



IDF position on FAO report on integration of environment and nutrition in life cycle assessment of food items

IDF supports the report of the **FAO Integration of environment and nutrition in life cycle assessment of food items: opportunities and challenges** (1); stating that when different food products are compared for their environmental impact consideration should be given to their nutritional value.

In late 2021, the FAO published the report which is the outcome of a consensus building project aiming to agree on best practices for environmental and nutritional life cycle assessment (nLCA) methodology of food items, as well as identify future research needed.

It is abundantly clear that comparing LCA data of foods on a simple mass or volume-based i.e., kg functional unit is not feasible and will lead to highly controversial outcomes as an incomplete picture of a food contribution to sustainable diets is provided (single domain). While the report concludes that the nutrition and health domain should be considered, an nLCA study should report the quantities of as many essential nutrients as possible and aim to provide information on the nutritional quality and/or health impacts in addition to nutrient quantities. However, the road towards a best practice for nLCAs in terms of which (complimentary) functional units or impact categories should be used, remains open.

The primary intent of the LCA is not to set public health policy. However, if it is used for this purpose then the choice of an appropriate functional unit should take into account the nutritional quality and or health impact of the food, as outlined in the FAO report 'Integration of environment and nutrition in life cycle assessment of food items: opportunities and challenges'.

(1) McLaren, S., Berardy, A., Henderson, A., Holden, N., Huppertz, T., Jolliet, O., De Camillis, C., Renouf, M., Rugani, B., Saarinen, M., van der Pols, J., Vázquez-Rowe, I., Antón Vallejo, A., Bianchi, M., Chaudhary, A., Chen, C., CooremanAlgoed, M., Dong, H., Grant, T., Green, A., Hallström, E., Hoang, H., Leip, A., Lynch, J., McAuliffe, G., Ridoutt, B., Saget, S., Scherer, L., Tuomisto, H., Tyedmers, P. & van Zanten, H. 2021. Integration of environment and nutrition in life cycle assessment of food items: opportunities and challenges. Rome, FAO.
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