



Anti-palm oil marketing by The Flower Farm is misleading

- The Flower Farm loses appeal against the first ruling of the Advertising Code Committee (RCC) on all points.
- The Board of Appeal (CvB) is even stricter than RCC in earlier statement: The Flower Farm marketing concept is misleading. The Flower Farm has to adjust packaging, television commercial, video, social media messages and website.
- In the Netherlands, all margarine is deforestation-free. In its marketing campaign, The Flower Farm is erroneously opposing sustainable palm oil, and sets up consumers against margarines containing sustainable palm oil wrongly.
- All statements made by The Flower Farm about palm oil and deforestation are unqualified and unilateral and therefore misleading and not permitted.
- The CvB considers the statements of NGOs that support sustainable palm oil and have no commercial interest, of great importance.



17 December 2019, the Board of Appeal (CvB) has confirmed the ruling of the Advertising Code Committee (RCC) about the misleading nature of the anti-palm oil marketing by The Flower Farm (TFF). Last month, the RCC ruled that the campaign for the new margarine brand was misleading, inaccurate and indiscriminate. TFF appealed against part of the ruling. They have now lost that appeal on all points. The CvB rules in favor of the European Palm Oil Alliance (EPOA) again and with additional arguments. TFF acts in breach of both the Dutch Advertising Code and the Environmental Advertising Code, and must adjust all packaging, television commercial, video, social media messages and website.

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Appeal

The CvB confirms the ruling of the RCC that in its marketing campaign TFF is erroneously opposing sustainable palm oil, and sets up consumers against margarines containing sustainable palm oil wrongly. In the Netherlands, all margarines are deforestation-free. The CvB: "EPOA has made it sufficiently plausible that the RSPO standard actually offers guarantees. Furthermore it is important that the RSPO certification is supported by the World Wide Fund for Nature, Solidaridad and other organizations (NGOs) that have no business interests in the palm oil industry and that are specifically aimed at nature conservation and social goals. Solidaridad's statement submitted with the defense shows that they fully support the complaint against Flower Farm and that they consider the RSPO as a credible and effective organisation for making the palm oil sector more sustainable."

Ruling CvB

The CvB considers all claims suggesting that (all) tropical rain forest must be destroyed for palm oil incorrect and therefore misleading. Also misleading is the claim that palm oil exterminates animals (including orangutans). The statement by TFF that a family saves 30 m² of rainforest each year when using TFF's margarine is incorrect and is in violation of the Environmental Advertising Code. TFF may no longer use this statement. TFF has to adjust the text on pack about the destruction of rainforest by palm oil. This also applies to the television commercial, the video that is used in the campaign, the films with texts on Instagram and Facebook and the website.

Support NGOs and science

EPOA is committed making the palm oil sector more sustainable and points out that only sustainably produced palm oil can solve the problems for people and the environment. EPOA is supported in this by a large number of NGOs and scientists. **Nico Roozen (Solidaridad)** confirms: "We are very happy with both rulings. The Flower Farm's anti-palm oil campaign is polarizing and does not offer a sustainable solution that is widely supported. Opportunism becomes leading and that does not serve sustainability". **Professor dr.ir. Otto Hospes, (Wageningen University & Research)**: "The Flower Farm cannot live up to its promises in their campaign. If you use palm oil-free margarine, you shouldn't have the illusion to save the rainforest from destruction. It would be much better if The Flower Farm were to use sustainably certified palm oil in their products."

Importance of sustainable palm oil

The palm oil industry is complex and can only be tackled globally. Together with other (international) initiatives, EPOA is working on 100% sustainable palm oil in Europe. Frans Claassen, chairman of EPOA: "I am delighted with this ruling. Both RCC and CvB support our approach and punishes misleading and one-sided messaging. The TFF likes to position itself as the Tony Chocolonely of the margarine industry, but they are not. The Dutch chocolate brand Tony Chocolonely is committed to making the cocoa sector more sustainable. TFF does nothing related to sustainability. If TFF really wants to work towards a better world, they should join our initiative for sustainable palm oil."

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PRESS RELEASE



NOTE FOR EDITORS:

The European Palm Oil Alliance (EPOA) is an alliance of companies and organisations and is 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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