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## Understanding Green Labels

There are many green labels, logos and claims on product packaging or accompanying goods and services. These can be confusing to organisations trying to make their purchasing more environmentally and ethically aware. As green marketing becomes increasingly sophisticated it is easy to be misled by advertising claims. Defra, the Government Department with responsibility for green labelling, publishes consumer guidance.

Some of the labels may be familiar such as the 'Recycling Loop' and the Energy Efficiency logo. At present no label gives a clear indication of a product's climate change impacts. Defra is working with the Carbon Trust and BSI British Standards to establish a method that can be used across a range of consumer products.

### Sources of information and advice

#### **Directgov:**

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/Environmentandgreenerliving/Greenershopping/DG\\_064421](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Environmentandgreenerliving/Greenershopping/DG_064421)

– Greener shopping pages give information and direct links to green labels and claims relating to: food labels; organic labels; timber products; wider world; eco-labelling; energy efficiency; vehicles; product specifics; recycling & packaging.

**Defra Shoppers Guide to Green Labels.** An Index of Green Labels (updated Oct 2007, PDF 350KB)

This is an accessible tool to help guide a way through the maze of green labels and claims. It includes logos and certification schemes, and information on related initiatives (or organisations that run them). To ensure context, the Index includes a number of assurance schemes and initiatives which are not necessarily 'green labels'. For example, ethical schemes such as fair trade initiatives are often engaged with environmental schemes, and some of these, such as Fairtrade itself, include some environmental requirements. The A-Z listing makes it easy to search and direct web-links are provided, as well as guidance on logo copyright issues.

A fold-out credit card-sized version is available. To obtain a copy you must quote Ref. PB 11502. Request from Defra Publications, Admail 6000, London SW1A 2XX. Tel: 08459 556000 Email: [defra@cambertown.com](mailto:defra@cambertown.com)

See [www.bassac.org.uk](http://www.bassac.org.uk) for more information