

Plastic footprints

Re: your article on carbon footprint scores (EC 103 Nov 06). I am in sympathy with Elaine Simper's over-abundance of jiffy bags and plastic wrappings. Fortunately there are answers (which will cost a little time and money):

POLYPRINT at Mackintosh Road, Rackheath Industrial Estate, Norwich, NR13 6LJ. www.polyprint.co.uk. Will be happy to receive used 'soft' plastic wrappings (i.e. that which stretches).

Used jiffy bags – not too tatty – will be much appreciated at The Centre For Alternative Technology, Machynlleth, Powys, SY20 9AZ, www.cat.org.uk.

I checked with both organisations before sending this letter. They will be equally happy with a sudden influx. Keep up the excellent work.

Patricia Wood, Halifax

'Token' ethical purchasing

Isn't it time for debate not just about whether the individual purchasing decisions that we make are ethical, but about how much of what we spend is ethical? I value the specific advice that EC and Ethiscore provide, but in looking at the real impact of our decisions, it's £s that speak. For example, surely a much greater proportion of what we spend goes on purchasing decisions about cars than it does about chocolate? Let's not be blind to what we're doing - buying fairtrade and organic food is important and I will continue to do so, but big business will really sit up and listen if consumers start to focus their £s more effectively on ethical purchases. What does it say about you if you buy an organic, fairtrade chocolate bar in the

motorway service station after filling your new non-hybrid car with petrol sourced from brutal, repressive regimes?

I'll be looking closely at my bank statement today and questioning if I'm being tokenist about my ethical principles. I know I'm guilty of exactly what I'm criticising and I'm going to change. I hope others are thinking like I do, otherwise the road to a better world will take a long, misguided route.

Simon Pyne, Bristol

Sustainable music

I was delighted to see that you'd covered the concept of the Ethical Musical Instrument in your last edition.

However, might I be so bold as to suggest that there are still many musical instruments that can still

be bought that don't actually need an electricity supply or the use of batteries. Also, there are still many U.K. manufacturers still producing instruments using locally sourced materials.

Marcus Butler of Newport, South Wales produces an excellent range of concertinas, each one handmade by craftsmen (and women). Also, John Tose of Crymych, Pembrokeshire makes Welsh Bagpipes using such materials as locally sourced pear and yew.

There are many other examples of other craftsmen still producing traditional instruments throughout the U.K. for those who'd prefer a more organic sort of instrument.

Philip Edwards, Groeswen, South

Highland Spring

As well as misleading readers, we firmly believe your "animals" and "anti-social" rankings damage the reputation of Highland Spring Ltd, which is an independently managed company that has built a credible ethical track record over the last 25 years.

In our opinion Down the Drain (EC103) seriously damages Highland Spring's reputation because it wrongly states that Highland Spring Limited and/or the Highland Spring brand uses animal testing and factory farming techniques, which is demonstrably untrue.

Highland Spring's bottled waters are drawn from naturally renewable sources and harvested from certified organic land (Soil Association). The

company is totally committed to maintaining the sustainability of its operation and equally committed to reducing the environmental impact of its packaging, bottling operations and distribution systems.

Surely Ethical Consumer should give credit where it is due, particularly in this case, as the UK's leading producer of bottled water has an ethos of sustainability and environmental responsibility. It is misleading your readers to show in your chart an adverse result for animal testing or factory farming. They will conclude that these activities are undertaken by Highland Spring when in truth such things have never, ever occurred. This is unethical and should be as unacceptable to you as it is to us.

*Sally Stanley, Marketing Director,
Highland Spring, Perthshire*

Highland Spring's negative ratings on our system come from the ownership of the company by the Al Tajir family which has wider interests than just water.

Biased against procreation

We will not be continuing with our subscription, due to an article that you featured in the last issue of the magazine, entitled, 'Is it ethical to have children?'. We found the article to be ridiculous as it was totally biased and featured no alternative viewpoint to those who felt it was unethical to have children and actually bordered on the offensive to us.

who's who

editor Rob Harrison

sub-editing Sarah Irving/Dan Welch/Jane Lawson

writers/researchers Katy Brown, Sarah Irving, Mary Rayner, Nicola Scott, Jenny Rhodes, Ruth Rosselson, Jane Turner, Dan Welch, Lindsay Whalen

contributors Simon Birch

design and layout Marcus Graham, Jane Lawson, Ruth Rosselson, Jane Turner

cover Jane Lawson/bygonefimes/Alamy

cartoons Andy Vine, Sarah Guthrie, Steve Hutton, Matt Mahlen, Polyp, Alexei Talimov

ad sales Simon Birch

subscriptions Jenny Rhodes

enquiries Lindsay Whalen

press enquiries Mary Rayner, Ruth Rosselson

research & consultancy Sarah Irving

internet/web Lindsay Whalen

marketing Jane Turner

personnel Mary Rayner

Thanks also to: Bryony Moore.

All material correct one month before cover date and © ECRA Publishing Ltd.

Not-for-profit organisations may normally reproduce without charge any of the material appearing in Ethical Consumer, providing that all such material is credited and providing that written permission has been sought prior to publication. No part of this publication may be produced by commercial organisations without written permission from ECRA Publishing Ltd. **ISSN 0955 8608**

Printed by **RAP Spiderweb Ltd**, c/o the Commercial Centre, Clowes Centre, Hollinwood, Oldham OL9 7LY. 0161 947 3700 **Paper:** The cover is printed on Cyclus 130gsm recycled and the inside pages on 80gsm Repeat Offset Recycled from 100% post-consumer waste.

