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# Coke's carbon footprints are revealed

Posted by Anne Marie Mohan, Managing Editor, GreenerPackage.com, March 13, 2009 | See [1 comment](#) [6]

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### Major Category:

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[11]Coca-Cola Great Britain (CCGB)

and Coca-Cola Enterprises (CCE), in cooperation with the **Carbon Trust** ([www.carbontrust.co.uk](http://www.carbontrust.co.uk) [12]), have released details on the carbon footprints of some of the company's most popular drinks, including Coca-Cola, Diet Coke, and Coke Zero. This marks the first time that the carbon footprint of any brand of carbonated drinks has been certified by the Carbon Trust,

The project measured greenhouse gas emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>e) across the full life cycle of 14 Coca-Cola skus in aluminum cans and in PET and glass bottles. To evaluate the full life cycle of the products, the project looked at the ingredients used to make the drink, the manufacture of the drink and its packaging, the impact of distribution and retailing, the use of the product by individual consumers, and the subsequent disposal of the empty bottle or can.

The results reveal that a 330-mL can of Coca-Cola sold in Great Britain has a carbon footprint of 170 g, while the same-sized can of Diet Coke or Coke Zero has a footprint of 150 g. A 330-L glass bottle of Coca-Cola has a footprint of 360 g. The research also reveals that packaging accounts for the largest portion of the drink's carbon footprint, between 30% and 70%, depending on the type of container used. However, the research highlights the importance of both using recycled content and encouraging recycling post-use—the combination of which can decrease the overall carbon footprint of a product by up to 60%.

Tom Delay, chief executive of the Carbon Trust, comments, "Coca-Cola was one of the first companies to sign up for carbon footprinting with the Carbon Trust as part of its ongoing commitment to reducing its carbon impact, and it has made an important contribution to our work to create the product carbon-footprinting standard. Coca-Cola's help in streamlining the process and sharing international insights was critical. Today's announcement is important, as it will help bring home to consumers that carbon is everywhere—in all we consume. When we launched the idea around the carbon footprinting of products, it was always our aim to have major brands, like Coca-Cola, using the process as a means to further reduce the carbon in their supply chains. We are delighted they are committed to doing just that."

Much progress has already been made in maximizing recycled content in CCE's packaging. In Great Britain, Coca-Cola's aluminum cans contain around 50% recycled content, and its glass bottles contain an average of 40% recycled glass. CCE has also set a target for all its PET

bottles across Great Britain and Europe to contain an average of 25% recycled PET by the end of 2010.

Recycling also plays a part in reducing a product's carbon footprint. For example, if a consumer were to recycle the Coke can, with a carbon footprint of 170 g, this would reduce the footprint by 70 g, bringing it down to 100 g. If a consumer were to recycle a can of Diet Coke or Coke Zero, this would reduce the carbon footprint from 150 g to 85 g.

To encourage consumers to recycle when they are out and about, the Coca-Cola System (CCGB and CCE) in partnership with **WRAP** (Waste & Resources Action Programme, [www.wrap.org.uk](http://www.wrap.org.uk) <sup>[13]</sup>) is currently rolling out a nationwide series of branded Recycle Zones. Six such zones have already been successfully launched in the U.K., including at Thorpe Park, Festival Place in Basingstoke, and the University of Warwick.

### **Each life-cycle step considered**

Coca-Cola GB piloted the Carbon Trust PAS 2050 methodology to calculate the product-level carbon footprints. The research covered the following aspects of a product's life cycle:

- **Ingredients:** Includes CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions produced during the agricultural production & transportation of all raw materials, including sugar and water.
- **Packaging:** Includes CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions produced during the creation of all packaging (e.g. bottles, cans, and pallets for transportation).
- **Manufacturing:** Includes CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions resulting from the electricity and fuel used at all factories, the manufacture of plastic bottles on site, and the filling of bottles and cans with drinks.
- **Distribution:** Includes CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions produced when transporting products and the electricity and fuel used to do this.
- **Storage and refrigeration:** Includes CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions resulting from the electricity and fuel used by the retailer and shop, plus the electricity used to run the vending machines and fridges used to keep drinks chilled.
- **Consumer use and disposal:** Includes CO<sub>2</sub>e resulting from consumers cooling the drink at home and subsequent disposal of the empty packaging.

### **Management speaks on sustainability goals**

Says Sanjay Guha, president of Coca-Cola, Great Britain and Ireland, "We are absolutely committed as a business to reducing the environmental impact of our products. This is what our consumers expect, and we believe is our responsibility as market leaders. Over the last few years, we have significantly cut our water and energy use in the U.K. But we are determined to do more. A clear measurement of the carbon emissions of individual products is a vital step on our journey to reduce them and to achieve our goal of operating in a responsible and sustainable way. As we move forward, we will look to integrate the carbon footprint information with other key environmental impacts, for example water, and explore how best to share the total environmental impact of our products with consumers."

Simon Baldry, managing Director, CCE GB, adds, "Delivering against the sustainability agenda is key to our business and to all our decision making. We are determined to deliver the transparency and progress that our customers need in this area. We have worked closely with the Carbon Trust to really understand the footprint of our products. It is the first time this analysis has been undertaken for soft drinks in Great Britain. We will continue to lead the search for better understanding, and the results will help us continue to improve the impact of our business

on the environment."

**Author Override:**

Anne Marie Mohan, Managing Editor, GreenerPackage.com,  
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I can't believe this it is crazy

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