



Media Release

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The World Food LCA Database: international project to provide accurate food datasets for environmental footprints

How to improve the realisation and the communication of environmental footprints of food products? A new database providing reliable and up-to-date data for food and beverages life cycle assessments (LCA) has been launched by Agroscope and Quantis.

The Swiss Federal Research Station Agroscope and the consulting firm Quantis, the co-founders of the project, announced today the launch of the World Food LCA Database (WFLDB). This project aims at bringing together experts from all stakeholders of the food supply chain to develop a comprehensive and up-to-date inventory database for accurate life cycle assessments (LCA) in the food sector. Two governmental institutions and nine companies of the food sector have already joined the ranks of the project and recruitment is continuing.

In the food and beverage sector, there is an increasing demand for LCA applied for the quantification of environmental impacts and as a basis for optimization of food production. Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) is a scientific method used to quantify impacts throughout all activities occurring over the life cycle of a product or service, from extracting natural resources to managing generated waste. Currently, one of the major limitations of LCAs in this sector is the lack of consistent, up-to-date, comprehensive and transparent inventory data for food products and processes. Therefore, LCA-based communication is too often driven by results that are not comparable and sufficiently reliable. High quality data are fundamental to ensure well-informed decision-making, both at the company and policy levels. Such data are needed to properly communicate on the environmental impact of products as in the case of Environmental Product Declaration (EPD). The creation of the World Food LCA Database therefore responds to the high demand for such data, especially in the food sector. The need for better data was identified and recognised by many stakeholders worldwide, such as the Environment



and Energy Management Agency (ADEME) in France and The Sustainability Consortium in the USA.

The WFLDB project is an independent project of Agroscope and Quantis that creates knowledge for the public by publishing datasets and the methods applied for the modelling. Governmental institutions as well as private companies fund the project which allows to address the most urgent needs of the food and beverage sector in a consensus process. The funding partners are: the French Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME), Bayer, the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), General Mills, Kraft Foods, Mars, Mondelēz International, Monsanto, Nestlé, Syngenta and Yara. The recruitment of new partners continues and the project is planned to be completed in 2015. Yves Loerincik, CEO of Quantis explains: “We are proud to have already been able to bring together these organizations of the food sector and we are looking forward to welcoming other participants in the next months. The WFLDB is open to organizations who wish to participate in a project generating an unprecedented set of data to support LCA in the food sector. It is also an innovative model for how life cycle inventory data can be produced in a given industrial sector”. Gérard Gaillard, head of LCA research group at Agroscope adds: “The main motivation of the partners to participate in this project is to have the possibility to perform LCAs of the highest standard while being cost-effective. Additionally, the project gives the industry and public authorities an opportunity to collaborate and to gain recognition for promoting the development of sustainable food production systems and ensuring a better consumer information”.

Transparent, comprehensive and robust

The database will provide over 200 datasets comprising of various agricultural crops and animal products including different production schemes as well as food transformation, storage and transport processes. The objective is to provide reliable, consistent and up-to-date data. The scientific modelling principles applied are in line with international standards. All datasets created within the project will be published and the database will be compatible with existing LCA software.

The WFLDB creates a basis to assist companies and environmental authorities in efforts like the generation of Environmental Product Declarations (EPD) or in eco-design, and it can also serve academic research and consultancy work. While being aligned with other database developments such as ecoinvent version 3, the WFLDB will be a comprehensive LCA food database providing detailed and disaggregated life cycle inventory data of high scientific quality, reliability and transparency.



The **Life Cycle Assessment research group at Agroscope** is working since the year 2000 in the field of LCAs in the context of agriculture and food. Two main strands can be differentiated in the activities: on the one hand the methodological development of agricultural and food LCA and on the other hand the application of this methodology in national and international research projects as well as in political or business consulting processes. Focus of the research of the LCA group is eco-design, environmental information for food products and resource efficiency in agricultural production systems.

Quantis is a global operating and leading LCA consulting firm specialized in supporting companies to measure, understand and manage the environmental impacts of products, services and operations. With more than 50 LCAs in products and processes, Quantis has a strong experience in doing LCA applied to the food sector and supporting clients in enhancing the value of their LCAs through action plans and environmental strategy. Quantis is a global company with offices in Switzerland, France, USA and Canada and employs close to 60 people.

For further information: <http://www.quantis-intl.com/wfldb/>

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Agroscope consists of the research stations Agroscope Changins-Wädenswil ACW, Agroscope Liebefeld-Posieux ALP-Haras, and Agroscope Reckenholz-Tänikon ART, and is the Swiss national competence centre for agricultural research. From 2013, the three current research stations will be merged organisationally into a single Agroscope Research Station under the leadership of Michael Gysi. Research activities will continue to be carried out at the various sites.