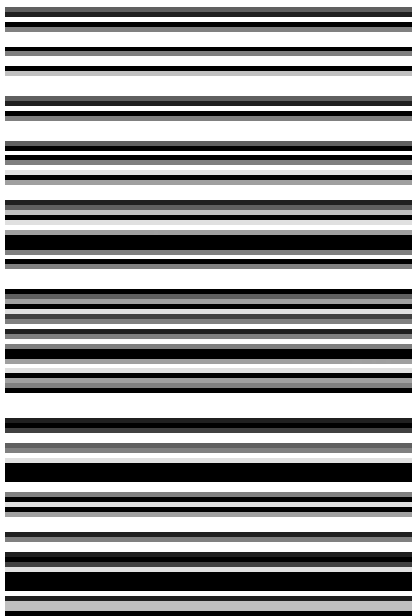


ethics without agony!



a guide to shopping for sustainability

what should I buy?

# Sustainability affects us all

## What is the problem?

Sustainability is about creating a lasting world without overwhelming environmental, social or economic problems. Although this might seem a long way off, you can make a difference now by how you shop and what you buy. This Guide is designed to help you make choices that will count.

Environmental problems arise from many causes, but one of the fundamental issues is energy use. Social and economic problems can be caused by inequality and poverty – often with no awareness on the part of the consumer.

So sustainability presents us with complex choices. There are some choices which are obvious – a car which uses less petrol will be more environmentally benign. A fridge which uses less electricity will be cheaper to run. You win; the environment wins.

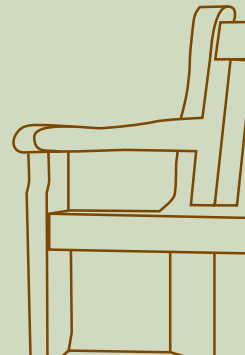
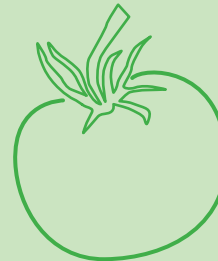
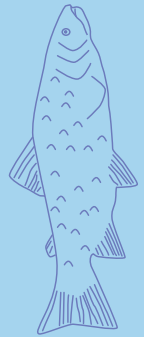
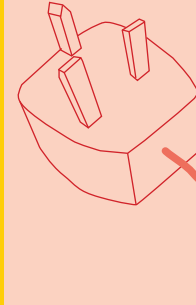
But sometimes it is not so obvious. Maybe the more beneficial choice costs slightly more. Maybe you just can't tell under what conditions the workers who made your clothes had to work.

## What can be done about it?

One solution is to get someone else to find out! This booklet shows you how to do that for some kinds of product, for free. This approach relies on labelling.

Most things you buy have all sorts of labels on them. The majority of those in this booklet are designed to show that the products which carry them have been checked to ensure they have passed certain agreed sustainability standards.

More information can be found from the websites listed throughout this Guide and at the end of the booklet.



# Fairtrade products

## What is the problem?

It can be very hard for small-scale farmers and those working on plantations in the third world to make a living. Commodities, like bananas and coffee, are subject to the pressures of a global trading system. Those who survive by selling these commodities are living very close to poverty.

## What can be done about it?

Buy Fairtrade food! The Fairtrade scheme requires all those who participate to:

- pay a price to producers that covers the costs of sustainable production and living
- pay a 'premium' that producers can invest in development
- make partial advance payments when requested by producers
- sign contracts that allow for long-term planning and sustainable production practices.

More than 180 Fairtrade foods are now available in supermarkets, independent outlets, cafés, restaurants and through catering suppliers.

Products currently covered by the Fairtrade label:

- coffee
- tea
- chocolate & cocoa
- honey
- bananas
- mangoes
- fruit juice
- sugar
- oranges, apples, lemons, pineapples & grapes
- snacks & biscuits

For more information see: [www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)



# Energy efficiency

## What is the problem?

Our lifestyles are energy-hungry. We use energy for driving cars, flying in aeroplanes and even watching TV!

