

www.BusinessAssurance.com Tesco Carbon Labelling Podcast Transcript

Welcome to the latest edition of the Business Assurance dot com Climate Change Podcast Series. My name is Neville Hobson.

In this episode, we hear from Katherine Symonds, Tesco's Sustainability Manager, about Tesco's carbon labelling pilot project which she discussed at the June launch of the Forum for the Future "Check-out Carbon" report, held at the headquarters of Lloyd's Register, a key supporter of the Forum's research.

***NEVILLE HOBSON:** Katherine told us a bit about the pilot carbon labelling project that Tesco has recently undertaken.*

KATHERINE SYMONDS: There's a certain amount customers need to understand before they can really get to grips with their carbon footprint. So we created a booklet that we put in stores at the same time that we put the label on products, and this booklet takes them through the whole journey, because climate change is a complicated thing and we needed to go right back to 'what is a greenhouse gas', 'what is a fossil fuel'. And take them on that journey, so that when we talked about a carbon footprint they really knew kind of where we were coming from.

And its been great, I have had so many emails asking for copies of this booklet, so schools keep emailing me and saying can you send me 50 of these. So, it's obviously really working as a basic level tool, to get people to a point where they can get involved and understand.

***NEVILLE HOBSON:** Here Katherine talks about some of the key learnings for Tesco during this project.*

KATHERINE SYMONDS: We have learnt a lot through doing this process. Probably the most important things we have learnt is the fact that it's easy, that it's possible to do this in a 12 week stretch. We thought that it might be much longer, a much more expensive process, and the work that we have done has shown us that, actually, it doesn't need to be.

So that's been a key learning and allowing us to kind of roll it on and take it forward. And we have learnt a lot from testing different types of products, as well as understanding where the materials that make the product, or where the high carbon footprint is, or whether it's the in the use phase like with light bulbs, that's been a really interesting thing to find out.

In terms of next steps, it's about extending the trial. We have an ambition to get the label on to 100 products by the end of our financial year, because at that point we should be able to start making more informed decisions based on customer response.

At this stage, it's not on quite enough products to really get good feedback from customers. So we hope by the end of the year we will have that. Then, as I said earlier, this is a long journey and we have taken the first few steps, but it's about working with everybody else who is in this field right now and getting to a point where we have a universal label that can be used on any product, anywhere in the world.

***NEVILLE HOBSON:** Katherine talked about the role that standards play in carbon labelling and how long it took Tesco to carbon label their first 20 products*

KATHERINE SYMONDS: How, I think Euan sort of touched on there, the PAS 2050 the methodology that's being worked on by the Carbon Trust, DEFRA and the BSI and that's just the methodology that we have taken and have worked with Environmental Resource Management (ERM), and they have been supporting our suppliers to work up the data so that we compile which is then verified by Euan. So, that was all part of the challenge, working with suppliers who often hadn't given this a huge amount of support. Hadn't in measuring their data in such a way as this or were expected to be asked for. So that was an interesting learning process for us and our suppliers and accordingly the Carbon Trust and ERM as well.

But we found out that it sounds incredibly difficult on paper to work out the carbon footprint of a product, and actually its not impossible, is the message there. Its not only, not impossible, its entirely possible and we have done it. It's

not the easiest thing in the world, but it's something that we think we have cracked and it's something that we have managed to do without spending huge amounts of money and without all those enormous amounts of time. So we reckon we can get from start to finish in 12 weeks, from the moment we decide which product we want to carbon footprint. We did that with the 20 products that we have put them on now, we did it from start to finish in 12 weeks. So, that's not an impossible task.

NEVILLE HOBSON: *In closing, Katherine answered the audience question "what are we all hoping to get out of carbon labelling?"*

KATHERINE SYMONDS, TESCO: So, what is our goal. Well, this is very much a journey, we have taken the first steps working with those people that we have worked with thus far, its really exciting where we have got to, we are learning so much everyday that label is out there and that's just a taste of understanding where that goes next and how that can become a universal measure. So, from our point of view this is something we are testing, we hope other people are going to embrace that and start trying it out on their products and it will eventually get to the point where customers are empowered, they are making good decisions and by doing those things, they are cutting their carbon footprint. I think that's a goal that we all share, now let's just work together to figure out the very best of getting there.

NEVILLE HOBSON: You have been listening to a Business Assurance dot com Climate Change podcast about Tesco's carbon labelling pilot project. For more information about Tesco and climate change, visit www.tesco.com/greenerliving. To listen to or download any of the episodes from this Climate Change podcast series, please visit www.businessassurance.com/climatechange.

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