



As part of our vision to be a positive force for change, we've produced a series of factsheets to help our customers better understand sustainability issues, and what we're doing about them.

Overview

Labelling requirements on food and menus have increased steadily over time – recent additions have included improvements to allergen labelling as well as calorie information for large catering establishments. A growing number of foodservice and hospitality outlets now require carbon information on the products they buy from us – so that they can either provide this data on menus and/or calculate the carbon footprint of their total annual food purchasing from us.

We're working hard on providing this information – read on to find out more.



What's the problem?

As the climate and nature crisis accelerates, there's growing awareness that industrial scale food production drives a lot of negative impacts. From land use change (e.g. the cutting down of native forests to create cropland or pasture for livestock – known as 'deforestation') to agricultural processes, fertilisers, methane production, transportation and storage, the food we eat has a hefty carbon footprint.

That's before we've even cooked it, disposed of the packaging or created any waste food. But not all food is equal, and there are a lot of misunderstandings about what drives the carbon footprint. So we need to support customers with better information – so that they can better measure and reduce their own footprint – as well as enabling them to give consumers the information they need for more responsible choices.

Jargon busting

Did you know that food transport related emissions make up typically only 10% of the carbon footprint?

Lots of people love the idea of local food (and with good reason!) but it's generally far better (environmentally speaking) to buy food from where it's grown seasonally, then transported to UK, than to buy food from heated greenhouses in the UK, which are usually powered by fossil fuels.

There's also a lot more to food sustainability than just its carbon footprint. From fair pay to workers, water consumption to animal welfare and more, the carbon footprint is just one aspect of sustainability.

What can you do?

You don't need carbon footprint data to start making a difference. Meat and dairy are typically high impact foods, so reducing the proportion of these on a plate will almost always result in a reduction in the climate impact. This can be achieved creatively by swapping in different ingredients (veg, lentils, meat substitutes, nuts etc.) without compromising on taste.

Many caterers have already adopted meat reduction targets (some without even communicating it) and this can have benefits for health and your bottom line too.

Our targets and plans

We're working in partnership with CarbonCloud to provide carbon footprint data for all products in our consumable product range. CarbonCloud is a SaaS platform that uses AI to calculate, report and improve the carbon footprint of food companies. A project overview is below:

STEP 1:

We use the Carbon Cloud platform to provide fairly generic carbon footprint data for all our products, which gives customers an initial reference point for understanding the different carbon impacts of the various food categories. (We will inevitably have better quality data on own brand products as we hold a greater level of product specific / recipe related information.)

STEP 2:

We engage our suppliers in this initiative, explaining our approach to carbon footprinting. This gives suppliers a clear signal that our customers are interested in measuring and reducing the climate impact of the food they're buying from us.

STEP 3:

We give suppliers the chance to input product/supplier specific data into the process, enabling the accuracy of calculations to be improved. This gives suppliers the chance to understand more about the climate impacts of the food they're producing, as well as an opportunity to differentiate themselves in the marketplace, by innovating (in the cultivation and/or processing and/or transportation of the product) to lower the carbon impact.

STEP 4:

By this point, we aim to have driven greater momentum in the decarbonisation of global food supply, contributing to a lower scope 3 carbon footprint for our customers, their customers and ourselves.

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