Carnauba wax

Origin and sustainability Statement

We take responsibility for environmental and human rights, labor, and social standards in the supply chain. We work to identify and assess environmental and social risks, negative impacts, and development potential along the supply chain. Through our Ethical Purchase Policy, we ensure that our suppliers are also qualified to comply with our standards.

Origin:

Carnauba wax is sourced from Brazil. It is derived from the leaves of the palm *Copernicia Prunifera*, which is native to and grown wildly in northeastern of Brazil, mainly in the States of Rio Grande do Norte, Ceará and Piauí. Cutting the leaves does not harm the palm and even slows aging. The drying of the leaves is usually done with sunlight. When the wax is obtained, the straw is used as organic fertilizer and mulch (known as "bagana"). The harvesting of carnauba wax provides an important source of jobs in a time of the year (July to December) that is usually critical in the region, due to low rainfall levels, which lead to a drop in agriculture production.

Upcycling:

The term upcycling refers to the process of transforming by-products, waste materials, useless, or unwanted products into new materials or products of greater quality. The carnauba palm has been used for centuries and offers numerous uses for its leaves, trunk, fibres, fruits, and roots. For example, its trunk was used to make sturdy beams, and its leaves are used for straw handicrafts such as hats and bags, as fertilizer, and for papermaking. However, since the wax is its most economically important product, we don't consider carnauba wax an upcycled product.

Water consumption:

Since carnauba wax is harvested from wild collection, no water is used to irrigate the palms.

KAHL GMBH & CO. KG | OTTO-HAHN-STR. 2 | 22946 TRITTAU, GERMANY | P: +49 4154 8431-0 | F: +49 4154 8431-10 | INFO@KAHLWORLD.COM

Page 1 of 2

Biodiversity:

The Carnauba palm tree is an endemic species in the Caatinga, an exclusive Brazilian biome that covers a total area of approximately 820,000 km². As an easily adaptable species, it covers large territories and is essential for the balance of the ecosystem. Carnauba palms usually grow along rivers and streams, where they help prevent siltation of the water bodies and control soil erosion. Furthermore, the fruits serve as food for animals such as bats, pigs, wild hogs, and birds, and their nectar and pollen are a food source for bees. The palm also supports animal migration processes – birds, for example, often use it as a nesting and resting place. Carnauba wax is obtained mainly from native vegetation, not planted areas. Cutting the leaves does not harm the palm and even slows aging.

Social projects related to Carnauba wax:

Initiative for Responsible Carnauba (IRC)

With 95 % of carnauba wax production taking place in Piauí and Ceará with 100,000–200,000 workers involved, Kahl is committed to helping improve Brazil's current situation to ensure sustainable and fair carnauba production. To make this happen, Kahl is part of the IRC, which promotes collaboration for human rights and biodiversity practices in the carnauba value chain in Brazil, in line with the requirements of the 'Union for Ethical Biotrade' (UEBT). The goal is to help carnauba processing companies improve the working and living conditions of workers. In addition to Kahl, Brazilian as well as international stakeholders, the government and civil society institutions, among others, are part of the project, and must all adhere to certain commitments, such as not being listed on the Brazilian government's slave labor company prosecution list, providing traceability, or annual third-party audits. The results are already visible: the IRC achieved progress in terms of presentations at international events, dialogues with local governments, collaboration between IRC members, and improvements in value chain practices (e.g. training or traceability). We only source carnauba wax from suppliers that are also participants in the IRC as well as members of the Union for Ethical Biotrade.

Kahl GmbH & Co. KG

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KAHL GMBH & CO. KG | OTTO-HAHN-STR. 2 | 22946 TRITTAU, GERMANY | P: +49 4154 8431-0 | F: +49 4154 8431-10 | INFO@KAHLWORLD.COM

Page 2 of 2