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## AN OPEN MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER REGARDING MONKEY LABOR

Edward & Sons Trading Co. Inc. is committed to ethical treatment of people and animals throughout our operations. Our company was the first in North America to introduce organic coconut milk to consumers over 20 years ago. So began our long and cherished friendship with Sam, a leading organic grower and processor of coconuts in Thailand. About thirty years ago, while restoring an abandoned coconut farm that lay fallow for many years, Sam began to explore and appreciate the benefits of organic agriculture. Impressed by the results of organic farming on his soil, his ecosystem and the health of his coconut palm trees, Sam has since become a prominent leader in Thailand's organic farming community. He now offers training and assistance to other farmers in their transition to organic agriculture. Edward & Sons produces our Native Forest® *Classic* and *Light* Organic Coconut Milks and Native Forest Organic *Premium* Coconut Cream in collaboration with Sam to this day.

Several years ago, PETA brought the world's attention to many smaller Thai coconut farms who abuse monkeys to harvest their coconuts. Wild monkeys are captured and trained to climb tall trees, spin and drop coconuts to the ground, where the farmers gather them for sale. Rejecting this practice, we believe wild animals should be allowed to live their lives in the wild. Our friend, Sam, has never used monkey labor to harvest his coconuts. However, an aggressive PETA campaign has cast a chilling shadow, warning consumers to avoid *all* Thai coconut milk. After all, how can a consumer be sure their coconut milk hasn't contributed to the exploitation of monkeys? We assert that the best way is to buy organic coconut milk from a principled company whose brands you trust.

Since we launched Native Forest organic coconut milk two decades ago, demand for this wonderful plant-based milk has grown exponentially. To keep up with demand, Edward & Sons expanded our supply chain to include excellent organic producers in Sri Lanka (where no farmers use monkey labor), as we introduced Native Forest *Simple* Organic Coconut Milk/Cream and Let's Do Organic Heavy Organic Coconut Cream. These are free of guar or other additives. Back in Thailand, business was brisk. Sam couldn't grow enough organic coconuts to fill orders from all his new customers. He planted more trees, but they would take several years to grow and harvest. So, Sam began buying coconuts from other organic farmers to fill his organic coconut milk orders.

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PETA continued their investigations and found that many smaller Thai farms still relied on monkey labor to pick their coconuts. This prompted Edward & Sons to strengthen our contracts with Sam, **ensuring that Native Forest brand coconut milk would be produced exclusively from coconuts harvested on his family farm.** It was vital that we secure our supply chain from any possible coconuts harvested by monkeys. We know for a fact that all the coconuts on Sam's farm are harvested by people, and the farm has been certified as "monkey free " by the Thai Dept of Agriculture.

While Edward & Sons have secured our humane organic coconut supply, we remain concerned for the plight of coconut monkeys on other Thai coconut farms. According to a National Geographic report, PETA's "revelations" about monkey labor prompted some Thai coconut farmers to surrender their monkeys to government-run centers or to wildlife groups. Edward & Sons reached out to the team at Wildlife Friends Foundation of Thailand (WFFT). We learned that WFFT receives more requests to rehome coconut monkeys than they are able to accommodate. Coconut monkeys are often abused and in need of significant medical care when surrendered. They do not possess social or survival skills that would allow them to be released successfully into the wild. Veterinary services must be provided, and enclosures built to house abandoned coconut monkeys until they are sufficiently healthy and socialized to release into protected habitats. Edward & Sons has become a financial supporter of Wildlife Friends Foundation of Thailand, and we encourage everyone, including our customers, our competitors and even PETA to do the same. Thailand's move away from using monkeys to harvest coconuts is an important and humane step, but it must be followed up with thoughtful protection and care of the monkeys who will be abandoned as a result of this change. For more information or to donate to Wildlife Friends Foundation of Thailand, please see: <https://www.wfft.org/>  
Thank you for caring about this important issue.

Joel Dee  
Founder and Director  
Edward & Sons Trading Co., Inc.  
October 2023

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