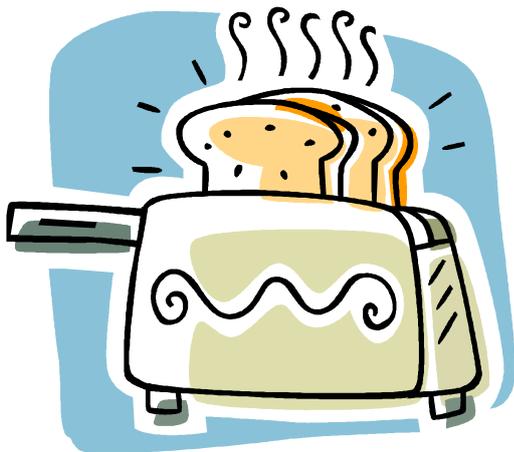




GREEN LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

How Green are you?

Green Shopping



We all need to buy goods, but we can make choices to reduce the environmental impact of our purchasing without necessarily paying more. It's important to consider factors like where the goods have come from and how, as well as the quality and the quantity of the goods we buy.

There are **five 'R's** to consider before buying:

1. **Refuse** – do I really need the item?
2. **Reduce** – do I need to consume as much? Buying extra may seem cheaper but will it be used?
3. **Repair** – instead of buying new, can I repair the existing item?
4. **Reuse** – instead of buying new, can I buy it second hand? Something may no longer perform its original function but can it be used / adapted to perform another?

5. **Recycle** – can the item I'm buying be easily recycled?

Food

In the past, the range of exotic produce was limited to bananas and citrus fruit and the occasional pineapple, melon & satsumas. Today supermarkets, and lesser extent greengrocers, supply a much wider choice of fruits and vegetables from across the world. As a result we have lost touch with the seasons. It has also increased pollution from the transport of this food - food miles. Flying such produce uses up to 4 litres of fuel for each kilo of.

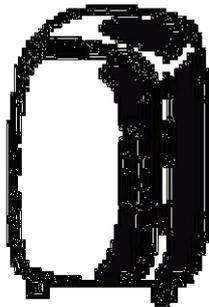
With climate change, emissions reductions targets and the world population due to rise to 9 billion by 2050 we need to find ways not only to feed the growing population, but to do it sustainably. The complex supply chain from farming/agriculture/production to consumption needs to be sustainable (and less dependent on non-renewables like oil for transport) if we are to ensure future food security.

While there is a debate about the merits and risks of genetically modified (GM) food and the taste difference or nutritional value of organic produce, the use of pesticides and other intensive farming practises, is

recognised to have a damaging impact on wildlife and ecosystems that support all life on earth.

Action Points for food shopping

- Buy locally grown, seasonal produce where possible and support farmers markets
- Consider growing your own produce and having your own compost bin
- Make pickles, jams and preserves when in season and cheaper
- Choose organically grown food
- Avoid buying too much that has been flown in from around the world
- Try to choose sustainable/responsibly sourced fish
- Avoid choosing food with excessive packaging and try to select recyclable packaging when available
- Try to cut down on products with high carbon footprints like meat and cheese



Appliances

With the growing impact of global warming, it is increasingly important to make energy consumption one of the factors in choosing a product (it will also save money too).

The European Energy label has been introduced to help consumers compare the energy consumption of different

models. Appliances are rated on a scale from A (most efficient) to G least efficient). By law these must be displayed on all fridges, freezers washing machines, tumble dryers and dishwashers. An A rated fridge freezer could save £450 on energy costs over 10 years of use (based on paying 7p/kwh) compared to a G rated one. Energy ratings are also being attached to many public buildings like universities as well as houses 'for sale'.

Action Points for shopping

- Avoid battery powered electrical goods and toys as most use 50x more energy to make, as they give out in their life time
- Choose paint and cleaning products that have a low VOC content. These are volatile organic compounds, which contribute to air pollution and linked to asthma and other breathing problems
- Energy saving devices that you can attach to old appliances like computers can help you regulate use and thus save energy
- Beware of false claims of being eco-friendly-make sure the label is from a genuine/officially recognised company



Clothes and Accessories

It is gradually becoming easier, particularly online, to find companies who produce clothing and accessories ethically,

sustainably and in an environmentally friendly way, such as People Tree and Ascension Clothing.

It is important to consider how sustainable the materials are, as well as where the product was produced. Many companies like Ecoist use recycled materials for their products.

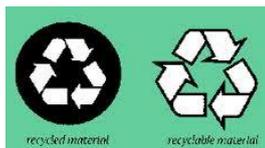
Also take care when buying products made of Bamboo as sometimes it is not managed sustainably and many chemicals can be added during manufacturing.

There are many companies who produce toiletries, cleaning products as well as furniture and stationary from sustainably managed forests or without chemicals. Many producers and shops now offer an eco-friendly range.

Choosing green goods

There are a number of official labels to guide consumers and help tell the difference between genuine 'green' products rather than those claiming to be green.

The Mobius loop symbol means that a product can be recycled – a percentage figure shows the percentage of recycled material.



The European Union Ecolabel is an official award for products that meet a high environmental standard. It can be shown

on a wide range of household goods, including kitchen towels, toilets, washing powder and paint.



The Marine Stewardship Council labels fish products that have been produced in an environmentally responsible way.



The Forestry Stewardship Council awards their label to wood that has been grown, managed and felled according to sustainable forest standards.



A green consumer website has been launched to help individuals, organisations and local authorities source sustainable products and services. The site search facility is by topic or a geographical basis (town, region or nationally).

www.greenguideonline.com

Ethical Consumer Magazine is a reference guide to ethical shopping (Book, A5, 250 pages, £12). 60 ethical consumer reports published in a guide book

Order by phone: 0161 226 2929 or www.ethicalconsumer.org



Green Personal Finance



Individuals and organisations can make decisions that reflect their ethical values. Two main areas are your bank and how you invest any savings.

Bank/ Building Society Accounts

There are two main ways to have an account with a bank with environmental policies. One is to work with the bank you currently use, and press them about their environmental policies, including Third World debt. Such pressure from customers can bring about change.

The second option is to move your account to a bank that conducts its business to an ethical set of criteria that you support. Some banks operate more positive environmental policies than others.

Savings

Common types of savings include a bank or building society deposit account, shares or unit trusts, a financial vehicle such as an ISA and pension. There are a wide variety of ethical investment funds available, which operate according to a variety of principals. Details of saving products operating ethical criteria can be obtained from financial advisors. Advice can also be obtained from the Ethical investment Research Service (EIRIS).

www.eiris.org

Giving

Charitable giving is an important way of using your money according to your principals. Many environmental charities welcome such support, whether in one-off gifts, regular gifts or a legacy.

For more information about tax efficient giving, contact your chosen charity or the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF). CAF can advise on how the government encourages charitable giving by increasing the value of gifts at no extra cost to the individual donor.

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