Ethical Consumer is a member of **INK** (independent news collective), an association of radical and alternative publishers. INK publications cover issues of social, political and personal change; issues which are often neglected by the mainstream media.

About the Advertisers

ECRA checks out advertisers before accepting their ads and reserves the right to refuse any advert.

Covered in previous buyers' guides: CIS Insurance (95), ETA (84), Earthborn Paints (102), Ecology Building Society (84), Greenfibres (98), Green Stationery Company (96), Plamil (103), Smile (94), Suma (104) Vegetarian Shoes (102)

Other advertisers: Amnesty International, Brockwood Park School, Dojo Ecoshop, Ethical Investment Co-op, Fair Deal Trading, Green Building Store, Green Shop, Independent Living Agency, INK, ITDG, Labour Behind the Label, Natural Clothing Ltd, One Village, Sage Organic Ltd, Soil Association

We are Christians and we believe that God's purpose for the majority of us, is to procreate and populate the earth. We also believe that we have a duty of stewardship for the environment, which we carry out to the best of our abilities and teach our children to do the same.

What we would like to see magazines such as yourself doing is getting off the fanatical soapbox, moving away from extreme ideas that will not come to fruition and find sensible, viable solutions for every day people. For example, boycott the Body Shop and you will say to L'Oréal, whatever you do, we will not buy from you. What incentive is this for a corporation to change their ways?

It is a shame to end the subscription, as we have found some of your articles useful and they have changed how we have spent our money and resources, as a family. For instance, when my 9 year old son was choosing football boots, he used the ethiscore site to choose the most ethical (or least bad!) company (!). However, we will be looking at supporting organisations with literature that is sensible and provides us with practical ideas for how to be more responsible and better stewards of our environment, as well as advice on how to purchase items.

*James and Michaela Turpin,
Buckingham*

Nestlé UK

Your September/October issue of Ethical Consumer magazine [EC102] carries an article 'Down the

Drain' and includes many allegations about Nestlé to which we would wish to respond to.

This article criticises Nestlé for depleting the water resources in Sao Lourenco and allegedly causing environmental damage. The facts are different. Nestlé Brazil used the water in Sao Lourenco for the production of Pure Life from a well that contained high levels of iron and manganese that made it unsuitable for human consumption unless purified. This process was approved by the Health Ministry and various studies conducted found that production was conducted within the law.

Regarding the class action lawsuit filed in 2001, this was concluded after the parties involved reached an agreement in March 2006, that related to the conditions of usage of the Primavera spring and some environmental measures taken by Nestlé to benefit the local community, as Nestlé Pure Life was no longer being produced on this site. The Agreement did not acknowledge any wrong doing on the part of Nestlé.

DEFRA statistics show that the contribution to household waste is 18%, and not 40%.

Reference is made to our alleged aggressive policy on the marketing of breast milk substitutes. Our policy is that, we believe that breastfeeding is indisputably the best way to feed a baby, and actively promote this fact. We also believe that when mothers cannot or choose not to breastfeed, they have a right to a safe, nutritious infant formula for their babies.

We adhere to national government

measures implementing the WHO Code in every country. However, because of the heightened need for protecting children in countries with poor sanitation and higher infant mortality, in all developing countries Nestlé applies the WHO Code as a minimum standard, or follows national legislation, if stricter. Nestlé also supports strong enforcement of National Codes to protect mothers and children. Thus, for instance, in Malaysia the Ministry of Health in articles published in The Star on the 19th and 20th August and The New Straits Times of 19th August, highlighted the prohibition imposed by the Ministry on the sale of new products by 8 manufacturers if milk formula who have violated the Code of Ethics of infant formula. Of the twelve firms marketing breast milk marketing breastmilk substitutes in Malaysia, only four, namely Meiji, Snow, Nestlé and Takaso, have got positive recognition for Code compliance from the Ministry of Health. Reference is made to the long-running baby milk boycott. The reality is that in the countries where there is said to be a boycott, our factories are located, local people are employed, quality products manufactured and these products are well purchased.

*Beverley Mirando, Senior Policy
Advisor, Nestlé UK Ltd.*

New format

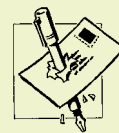
Just to let you know that I find the Money Ethical Funds table really useful. Not that I have loads of money to invest, but it means that

I can make sure of insurance or investments (eg ISAs) which use ethical funds.

Incidentally I like the new format of the magazine. I don't always have time to read the whole mag, but the new layout (highlighted boxes etc) means I can pick out key info & then focus on the articles that really interest me without feeling I'm missing important stuff

Lynda Simpson, by email

The table is resting for an issue pending a re-vamp. Back soon.



**Ethical
Consumer
magazine**
welcomes
readers'

letters. Letters may be edited for reasons of space or clarity. If you do not want letters that you send to us to be published, please mark them "Not for publication". Send letters to the address on the contents page or email them to: letters@ethicalconsumer.org
We do not normally reply to letters marked for publication which are not chosen to appear in the magazine

Exploiting Strange New Worlds!

