



Our destructive obsession with Palm oil

Research and testing carried out by students of Ricards
Lodge

What is Palm oil?

Palm oil is an edible vegetable oil derived from the fruits of palm tree.



- Cultivation for palm oil is ranked as one of the most prominent sources of global forest loss
- More than 10 million hectares (25 million acres) of tropical forest has been lost to palm oil since 1990, most of it in Southeast Asia: 85% of global output comes from Indonesia and Malaysia.

Impact of mass palm oil cultivation

Habitat destruction:



Providing space for palm tree growth requires mass deforestation

Slave Labour:



Palm oil is so affordable for Billion-pound companies due to the exploitation of poor workers

Palm oil

Climate change + pollution:



Tropical rainforests are often burnt down so palm trees can be grown. This releases high levels of CO₂, a greenhouse gas linked to climate change

Species extinction:



Due to habitat destruction and climate change, palm oil cultivation is a major cause of species extinction

We wanted to find out how aware the public were...

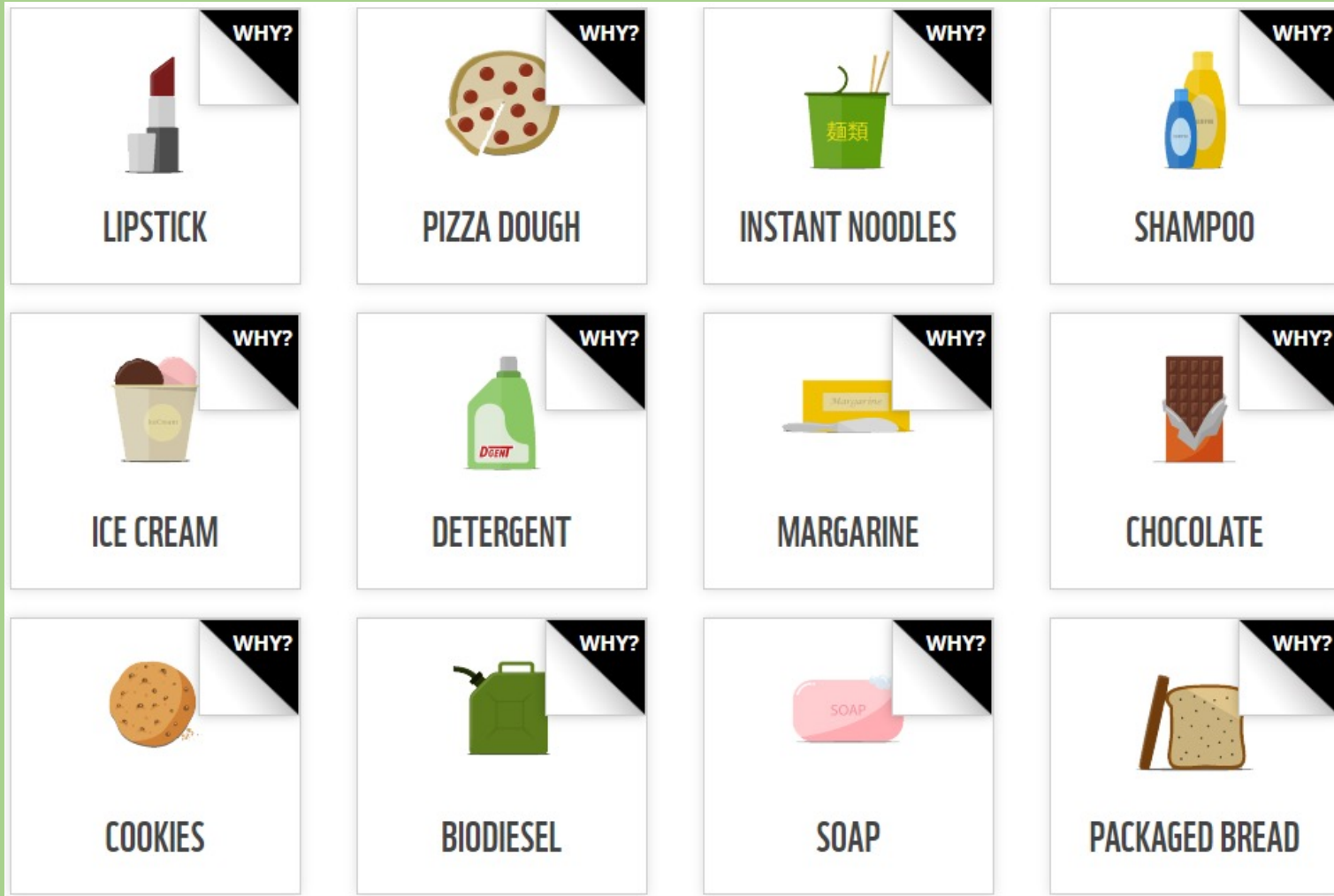


Research:

Members of the public were asked two questions:

1. When asked whether they had ever actively bought palm oil; only **1 in 63** people claimed they ever had
2. When asked how many times a week they **believe** they use palm oil; **42** out of the **63** people responded with '**never**'

Most participants were unaware of regularly palm oil is used in many everyday foods and products



Palm oil is commonly found in a vast range of things we consume

Our research found that the average person uses/consumes **10 kg** of palm oil a **year**, often without knowing.

Great... But is palm oil something we need?

Experiment: With the help of 20 students, we conducted a **blind** test where students were asked to try **products** with and without palm oil and describe if there were any noticeable differences in taste, quality, smell and texture

Product	No. of students who preferred palm oil version	No. of students who preferred non-palm oil version	No. of students who couldn't tell any difference
Bread	3	4	13
Chocolate	2	2	16
Butter	0	0	20
Moisturiser	0	7	13
Hand Soap	1	9	10

What can we do?

As shown by our research, palm oil is often not a product we need or even necessarily desire. The issues caused are largely from people being blissfully unaware of the palm oil within the things they buy



A good place to start is by taking the time to scan the ingredients of foods you buy in the shop and trying to find alternatives.

It may take half a minute longer, but by doing that, you could make a huge difference!