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Zoetermeer, The Netherlands, 19 November 2019

Dutch Advertising Code Committee: anti-palm oil campaign The Flower Farm misleading

- RCC: The Flower Farm has to adjust packaging, television commercial, video, social media messages and website.
- NGOs: The Flower Farm's anti-palm oil campaign is polarizing and does not offer a sustainable solution.
- Science: If you use palm oil-free margarine, you should not have the illusion that this will save the rainforest from destruction.
- EPOA: Food producers and supermarkets should only source sustainable palm oil.

The Dutch Advertising Code Committee (RCC) is of the opinion that the anti-palm oil campaign of the new margarine brand The Flower Farm is misleading, inaccurate and indiscriminate. The Flower Farm acts contrary to both the Dutch Advertising Code and the Environmental Advertising Code, and has to adjust packaging, television commercial, video, social media messages and website.

Ruling RCC

The RCC considers all claims suggesting that palm oil always causes deforestation incorrect and therefore misleading. This also applies to the claim that palm oil exterminates animals (including orangutans). The calculation that a consumer saves 30 m² of rainforest every year if he uses The Flower Farm margarine is in violation of the Environmental Advertising Code. To stop the misleading, The Flower Farm has to adjust the text on the package about the destruction of rainforest by palm oil. This also applies to the television commercial, the children's drawing video used in the campaign, the videos and texts on Instagram and Facebook and various texts on the website.

Support NGOs

The RCC agrees with the European Palm Oil Alliance (EPOA). EPOA had filed a complaint about how the new Dutch margarine brand The Flower Farm responds to the need of consumers to make sustainable choices. EPOA received support from a number of NGOs that are committed to sustainable palm oil, namely Solidaridad, Orangutan Land Trust and IDH (Sustainable Trade Initiative).

NGOs: boycotting is not a sustainable solution

Nico Roozen of Solidaridad: "We are very happy with this statement. The Flower Farm's anti-palm oil campaign is polarizing and does not offer a sustainable solution that is widely

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supported. The Advertising Code Committee rightly states that indiscriminate and one-sided messaging as a wake-up call to consumers is not a justification for deception."

Science: a boycott is no solution

It is also acknowledged by scientists that a boycott of palm oil is not a solution. Professor dr.ir. Otto Hospes of Wageningen University & Research: "The Flower Farm cannot live up to its promises in their campaign. If you use palm oil-free margarine, you should not have the illusion of saving the rainforest from destruction. It would be much better if The Flower Farm were to use certified sustainable palm oil in their products."

The Netherlands: frontrunner

In the Netherlands, MVO as representative of the Oils and Fats Industry, has also been emphasising for years: the best alternative to palm oil is sustainable palm oil. Frans Claassen, Director of MVO and chairman of EPOA, feels supported by the statement and emphasises: "There are still challenges in the production of palm oil, but the Netherlands is a frontrunner in Europe when it comes to the use of sustainable palm oil. Consumers need to know why and how sustainable palm oil production is being tackled globally, and why a boycott does not work".

Importance of sustainable palm oil

EPOA is convinced that sustainably-produced palm oil contributes to the solution of issues such as the global food supply, the protection of biodiversity and the socio-economic development of small farmers. Based on the marketing principle 'demand creates supply', EPOA calls upon food producers and supermarkets to only source sustainably-produced palm oil. Currently the demand for sustainable palm oil is less than the supply.

NOTE FOR EDITORS:

The European Palm Oil Alliance (EPOA) is an alliance of companies and organizations that are committed to the use of 100% sustainable palm oil in Europe. EPOA communicates about the role of palm oil in food, based on objective and scientifically substantiated facts. EPOA facilitates and supports organisations for sustainable palm oil in various European countries and cooperates with governments, industry, NGOs, and other civil society organisations. See www.palmoilalliance.eu.

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