

# Welsh Government to help end use of unethical palm oil

This is the message from Economy Secretary Ken Skates who has said he wants to follow the lead of Greenpeace and food retailer Iceland, by taking a stance against the use of non-ethical palm oil, an ingredient which is becoming increasingly notorious for the damage and destruction it causes to wildlife and the wider environment.

The Economy Secretary wants companies operating in Wales to move away from using non-ethical palm oil which has been widely linked to issues including deforestation, habitat degradation, climate change, animal cruelty and indigenous rights abuse.

To progress this changes will be made to the Welsh Government's Economic Contract – a key component of the Economic Action Plan – which requires businesses seeking Welsh Government support to enter into an agreement with the Welsh Government that is specifically designed to drive responsible business behaviours.

Ken Skates said:

“The devastation and destruction caused by the use of non-ethical palm oil is high on the news agenda at the moment and I would like to pay tribute to the supermarket Iceland, Greenpeace and others for their work in raising the profile of this important issue.

“The campaign against the use of non-ethical palm oil is very much in line with the ethos of my Economic Action Plan which has driving sustainable growth and encouraging responsible business behaviours at its very core.

“It is now nearly a year since I launched the Economic Action Plan and I have been really encouraged by the positive response it has received from the business community. Indeed as a result of the Action Plan we now have 100 Economic Contracts in place with companies across Wales who are seeking our support.

“The Economic Contract is an obvious vehicle through which we can influence business behaviour and encourage responsible action . With that in mind I want to use the Economic Contract to encourage and assist companies to move away from the use of non-ethical palm oil to help reduce the use of this damaging and destructive product.

The Welsh Government is also considering how it can reduce the use of unethical palm oil in food and drink produced in Wales.

Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths, said:

“The impact of the unsustainably produced palm oil is increasingly becoming part of the public’s consciousness. The government and Food and Drink Industry Wales Board are committed to promoting sustainability. We want to encourage the food and drink industry to use sustainably sourced palm oil and this will feature in our joint consultation in spring 2019 on a successor food and drink action plan.”