

## Palm oil, Starsuckers and Media Manipulation

What do Amy Winehouse's flaming beehive and Guy Ritchie's self-inflicted black eye have in common?

Both stories appeared in the pages of Britain's tabloid press. Neither is true.

The two incidents were fake showbiz news tips phoned into newspapers by the makers of the new documentary "Starsuckers," to see whether they would be used without fact-checking. The fact that they were forms part of the movie's argument that the culture of celebrity has undermined journalistic standards and warped society's values.

The sad thing is that the media is guilty of the same level of journalistic negligence in respect of the anti-palm oil lobby, often running stories fed to it by "environmental NGOs" such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth (FOE) on palm oil and deforestation without fact checking.

One of the worst offenders in this regard are the tabloid press and broadsheets in the United Kingdom, often regurgitating and publishing NGO "reports" alleging that the palm oil industry is environmentally the most destructive.

However, if the British tabloid press and broadsheets had bothered to do any fact checking they'd have discovered that the truth is far removed from the hype!

Malaysia is a small country. Yet the fact that the country had, for more than a century been the world's largest producer of palm oil should have alerted the media to the glaring incongruity of Greenpeace and FOE's charge that palm oil is responsible for an alarming degree of environmental degradation, harming the habitats of orangutan and other forms of wildlife.

The fact of the matter is that palm oil does not require quite as much land to produce the same unit of edible oil as its competitors such as soy, rapeseed or sunflower. That is largely down to the fact that palm oil is a remarkably productive tree crop, so productive that a single hectare of palm oil planted could yield 4-5 metric tons of edible oil. That is close to 10 times the yield of its nearest competitor.

That explains why Malaysia could, after more than a century of planting palm oil still retain permanent forest cover of 56%, FAR HIGHER THAN the typical forest cover of 20 odd per cent found in the countries of the industrial west, from which the gratingly sanctimonious Greenpeace and FOE hail! (Malaysia had made a pledge at the Rio Earth Summit some 15 years ago to preserve 50% of its land as natural forest.)

Says the CEO of the Malaysian Palm Oil Council, Tan Sri Dr. Yusof Basiron: "Malaysia plays an important role in a green energy future. Our land use policies, coupled with the additional tree cover due to the oil palm, rubber, cocoa and coconut industries mean that the nation is a net carbon sink. This stands in stark contrast with many nations in Europe that are net CO2 emitters."

He continues: "The Malaysian palm oil industry has been an enthusiastic supporter of its nation's efforts to protect its natural endowments while helping the nation to grow and raise living standards. Indeed, Malaysia could not have realized its environmental goals without the cooperation of the industry."

"The palm oil industry remains an important driver of sustainable economic growth and job creation. The industry now employs over 400,000 people - up from 80,000 in the 1980s - even as the majority of the nation's forests remain protected by the government. If this is not the very model of sustainable development and responsible environmental stewardship, then no such example exists in this world," he pointed out.

In the view of the Palm Oil Truth Foundation, the media should be wary of the fact that the charges of Greenpeace and FOE is really a cleverly disguised proxy trade war fought against the palm oil industry using the Trojan horse of environmental issues! Could the fact that palm oil is the cheapest and fastest growing edible oil in the world have contributed to the suppression of the prices of its competitor commodities?

Could this have triggered this incongruous, irreconcilable and incomprehensible onslaught against a commodity that is, after all one of the most inherently sustainable, on account of its productivity! THE END

## About the Author

[Palm Oil Truth Foundation](#) (TRUTH Foundation) is an international non-governmental and not-for-profit organisation, without strings to the world of commerce and power. We are a people organisation, organised for the people and founded upon the principles of integrity and responsibility as a global citizen with the sole purpose of representing TRUTH to the global community about health, environmental and economic benefits of palm oil.

The TRUTH Foundation is an international network of social conscience and cooperation among peoples in industry, government, academia and the ordinary global consuming public, strengthening the forces devoted to respect, justice and equality for a more just and sustainable world and for global peace.

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