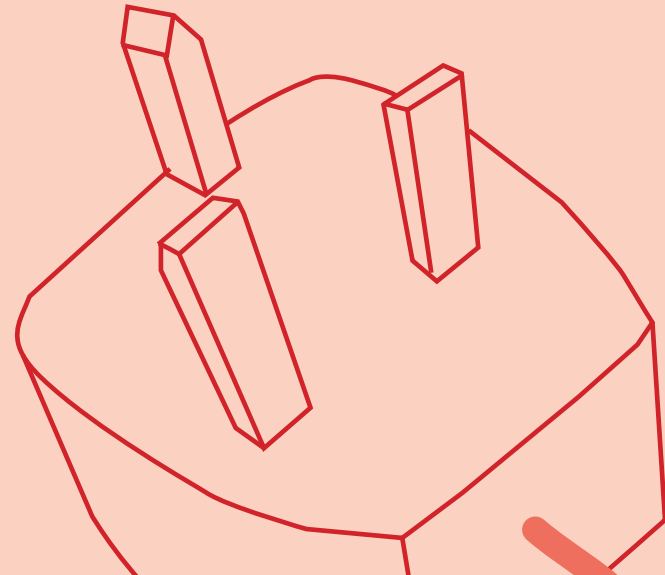
But the generation of energy often causes pollution and carbon dioxide to be produced. Carbon dioxide is a major cause of global warming which may cause climate change and upheaval in the way of life for many people throughout the world.

## What can be done about it?

Buy the most energy-efficient cooker, fridge, washing machine or other appliance which meets your needs. Look for the Energy label opposite.

Buy the car you like which does the most miles to the gallon. This can vary by almost 50% for similar sized cars. (And maybe buy a smaller car – it could save you road tax.)

For more information see [www.mtprog.com](http://www.mtprog.com)



Energy		Washing Machine
Manufacturer		
Model		
More efficient		
A		
B		◀ B
C		
D		
E		
F		
Less efficient		
G		▶ G
Energy consumption KWh/cycle <small>(based on standard units for 60° C cotton cycle)</small> Actual energy consumption will depend on how the appliance is used		1,05
Washing performance <small>A: higher G: lower</small>		A B C D E F G
Spin drying performance <small>A: higher G: lower</small>		A B C D E F G
Spin speed from		1400
Capacity (cotton) kg		5.0
Water consumption		55

# Responsible forestry

## What is the problem?

In too many parts of the world, the wood for our products is being cut down without regard for the animals and plants in the forest, the people who may depend upon it – or, of course, for the trees themselves!

Forests contain as much as 90% of the world's terrestrial biodiversity – from charismatic mammals such as the great apes, tiger and panda to millions of species of plants. We cannot conserve species without conserving their habitat. Forests purify the air we breathe, provide life-saving medicines and are key to controlling soil erosion and preventing the flooding that threatens so many lives. They also provide energy for cooking and heating homes in places where no other resource is available.

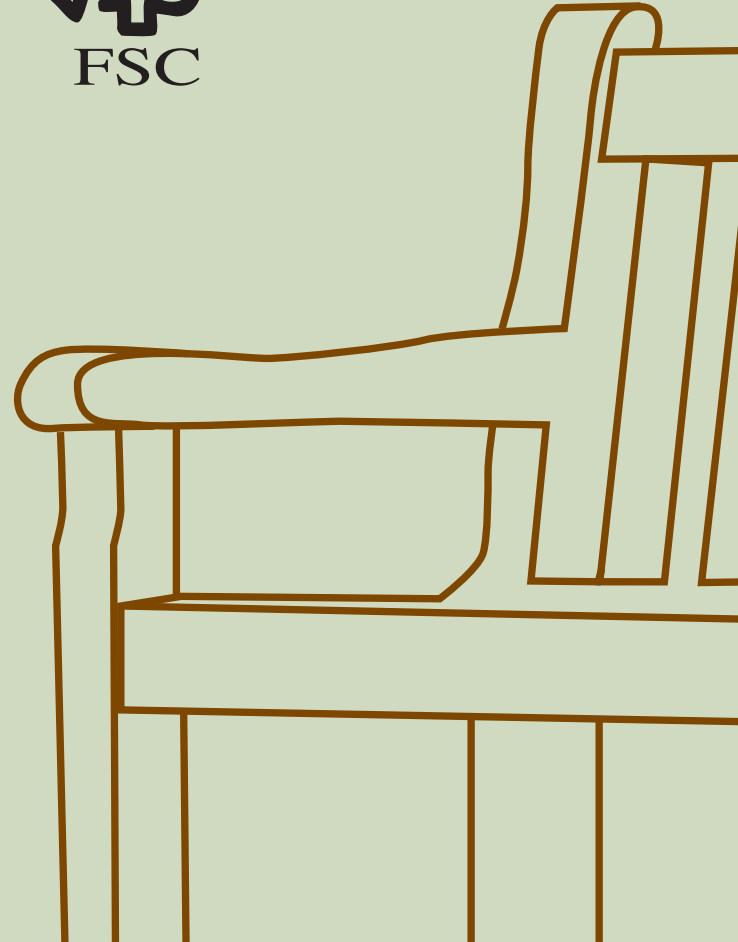
Millions of rural people depend on forests for their livelihoods – for food, fuel, building material, medicinal plants and clean water. 14.6 million hectares of natural forest are lost each year – an area larger than the UK – due to activities such as illegal logging, forest fires land clearance for agriculture, mining and road building. This is a rate of 30 hectares every minute.

