

WARM UP

1 What are food miles? Read the first text and check your answer.

- A Points (equivalent to miles of free travel) when you buy food products.
- B The distance people in developing countries have to travel to find food.
- C The distance which food is transported from producer to consumer.

FAIRTRADE VS FOOD MILES

FOOD MILES

'Food miles' refers to the distance food is transported from the time of its production until it reaches the consumer. It is a simple way of assessing the environmental impact of food, in that food that has had to travel further will cause more pollution through transportation. However, food miles do not take into account the other ways that food impacts on the environment, for example, though the energy and resources used in its production, or in the disposal of packaging and waste food.

FAIRTRADE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Firstly, fairtrade encourages sustainable use of land and resources. If people are guaranteed a fair price, they will not have to use land, resources and energy in an unsustainable way to produce as much as they can, as quickly as they can. Furthermore, fairtrade standards require producers to try and protect the natural environment as part of farm management. Producers are also encouraged to minimise the use of energy, especially from non-renewable sources. Lastly, the social premium that producers receive from fairtrade enables them to implement a range of programmes, which help protect their local environment from harm and defend them against natural disasters or the effects of climate change, which ultimately benefits everybody.


ACTIVITIES

READING COMPREHENSION

2 Read the text about fairtrade and the environment and answer these questions.

- 1 What do producers need in order to be able to use land, resources and energy sustainably?
- 2 What do fairtrade standards require producers to try and do?
- 3 What are producers encouraged to do?
- 4 How can the social premium attached to fairtrade have a positive environmental impact?

LISTENING

3  28 Listen to an interview about food miles and fairtrade and decide if these sentences are true (T) or false (F).

- 1 Shopping locally is always better for the environment than buying fairtrade goods.
- 2 It does not take a lot of energy to grow produce in countries without naturally warm climates.
- 3 Some light-weight products can be added to the cargo of passenger flights, so they are energy-efficient.
- 4 Food makes up an average of 50% of the carbon footprint for a person in the UK.
- 5 Food is the third highest carbon footprint contributor after recreation and heating.
- 6 As it rots in landfill sites, food waste produces methane, a highly potent greenhouse gas.
- 7 17% of Africa's rural poor are dependent on agriculture and horticulture to live.
- 8 There would be a big impact on people's lives if trade with Africa was greatly reduced in favour of more local produce.
- 9 People in developing countries are least responsible for climate change and suffer most consequences from it.
- 10 People in developing countries need to tackle climate change first if they are to overcome poverty.

	T	F
1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

WRITING

4 Write a short article for a magazine entitled 'Fairtrade vs food miles'. In your article you should write arguments for and against both, before drawing your own conclusions.