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Biodiversity: a confirmed trend in 2010

In 2009, the Union for Ethical BioTrade and IPSOS launched the first worldwide biodiversity barometer, to measure levels of awareness of the French, British, Americans and Germans. In 2010, declared the International Year of Biodiversity by the UN, the second wave of the barometer allows for an evaluation of the progress within a year, but also to test Brazilians' levels of awareness, as well as consumers' sensitivity to these matters in the food sector. The results of the 2010 barometer were revealed at UEBT's annual conference "The Beauty of Sourcing with Respect" on April 16, in Paris.

Simultaneously with the increase of mentions of biodiversity in the press, its common knowledge has progressed in one year: from 56% to 60%. A significant point: Brazilians show the highest awareness of biodiversity, 94% of people have already heard of it, out of which 47% could give a correct definition.

In general, nature is ever more present in the minds of the consumers. If Fair Trade remains today the most well known notion, deforestation and the conservation of biodiversity are equally important. Here too, Brazilians are in the lead, with biodiversity a key theme, much more important than Fair Trade.

A lack of trust in the cosmetics and food industries' respect for biodiversity

Respondents do not have much trust in companies from the food and cosmetics sector, and particularly of their ethical sourcing practices related to biodiversity. Nevertheless, it is urgent to build this relationship of trust, since there is such a high number of people who would be ready to stop buying a product from a specific brand, if they knew ethical and environmental rules had been neglected in its sourcing and production process. This applies to the food sector (81%), and even more so to the cosmetics industry (84%). The public at large is now massively requesting control by an independent third-party organisation, which would guarantee objectivity.

Communication about biodiversity from the cosmetics industries remains low

Only 21 of the top 100 companies** in the cosmetics industry mention biodiversity, out of which a small minority claim to take it into account in their sourcing practices. This being said, it is possible to note an increase of mentions of biodiversity in the press: 2009 witnessed an increase in the number of articles on this matter in France, Germany, the UK and the USA by 32%.

This just goes to show that the conservation of biodiversity, an emerging issue in 2009, has now become a topic of debate in environmental matters. In fact, the cosmetics companies present at the 16 April conference "The Beauty of Sourcing with Respect" discussed their sourcing practices and exchange their views on the future.

** Source of the top 100: Women's Wear Daily

The Union for Ethical BioTrade is a non-profit association that promotes the 'Sourcing with Respect' of ingredients that come from native biodiversity. Members commit to gradually ensuring that their sourcing practices promote the conservation of biodiversity, respect traditional knowledge, and assure the equitable sharing of benefits all along the supply chain.

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