

Dear Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius,

The global food and drink industry has a significant role to play in building a more sustainable planet. It will do this by building a food system that helps to ensure the globe can limit global warming to a maximum of 1.5 degrees, but also by taking the necessary actions in areas such as water usage, soil health and biodiversity loss.

To support these efforts, it is right to explore the potential for environmental labelling on food and drink products, so consumers can make more informed choices and producers are given the information they need to innovate in a more sustainable way.

We welcome the efforts that have already been made by many organisations, governments, academics and companies to deliver on these ambitions.

As the future of environmental labelling for food and drink continues to take shape, it is vital that any eventual scoring and labelling scheme is governed by an independent organisation and harmonised across the continent of Europe, building upon the European Union's Product Environmental Footprint.

Environmental labelling of food should also be based upon the foundations of life cycle assessment, use as much primary data as possible, and allow products to be compared based upon credible and robust product-specific data.

It is encouraging that technical solutions will soon be available to make such a system a reality and that research is already being compiled on how consumer behaviour can be affected by environmental scoring.

Any environmental labelling system that falls short on these core principles not only risks failing to gain the trust of consumers, but would not provide food and drink producers with the product level information they require to introduce sustainable innovations through their supply chains.

It is these small changes - when added together in their millions - that will go the furthest in reducing the industry's environmental impacts.

We look forward to working with experts, policy makers, civil society, academia and industry stakeholders to progress this agenda and build the more sustainable food and drink industry we all want to see. We call on all stakeholders to engage openly, inclusively and collaboratively to find the optimised and harmonised solution we crave.

Yours faithfully

Cliona Howie – Chief Executive, Foundation Earth

Andy Zynga – Chief Executive, EIT Food (European Union's food innovation initiative)

Dr Laura Fernández Celemín – Director General, European Food Information Council

Dr Kirsten Dunlop – Chief Executive, EIT Climate-KIC (European Union's climate innovation initiative)

Professor Chris Elliott OBE – Institute of Global Food Security (Northern Ireland)

Dr Peter Holl – DIL German Institute of Food Technology (Germany)

Christophe Matthys – Assistant Professor, KU Leuven University (Belgium)

Heidi Hautala MEP, Vice President of the European Parliament & Chair of the Parliament's working group on Responsible Business Conduct (Finland)

Biljana Borzan MEP – European Parliament Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (Croatia)

Margrete Auken MEP – European Parliament Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (Denmark)

Franc Bogovic MEP - Vice-Chair of the European Parliament Intergroup on 'Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development' (Slovenia)

Kira Marie Peter-Hansen MEP – European Parliament Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (Denmark)

Geraint Davies MP – member of the House of Commons Environment select committee (United Kingdom)

Barry Gardiner MP - former shadow climate change secretary (United Kingdom)

Sarah Olney MP – Climate Change spokesman, Liberal Democrat Party (United Kingdom)

Deirdre Brock MP – Environment & Rural Affairs spokesman, Scottish National Party (United Kingdom)

Massamba Thioye – UN Climate Change Secretariat

Charles Banks – Co-Founder of thefoodpeople

Wayne Edwards – Co-Founder of thefoodpeople