

OUR POSITION ON PALM

KEY MESSAGE

VANDEMOORTELE is committed to sourcing palm oil that is traceable, deforestation- and exploitation-free as well as certified sustainable.

BACKGROUND

Palm oil is the most commonly used vegetable oil for food and non-food purposes across the world. In the tropical belt of Southeast Asia, Africa, and parts of South America it is used as a common cooking fat. Worldwide it is used as an ingredient in the food industry because of its excellent sensory characteristics and functional properties. The global demand for palm oil has increased significantly, and it is still increasing, as no alternative edible vegetable or animal oil exists in sufficient quantities and that offers the same functional properties. However, European public opinion has three main areas of concern regarding the use of palm oil in food products: its effects on the environment, on society, and on health.

1. Environmental concerns

Palm oil production has been linked to deforestation and the loss of peat lands. Both of these hazards cause the loss of biodiversity and the endangerment of animal species. If unregulated, palm oil production can hinder the sustainable development of natural ecosystems. Read more on our [Palm oil Sourcing charter](#) and [Sustainability Report](#).

2. Social concerns

In some instances, the land conversion required for palm oil production has negatively affected the lives of workers and smallholders, as well as some indigenous and local communities. However, palm oil production also contributes significantly to the economic development of regions where it is produced. Read more on our [Palm oil Sourcing charter](#) and [Sustainability Report](#).

3. Health concerns

In some European countries, palm oil is perceived as an unhealthy fat. In those countries, thought leaders, retailers and politicians, among others, try to ban palm oil in food and promote “palm-free” products.

However, there is no scientific proof that consumption of palm oil is related to any specific health concern¹. Health experts recommend a reduction of saturated fatty acid (SFA) intake from all sources – not only from palm oil, but also from butter and cream, for example. From a nutritional perspective, the total fatty acid composition, and in particular the ratio of SFAs to unsaturated fatty acids (UFAs) of the food “as consumed”, is important.

¹ Prof. Jean-Michel Lecerf (april 2011), Huile de palme: rapport nutritionnel, (Institut Pasteur)

In fact, palm oil has a rather balanced composition in terms of fatty acids. It contains saturated and unsaturated fatty acids in near-equal amounts (50% SFAs/50% UFAs). In foods, palm oil is most often used with other vegetable oils and fats with different fatty acid profiles, which together determine the total fatty acid composition (SFAs and UFAs) of the final food.

Scientific studies have shown that, due to its specific fatty acid composition, palm oil does not increase the ratio between total and LDL-cholesterol and the risk of cardio-vascular mortality². The negative impact of SFAs is offset by the positive impact of the UFAs present in palm³.

What is more, other nutrients (such as vitamin E and A) that are also naturally present in palm oil are also beneficial to health¹.

Palm oil is considered a healthy alternative to partially hydrogenated oils and fats containing trans fatty acids (TFAs). The use of palm oil in food has made it possible to reduce TFAs in food products without increasing the total sum of SFAs and TFAs.

OUR POSITION

VANDEMOORTELE is a significant buyer of palm oil for use in food products. We use palm oil mainly because of its excellent functional properties and sensory characteristics. Due to its higher melting point, palm oil is naturally solid at 20°C and gives an excellent feel when tasted. Palm oil also offers the right structure for a final smooth and creamy texture.

What's more, in terms of land use efficiency and productivity, as well as socio-economic development, palm oil can deliver significant benefits. When produced in a sustainable way, palm oil has clear environmental and social advantages compared to other vegetable oils and fats.

VANDEMOORTELE is committed to sustainable palm oil sourcing. We are a member of the Round Table of Sustainable Palm (RSPO) and Earthworm Foundation. In our Palm Oil Sourcing Charter, first published in 2014, we clearly describe our commitment to responsible palm oil sourcing. Starting from there, clear targets have been set for fully traceable, deforestation free and exploitation-free palm oil, as well as for certified sustainable palm oil. We have also committed to publicly reporting on our progress at least annually. In addition, we encourage our customers to use certified sustainable palm oil and to become members of the RSPO.

² Fattore E. et al. (2014), Palm oil and blood lipid-related markers of cardiovascular disease : a systematic review and meta-analysis of dietary intervention trials, *Am J Clin Nutr* 2014;99:1331- 50

³ Mensink RP et al. (2003), Effects of dietary fatty acids and carbohydrates on the ratio of serum total to HDL cholesterol and on serum lipids and apolipoproteins: a meta-analysis of 60 controlled trials, *Am J Clin Nutr* 2003: 77:1146-55

Finally, we believe that palm oil can deliver clear and significant benefits for human nutrition and health. We are committed to deliver products that have a good nutrition value but also healthy and safe. Palm oil has a balanced fatty acid composition, and its use in food has made it possible to reduce TFAs in food products through the replacement of partially hydrogenated vegetable oils and fats, which have a negative impact on health. Specifically, palm oil contributes positively to public health by allowing food manufacturers to optimize the total fat composition of many food products.

After carefully evaluating global, scientific research, VANDEMOORTELE has reached the conclusion that, when sourced in a sustainable way, palm oil is a suitable edible oil for use in the food industry.