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Half of Britons agree with ‘carbon tax’ on damaging products

Research released today by AEA, a leading sustainability consultancy, shows that 51% of the British public believes that products that are particularly harmful to the environment should carry a carbon tax. The survey also showed that a significant 81% of people would be more likely to buy locally-sourced goods if all products were required to show air miles or country of origin on the packaging.

The findings, taken from a study by Populus of 2,000 British residents, suggest that a large number of customers make decisions about what they buy based on environmental factors and not just price – despite the fact that many people are feeling the pinch during the recession.

Nearly half (48%) of the people surveyed also said they buy food from companies with a good environmental reputation. This is undoubtedly good news for retailers who are taking steps to improve the reputation of their businesses and to offer a greater choice of ethical or ‘green’ products to their customers.

Gwen Ventris, Chief Operating Officer at AEA, said:

“This survey has thrown up some fascinating results – the fact that even during a downturn, so many people support the idea of a carbon tax for products that are particularly harmful to the environment is remarkable. The British public is actively taking the sustainability agenda on board and is sending a clear message to businesses to do the same.”

The survey also showed that:

- 30% of people now grow more of their own food than five years ago, and the same amount of people buy more products and services from businesses that have a good reputation for caring for the environment.
- Younger people (aged 18-35) are more likely to say they drive more frequently, take more foreign holidays and use more gas, electricity and water than they did five years ago.
- Younger people are more likely to say they buy more products and services from businesses that have a good reputation for caring for the environment, but older people are more likely to say they buy locally-sourced food.
- 39% of people say they don't tend to buy products from companies with a good reputation for caring for the environment – this is much higher among men (46%) than women (32%).

Populus is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. For more details please go to www.populus.co.uk.

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About AEA

AEA is a leading energy, environment and information management consultancy. The company operates in the UK, Europe, the US and China advising the UK Government, the EU and major private sector organisations in energy and climate change, air and water quality, risk management, resources and waste, sustainable transport and knowledge transfer.

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