

French SME Offers Tool for Measuring Product Impacts

Blue Horse Associates offers a tool for guiding food product and menu composition, and for organizations whose sights are set on the French “Grenelle 2” legislation. The company’s tool balances carbon footprints, nutritional values and cost.

For a base price of €599, Blue Horse Associates’ Carbonostics tool enables food product manufacturers to strike a balance between carbon emissions, nutritional values and cost. A simplified, online life-cycle analysis is carried out using data provided by the user or the tool’s database. The basic idea is to provide an initial measurement of three criteria –carbon, nutrition and cost – in the early phases of the design chain. In a nutshell, Carbonostics is an eco-design tool for supply chain, R&D, sustainability and quality control managers. The tool makes it possible to pinpoint hot-spots for a fraction of the tens of thousands of Euros charged for exact life-cycle analyses. Carbonostics is also designed as an eco-labeling tool in view of the upcoming *Grenelle 2* [French] bill, expected in January 2011. According to Blue Horse, Carbonostics is complementary to the applications provided by the French Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME). Simplified tools [such as Carbonostics] are also recommended by the British PAS2050 publication, the first standard for measuring greenhouse gas emissions related to the life cycle of goods and services. Carbonostics provides unlimited scenarios that can be compared instantly by viewing the tool’s colorful graphs. The best way to learn about the tool is to request a live demonstration by phone or web conference. The company offers clients a data gathering assistance service.

A New Service

Founded by Sara Pax, an Englishwoman living in France, Blue Horse Associates develops sustainability metrics for the food industry in France, the UK, the US and the Netherlands. Headquartered in Neuilly-sur-Seine, this small company employs a dozen people (three in France), including a network of sustainability experts, sales representatives and software developers. Anne Himeno, a [French] environmental engineer with experience in IT consulting, is Associate Partner, while Lori Gustavus, a French-speaking American, oversees marketing and communications. Both women work at the headquarters in Neuilly. Carbonostics was launched in April 2009, and Blue Horse Associates aims to make it a tool of reference for agribusiness labeling. The company plans to respond to a RFP [Request for Proposal] expected to be issued by ADEME next year.

Carbonostics’ wealth lies in its database, which currently contains carbon emissions and nutrition data points for some 700 raw ingredients, and carbon emissions data points for 400 packaging materials, transport types and other means of production. Seventy-five percent of food data is provided on an exclusive basis by CLM, a Dutch research institute specializing in sustainable agriculture. The remaining data is provided by ADEME, the Swiss institute Ecoinvent and the American company CleanMetrics (for example, the meat data used in the lasagna example below). When European meat is involved, users should refer to local research (for example, data from the French Technical Centre for Meat (ADIV) in France).

Special Offer on Version 2

Carbonostics' main recommendation comes from the British retailer Marks and Spencer. In France, the tool's client base is slowly growing. Retailers are showing interest, as are food service providers, with whom the nutritional parameter is a big success. Another possible area of growth is with self-managed catering, as RFPs issued by local authorities (including the Rhône-Alpes region) increasingly include sustainability requirements. The response from SMEs has been lower than expected, however, as they are "*waiting for legislation to go through before making a move,*" regrets Anne Himeno. Finally, Carbonostics has attracted the attention of certified carbon footprint and life-cycle analysis consultants.

Anticipated enhancements to Carbonostics in 2010 include a product end-of-life phase, a function for differentiating the various layers of packaging, and new graph functions, such as a "supply chain" view. These additions will slightly increase the price of the second version of the tool but a special offer will be available in January 2010. Request a demonstration before December 18 to take advantage of 2009 rates.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE IN FRENCH:

<http://www.carbonostics.com/downloads/CarbonosticsArticle-Les%20Marches-20091126-wk.pdf>