## What can be done about it?

Buy sustainably managed products, such as those with the FSC label! The FSC promotes forestry that is environmentally appropriate, socially acceptable and economically viable through a system of forest certification and product labelling.

The FSC label can be found on timber and paper products which come from well managed forests – that's thousands of product lines in the UK alone. You'll find it on garden furniture, decking, sheds, conservatories, tools, bird boxes and bird tables, kitchen, bathroom ware, brushes, wall paper, flooring, doors, shelves, furniture, toilet tissue, paper, pencils – in fact most things made from wood.

For more information see [www.fsc-uk.org](http://www.fsc-uk.org)



# Biodiversity in the sea

## What is the problem?

Seafood is important for millions of people. The trouble is, our oceans are being seriously overfished. Unless action is taken, some of our favourite fish may disappear from the seafood counter altogether. And it's not just our supper that's at stake: overfishing is damaging fishing industries and marine environments around the world.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations reports that while 25% of the world's commercially important marine fish stocks are under-exploited, 47% are fully fished, 15% are over-exploited and 10% are depleted or slowly recovering.

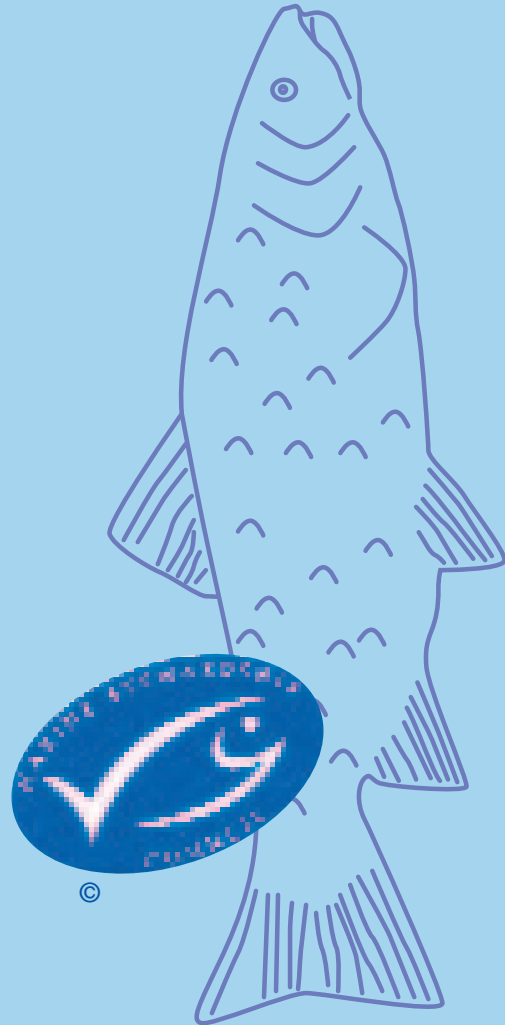
## What can be done about it?

Buy MSC certified produce! The Marine Stewardship Council programme uses a product eco label to reward environmentally responsible fishing management and practices. Fisheries certified to the MSC's environmental standard have demonstrated:

- the maintenance and re-establishment of healthy populations of fish
- the maintenance of the integrity of ecosystems
- the development and maintenance of an effective fisheries management system.

The Marine Stewardship Council's logo can be found on fish and fish products in major UK supermarkets (and around the world too).

For more information see: [www.msc.org](http://www.msc.org)



# Why organic food?

## What is the problem?

The use of intensive farming methods can produce cheap food, but its other impacts may be harmful, or more likely, simply unknown. There are particular concerns around the impact on human and animal health and on the environment. Intensively produced food can also be less tasty!

## What can be done about it?

Buy organic! Organic farming involves a strictly regulated approach to farming which includes restricting the use of artificial chemical fertilisers and pesticides and relying on developing a healthy, fertile soil and growing a mixture of crops. Also, animals are reared without the routine use of drugs, antibiotics and wormers common in intensive livestock farming.

Organic food is certified by a number of different bodies, including the Soil Association whose label is illustrated opposite.

