

Why carbon labels are the future

Is the annual COP conference driving the change we need? COP always generates plenty of headlines - and this year's in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, was no different. But are these conferences really driving change? Headlines are great, but action is what we need.

Temps de lecture : minute

17 November 2022

Last year's COP in Glasgow saw a carbon labelled climate conference - it was the first of its kind, giving delegates a glimpse into the future of the food and beverage industry. We know that three quarters of people want to make sustainable choices but at the moment they have no way of knowing which products have high carbon footprints and which have low ones. It's why we carbon label all our energy blends at TENZING and why we started Knowvember.

But fast forward a year, COP27 saw steak and chips being served and how many more carbon labels do you see on shelves?

Around one quarter of global emissions are produced by food and drink businesses, but how can these businesses manage what they do not know and why are there so few policies around the reduction of their emissions?

Can Knowvember kickstart the change we need?

Carbon labels taking centre stage at COP26 last year, convinced me that I was right to create Knowvember, a campaign which aims to bring climate transparency to the high street and help shoppers make climate-conscious choices. But companies seem to be shying away from sharing

their footprint which begs the question - what are they hiding?

We can't accelerate change alone. Knowvember is all about encouraging businesses to own their climate footprint too: know it, show it and lower it. Fortunately there are other brands that have joined TENZING in Knowvember's mission.

When In Rome sells high quality wine that generates ten times less CO2 than single-use glass bottles. The logistics team of Jude's, an ice cream brand, has focused on the efficiency of routes and fill loads as part of its commitment to reduce carbon intensity. At TENZING we use a ship-only policy to transport our ingredients and products internationally.

With help from CarbonCloud, you can compare the footprint of products allowing you to make simple swaps when you do your everyday shop.

We've done the hard work by finding easily-accessible, low-carbon alternatives for everything from fresh fruit to fish and chips: you can find all our swap suggestions here. For instance, a TENZING's footprint is 7 times lower than a takeaway latte. It offers you the same amount of energy, but with 7 times less carbon emissions. If people were aware of these comparisons, then they could make more informed choices.

The Carbon labelling journey

CarbonCloud, the climate intelligence platform, has a team of carbon data scientists who have worked out the carbon footprint of thousands of ingredients, packaging types, products and continue to live monitor our full range, from crop to can. That allowed us to put carbon labels on our cans, in turn enabling shoppers to make an informed choice.

The biggest challenge was getting all the data from our suppliers because at the time it was very new to them and required a lot of their time. They

couldn't necessarily see the benefits for them, but after a while their attitude changed. It became: *"I'm sorry it took so long to gather your climate footprint data; we have now had more requests from other businesses to do the same so next time everything will be a lot easier."*

We can now be held accountable for our emissions and create informed targets when it comes to carbon reduction. We believe that carbon labelling makes us a better company because it ensures we have a full understanding of our supply chain and can make informed changes on the quest to becoming as climate-efficient as possible.

People are used to looking at fat, salt, sugar and calories when they buy food and drink - but knowing a product's carbon impact is just as important and actually far easier to understand. There's no "good" carbon or "bad" carbon like you have with calories. It's simply the lower the better.

Change is coming. More and more brands are joining the movement and hopefully by the time we get to COP28, you'll be seeing more carbon labelled products on shelf.

Sign up [here](#) if you want to hear more from the businesses making real change at the Knowvember Summit later this month.

Huib Van Bockel is the founder and CEO of [TENZING](#).