

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
BY THE CONNÉTABLE OF ST. MARTIN
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON TUESDAY 20th SEPTEMBER 2022
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 27th SEPTEMBER 2022**

Question

“Will the Minister provide an update on the work that has so far been undertaken to deliver on the actions approved by the States Assembly as part of ‘Actions to Mitigate the Use of Palm Oil’ (P.99/2021)?”

Answer

The approved proposition was made up of 3 parts:

- a) Government of Jersey to lead by example and only use and procure products that contain credibly certified sustainable palm oil where practical and appropriate
- b) any food item produced in Jersey is labelled with a clear statement of whether the food item contains palm oil or any palm oil derivatives
- c) develop an Island-wide palm oil campaign that raises public awareness of the issue of its use

Update of Part a) of the approved proposition

Officers are working to understand where palm oil is currently being used across the Government of Jersey. Due to the complexity of the Government of Jersey, an initial investigation was carried out across parts of the organisation, looking at the prevalence of palm oil in a range of government services:

- Health and Community Services’ catering facility in St Peter (providing meals to the General Hospital, Government-owned nursing homes and presently the prison)
- The General Hospital (Thyme Out hospital restaurant kitchen and the hospital stores warehouse at Five Oaks)
- Hair and Beauty Academy at Highlands College
- The Government of Jersey Broad Street office
- Contracted cleaning services supplier

The research for this initial investigation was carried out by a student intern over the summer and these areas of government services were selected to represent the complexity of the organisation. This initial investigation has enabled officers to better understand where products containing palm oil are being used across some parts of the organisation and the implications for removing those items or finding suitable alternatives. This research has provided an indication of the prevalence of palm oil so that a full and comprehensive investigation can now be completed in order to scope and deliver part a) of the proposition. A report detailing the findings of this initial investigation will be published by the end of October 2022.

73% of those products sampled in the initial investigation contained at least one ingredient on the palm oil derivatives list that had been created for the study.

Removing palm oil from use across the organisation will have a significant financial impact as alternatives are significantly more expensive. The war in Ukraine has had a huge impact on the use of palm oil globally as the availability of other oils such as sunflower and rapeseed has drastically reduced,

resulting in an increased use of palm oil. A Strategic Outline Case has been written for consideration in the 2023 Government Plan when it is envisaged that the global market for other oils will have stabilized.

Update of Part b) of the approved proposition

This part of the approved proposition sets out a requirement to introduce legislation for labelling any food produced in Jersey that contains palm oil or palm oil derivatives. There is temporary Food Standards Agency guidance due to the ongoing disruption to the supply of sunflower oil. As a result, food manufacturers are turning to other refined or fully refined food grade vegetable oils. The temporary guidance states that alternatives to sunflower oil can be used in some products without changes to the label being made – this includes the use of fully refined palm oil. A new primary food law is reaching its final stages of drafting. If adopted by the Assembly, this will allow for subsequent legislation to introduce new labelling requirements. If not adopted, an amendment to the 2005 legislation will be established.

The costs to introduce the legislation were included in the amended proposition, but the source of funding not identified. Therefore, this has been included in the Strategic Outline Case which will be presented for consideration in the 2023 Government Plan when it is envisaged that the global market for other oils will have stabilized and the temporary Food Standards Agency guidance rescinded.

Update of Part c) of the approved proposition

A public information campaign will be launched to coincide with the introduction of legislation for labelling as detailed in Part b) of the proposition. The costs to run a public engagement campaign were included in the amended proposition but the source of funding not identified. Therefore, this has been included in the Strategic Outline Case which will be presented for consideration in the 2023 Government Plan.