the RSPO and the certification logo will be incorporated onto the new pie packaging that is scheduled to roll out later this year.

WWF spokesperson, Tatjana von Bormann congratulated Woolworths on taking a local leadership role in the global domain of sustainable palm oil production. “While giving South African consumers the opportunity to use products with RSPO sustainable palm oil certification is significant in its own right, palm oil is also an international commodity and the concerns about production are global. We commend Woolworths for leading the way and highlighting South Africa’s role in promoting more responsible purchasing.”

*Source: RSPO Impact Update report 2017

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