



Press release

For release: **June 28, 2022**

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## Westfalia takes avocado oil refining closer to circularity

As a leading multinational supplier of avocados, the Westfalia Fruit Group has unveiled three innovative environmental and social projects at its fruit processing plant in South Africa's Kwa Zulu Natal province, enhancing sustainability and helping local communities in the process.

The plant refines avocado oil which is used in cooking to cosmetics, and has been developing innovative ways to reduce the three separate types of waste generated in the refining operation - soap stock, spent bleach earth and avocado wax.

### Soap Stock

Soap stock is a waste product from the refining neutralisation process, consisting mainly of free fatty acids, glycerides, glycerophospholipids and water. This product is recycled into soaps and recently, Westfalia and the company that purchases the soap stock, have partnered with a social enterprise that has established a unique project.

"A local South African NGO called [PEN](#) has started to make washing powder and bathing soap from this product. In addition to recycling the soap stock, their project is supporting homeless people living in shelters, which enable these communities to generate additional income from selling the soap and learn important business skills and break the cycle of poverty at the same time. One success story from this project is a person currently living in the shelter who is using these funds to support himself while he is completing his Law degree" said Petrus van Eeden, Oil Operations Manager and Technical Support for New Business Development at Westfalia Fruits.

### Avocado Wax

Another by-product of refining is avocado wax, which is removed from the oil during winterisation, a process in which the oil is cooled, in order for the wax to solidify. After removal, the wax is used in the manufacturing of biofuels for boilers and burners to generate energy, instead of ending up in landfill.

### Spent Bleach Earth

Finally, spent bleach earth, a combination of natural dolomite clay, activated carbon and diatomaceous earth, is used to remove colour from the oil in a bleaching process. The solid waste from the process can be composted and it also contains excess oil which can be extracted as wax and, in turn, made into a biofuel.

These projects are helping to avoid 70 tons of landfill each year as well as Westfalia transition towards a more circular economy. "Sustainability is one of our core company values and we are always looking for ways to improve our processes. These projects have helped us to become more sustainable by reducing the waste we produce; they have social benefits, and we are saving costs in the process." said Paulina Theologou-Criticos, CEO EMEA Region.

"In cases of severe drought, such as we've seen in South Africa in the last few years, we have been reminded of how fragile our environment is and that we need to find more sustainable ways of doing things. I feel good that Westfalia is contributing to a better future for people and the planet," concludes Petrus van Eeden.



Westfalia takes avocado oil refining closer to circularity. (Photo: Westfalia Fruit, PR008)

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### About Westfalia Fruit

The multinational Westfalia Fruit Group is a leading supplier of fresh and processed produce to international markets, offering a diverse range of quality fruit and related products via its vertically integrated supply chain. As a frontrunner in the avocado industry, Westfalia grows, sources, ripens, packs, processes and markets accredited avocados across the globe throughout the year. Value-added products include avocado oil, low-preservative guacamole, frozen avocado and dried fruit.

Westfalia grows fruit in all major origins in the Americas and Africa and sources from partner orchards, giving the Group the most diverse avocado-growing footprint in the world. Westfalia's dynamic and integrated supply chain from research to the consumer benefits all stakeholders. The Group's research division, Westfalia Technological Services, is the world's largest privately funded subtropical fruit research unit. Its dedicated team of scientists and technicians focus on varietal development, innovation and environmental matters, and provides a pivotal role in defining the future of the global avocado industry.

A supplier of choice to retail, wholesale and food-service customers, Westfalia operates sales offices in the UK, Europe, North America, Latin America and southern Africa. Fruit is packed in diverse formats and expertly ripened to deliver optimal eating quality. For more information visit [www.westfaliafruit.com](http://www.westfaliafruit.com).

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