For more information see [www.soilassociation.org](http://www.soilassociation.org)



# Animals deserve kindness too

## What is the problem?

Animal welfare is a large subject. Two important aspects are cosmetics testing and farm animal welfare. Every year thousands of animals in Europe and millions across the world still endure painful experiments to test cosmetics products and their ingredients. On the farm, animals can be subject to hunger, distress or the inability to express their normal behaviour.

## What can be done about it?

Buy cruelty-free! The British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV) manages the Humane Cosmetics Standard, and the Humane Household Products Standard. To be approved a company must not conduct or commission animal testing nor buy animal tested ingredients, and they must prove compliance with an independent audit. A company that is approved under either scheme may use the 'rabbit and stars' logo.

For farm animals, the RSPCA has its own farm assurance and food labelling scheme, Freedom Food, to provide consumers with the opportunity to identify products which come from farms, hauliers and processors approved to RSPCA welfare standards. Scheme members are subject to annual assessments by Freedom Food assessors and random spot check visits from RSPCA Farm Livestock Officers.

The RSPCA standards are based on the concept of the five freedoms as defined by the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC). These include freedom from: fear and distress, hunger and thirst, discomfort, pain, injury and disease and freedom to express normal behaviour. The RSPCA standards work towards these ideals within a practical farming context.

For more information see:

- BUAV Humane Cosmetics Standard [www.buav.org](http://www.buav.org)
- RSPCA Freedom Food [www.freedomfood.co.uk](http://www.freedomfood.co.uk)
- FWAC [www.fawc.org.uk](http://www.fawc.org.uk)





# What else?

## What is the problem?

Labels may be catchy and popular. Unfortunately some labels can also be confusing and misleading. This booklet has focused on some of the more reliable labels available in this country for products which make a real, positive difference. Some manufacturers, however, use vague promises, like 'kind to nature'. Take care not to rely on good intentions alone.

## What can be done about it?

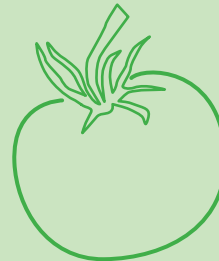
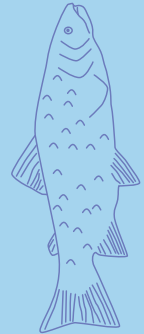
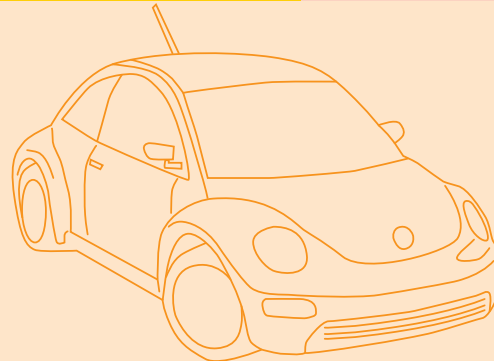
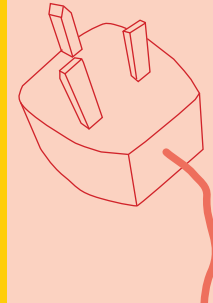
New labels are being developed and may be introduced in this country over the next few years.

In the meantime, **ask**. When you buy something – ask how it helps sustainability.

If more consumers show they care about the environmental, social and economic impacts of what they buy, then the producers and manufacturers will begin to take more care too.

For more information, see the following websites:

- **energy saving**, the Energy Saving Trust – [www.est.org.uk](http://www.est.org.uk)
- **vehicle fuel consumption** and the associated taxes, the Vehicle Certification Agency – [www.vcacarfueldata.org.uk](http://www.vcacarfueldata.org.uk)
- the **LEAF** Marque is about Linking Environment And Farming. It gives you the choice to buy affordable food produced by farmers who are committed to improving the environment for the benefit of wildlife and the countryside – [www.leafmarque.com](http://www.leafmarque.com)
- **Compassion in World Farming** – [www.ciwf.co.uk](http://www.ciwf.co.uk)



# WWF

WWF – the global environment network – takes action to conserve endangered species, protect endangered spaces and address global environmental threats by seeking long-term solutions.

Our mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature by:

- conserving the world's biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable resources is sustainable, and
- promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

Although we are best known for our work to protect endangered species, this is merely a part of what we do. We also aspire to protect threatened habitats, and to diminish global threats to people and nature such as climate change, deforestation and the use of toxic chemicals. We work with governments, business and industry, educators and society in general to seek sustainable solutions to the planet's environmental problems.

This booklet has been developed by WWF in consultation with the retail and financial sectors.

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# THIS WAY UP

