



Fast Food With a Conscience

Most of us enjoy an occasional trip to a chip shop or local takeaway, either close to home or on holiday. There are a lot of choices that a takeaway restaurant can make to minimise their impact on our planet and, as customers, you have the power to help them make a positive change.

Packaging from takeaways can be incredibly damaging to the environment, especially in the form of Styrofoam trays that are not normally recyclable and do not biodegrade. There is also a risk to health from leaching of chemicals when hot food is placed in Styrofoam. There are lots of alternatives available these days that could be used instead.

Cooking oil is used in large quantities in chip shops or takeaways that fry their food. Many establishments rely on Palm Oil as their main frying oil. The damage that unsustainable palm oil has on the rainforests is extensive, as huge areas are cleared daily to grow palm oil. Orangutans, which live in the areas of rainforest that are being cleared, are now on the critically endangered list, primarily due to rainforest land that is being cleared to make way for palm oil plantations.



Your challenge is to visit some of the local takeaways close to your school and find out what they use to package the food and what oil they cook with. If you find out that they are using Styrofoam trays, then perhaps you could suggest some alternatives or simply encourage customers to ask for their food in paper only. You could also investigate whether they use plastic or wooden forks.

The second part of the challenge is to find out what oil they use for cooking and investigate how sustainable it is. If they are using palm oil, perhaps you could take some information to them to explain why unsustainable palm oil is a problem and what they could use instead. Make sure you check your own canteen in school as well!

More information can be found at www.wwf.org.uk/updates/8-things-know-about-palm-oil

Extension: If your takeaway sells fish, try and find out if they source sustainable fish so that they aren't contributing to the overfishing issues worldwide. If they do, make sure they are telling customers about it and if they aren't, maybe you can help them to make a sustainable change!



Please let us know if you take part in a challenge by emailing eco-schools@keepwalestidy.cymru or tweeting @EcoSchoolsWales