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100PercentCork.org Launches Pledge Drive to Reinforce Americans' Overwhelming Preference for Natural Cork: Time to Make The Voices Heard

Facebook Fans to Top 10,000 This Week

"Natural Cork Embodies Sustainability Like Few Other Products"

MONTEREY, Calif., June 9 /PRNewswire/ -- [100PercentCork.org](#) launched a pledge drive at the Sustainable Brands 2 conference today to reinforce Americans' overwhelming preference for natural cork for their wine because of cork's environmental, technical and societal benefits.

"Natural cork embodies sustainability like few other products, so this conference is the ideal venue to launch the campaign," Peter Weber, executive director of the Cork Quality Council, one of the campaign's supporters.

100PercentCork.org is already rapidly gathering momentum. The campaign is on track to sign up more than 10,000 fans on [Facebook page](#) before the conference's last session on Thursday.

Meanwhile, cork supporters are taking the [100 Percent Cork Pledge](#). Pledges will be collected in petitions to major wineries and winemakers to strongly urge them to increase their offerings of wine closed with natural cork.

"U.S. wine drinkers and winemakers overwhelmingly prefer cork over synthetic stoppers for its uniquely rich tradition and unmatched technical performance," Weber said. "However, there are also powerful environmental reasons to choose cork."

Cork is recyclable, biodegradable and creates a commercial incentive for the sustainable stewardship of the Mediterranean oak forests, which trap carbon emissions while providing one of the world's richest ecosystems.

"Choosing cork over artificial wine stoppers is a small but easy step to show that you care about your planet and your vineyard," Weber said. "In addition to its own environmental and technical advantages, that simple cork in the top of a wine bottle protects vast cork forests and a way of life that stretches back more than 400 years."

Why Choose Cork?

Cork is harvested from the bark of cork oaks. The process does not harm the trees, but it does provide some of the world's best paid agricultural jobs. Skilled craftsmen carefully remove the bark from the oak trees in a practice refined over centuries. Modern processing techniques have provided an unmatched technical performance. Natural cork is a safe, healthy, natural closure that protects wines better over time than metal-based or oil-derived closures.

The 5.4 million acres (2.2 million hectares) of Mediterranean cork forests sequester carbon, just like the world's rain forests. Portuguese cork forests alone - which account for about a third of all Mediterranean cork forests - retain [4.8 million metric tons of CO2](#) every year, according to the Lisbon School of Agronomy. This is equivalent to the annual CO2 emissions of more than [830,000 passenger vehicles](#), according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. If cork was no longer needed for wine stoppers, the survival of many of these trees would be at risk.

According to a peer-reviewed study by PricewaterhouseCoopers, aluminum and plastic stoppers consume as much as [more non-renewable energy](#) during their lifecycles, compared to cork. The same study shows that aluminum screw-caps [24 times as much greenhouse gases](#). Plastic stoppers produce nearly 10 times as much.

About 100PercentCork.org

[100PercentCork.org](#) is a campaign to recruit U.S. wine consumers to choose wine with natural cork stoppers because environmental, technical and societal benefits. The campaign seeks to educate, recruit and organize wine consumers that winemakers and retailers choose natural cork over artificial stoppers. The campaign is funded by the [Portuguese C Association](#) and the [Cork Quality Council](#).

For more information and a playback of the 100PercentCork.org presentation at the Sustainable Brands Conference, visit [100PercentCork.org](#). Join the conversation about cork on our [Facebook](#) page. Follow campaign developments on [Twitter](#).

About the Sustainable Brands Conference

The Sustainable Brands Conference is the preeminent conference for executives looking to understand the unfolding market drivers and leading-edge strategies for building business and brand value by innovating for sustainability. [Sustainable Brands 2010](#) – has convened an unprecedented list of more than 700 leading sustainability, brand strategy, product design and communications executives from top global brands as well as bonfire start-ups, NGOs and leading solutions providers.

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