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# 'Frustrated' Tesco ditches eco-labels

Ian Quinn

Tesco will no longer feature the Carbon Trust's carbon reduction label on its products, claiming it is too time-consuming and expensive to justify.

The supermarket giant has also told of its frustration that other leading retailers failed to follow its lead, which meant the label was unable to gain sufficient critical mass.

When it launched four years ago, in conjunction with the Carbon Trust, Tesco's Carbon Reduction Labelling plan was hailed by then CEO Sir Terry Leahy as the start of a "revolution in green consumption".

However, Tesco told The Grocer it had decided to wind down the project after finding research for each product involved "a minimum of several months' work".

"We expected that other retailers would move quickly to do it as well, giving it critical



Tesco first introduced the labels – in conjunction with the Carbon Trust – four years ago

mass, but that hasn't happened," said Tesco's climate change director, Helen Fleming.

About 1,100 products have been researched by the retailer with 500 products having labels in Tesco stores.

But Fleming said the lack of uptake by other retailers had failed to

make the scheme viable.

"There are an enormous amount of companies that research the carbon footprints of their products," she said. "But how do you ramp that up to the top level? We now need to make the right long-term decision and we're talking about what we do next."

Meanwhile PepsiCo, whose Walkers brand also pioneered the use of carbon footprint labelling, said it too had been disappointed at the uptake of the scheme, but pledged to continue.

"Although we've not seen the take-up we'd like, we still support carbon labelling as a way of helping consumers and businesses understand and reduce emissions," said Martyn Seal, European director for sustainability at PepsiCo.

Other retailers defended their decisions to discard footprint labelling. The Co-operative Group said it had completed research on 15 products after developing a tool with Manchester University two years ago but had decided it was impractical for mass use.

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Boots products in Waitrose "did not meet expectations"

## Waitrose calls time on trial of Boots lines

Waitrose has thrown in the towel over the long-term trial of Boots products in its stores.

The two-way trial began in March 2010 and featured Boots health and beauty goods listed in Waitrose stores, Waitrose foods listed in Boots, and Boots-branded pharmacies established in some Waitrose stores.

This week, Waitrose confirmed to The Grocer that it intended to call time on the 13-store trial of Boots products and revert to its standard health and beauty fixtures. "It didn't meet the expectations of either partner. But that's the whole point of having a trial – to learn what works," said a spokeswoman. Boots products would be replaced by existing Waitrose own-label or branded products, she added.

Although Waitrose will abandon the trial of Boots products in its stores, Waitrose products will continue to be sold in Boots, and existing Boots pharmacies will continue to be operated in Waitrose stores.

At the time of launch, Simon Potts, business development director at Boots UK, hailed the deal as giving customers "greater access to the products they love".

## Tracing the steps of carbon footprint labelling

Walkers Cheese & Onion crisps became the first product to introduce the Carbon Trust label in 2007, with the entire journey of the product scrutinised.

Finding that just 30% of the carbon emissions were produced while under the direct control of PepsiCo UK & Ireland, it sparked a programme of supplier education by the parent company.



Walkers added Carbon Trust labels to the crisps in 2007

Other suppliers to have adapted the scheme include Kingsmill, which credits it for helping to slice emissions by 20%,

while smoothie and juice maker Innocent has worked closely with the Trust to work out the 'carbon footprint' for its entire business system.

However, it was Tesco's decision to work with the Carbon Trust that perhaps attracted the most publicity, with potatoes, light bulbs, orange juice and laundry detergent among the first to get labels in store.