

Effectiveness of labels on consumer sustainability assessment of food: evidence from an eye-tracking study

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Abstract

Consumers lack suitable sustainability information about food products at their point of purchase which is why several mandatory labels for more sustainable food decisions are discussed. Although highly relevant for consumer decision making and at a broader level for social responsibility of societies, it is not clear how consumers respond to these most discussed sustainability label options. This study investigates how three of these label schemes affect sustainability assessment of food products and the perceived confidence of consumers in their assessment. The results of our study show that the three discussed label schemes influence consumer assessment of food sustainability and perceived confidence of the assessment differently. Our main finding is that a simplified label like the Eco-Score-Label requires less processing resources than more comprehensive labels and still leads to a good sustainability assessment – not different from expert assessment. In conclusion, the present study substantially informs future sustainability labelling policy.

Subject Areas: *Attitude, Consumer Behaviour, Decision-Making, Information Processing, Public Policy*

Track: Social Responsibility & Ethics