

Conference on

ECOLABELS AND THE GREENING OF THE FOOD MARKET

Boston, Massachusetts, USA November 7-9, 2002

<http://nutrition.tufts.edu/conted/ecolabels>

Organizers

Tufts University, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy

Economic Research Service, US Department of Agriculture

Agricultural Marketing Service, US Department of Agriculture

Purpose and scope

This conference will cover all aspects of ecolabels for foods and other agricultural products. The term “ecolabel” will be interpreted broadly, meaning any label, such as “certified organic”, intended to convey that a product is preferable regarding either environmental protection, biodiversity and wildlife, animal welfare, social justice, local origin, or any other aspect of ecological and social sustainability.

This conference is a response to the rapidly growing use of ecolabels, which has raised several questions: How credible are they? How can labels motivated by bona fide environmental concern be distinguished from those that are just a marketing ploy? How well do consumers understand them, and how much confidence do they have in them? What are the appropriate roles of government and private organizations in setting standards and enforcing compliance?

Intended audience

The conference is intended for people from a range of organizations and institutions:

- Companies that already use ecolabels, or are considering them
- Environmental organizations that offer ecolabels
- Inspection and certification bodies
- Consumer-related university departments
- Private market research organizations
- Consumer interest groups
- Government agencies that deal with food labeling and marketing, such as USDA, FDA, FTC, and state departments of agriculture
- National and international agencies concerned with world trade in food

Overview of the program

Half the program will consist of plenary sessions featuring nationally and internationally known speakers as well as panel discussions dealing with major policy issues. The other half will consist of parallel sessions for contributed papers, and a poster session. Themes for these sessions include:

- Descriptions of existing ecolabeling programs
- Effectiveness and credibility of ecolabels
- Comparisons of different ecolabels for the same products
- Domestic and international policy issues
- Understanding consumers' choices regarding ecolabels
- Marketing strategies for ecolabels
- Labels relating to social justice
- Certified organic: the oldest and best-known ecolabel

Schedule

The conference begins at 9:00 AM, Thursday, November 7, and adjourns at 3:30 PM, Saturday, November 9. Thursday evening there is a reception (6:00 PM - 7:00 PM), but no organized activity afterwards. Friday evening there is a banquet with a program that we promise will be not only informative but also highly entertaining.

For further information

For information on registration and hotel rooms, visit <http://nutrition.tufts.edu/conted/ecolabels>

For questions on registration or other logistical matters, please e-mail us at ecolabels@tufts.edu.

For questions regarding the program, please contact the conference chair, Willie Lockeretz (willie.lockeretz@tufts.edu)