

The agri-food sector aims to reduce its environmental impact by means of the Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) and the carbon footprint

- **Around 450 scientists coming from 22 different countries gathered at the 8th International Conference on LCA Sector to discuss how to apply this methodology in food production.**
- **An adequate packaging for food and beverages is essential to reduce environmental impacts; LCA helps evaluate the most sustainable packaging.**

Around 450 scientists coming from 22 countries gathered last week in Saint-Malo (France) at the 8th International Conference on LCA in the Agri-Food sector to discuss how this methodology can help to improve the sector's environmental, social and economical sustainability.

Over the last two decades the Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) methodology has been developed and applied in the agriculture and food sectors to quantify environmental impacts and assist decision making. In recent years, LCA in the agri-food sector has developed rapidly, in particular for sustainability assessments of agricultural systems and their products, and for guiding consumers toward more sustainable food-consumption patterns (e.g., via eco-labelling).

The boost in consumption, due to the growing world population and a more individualist way of living, has brought about a significant increase in the amount of packaging waste materials. Among all the local waste materials generated in the EU (Eurostat 2011), 35% was packaging.

"This kind of facts are driving us to the application of environmental methodologies for food products, specially by packaging, not only because of legislative pressure but also because the distribution chains are demanding it, explains doctor Pere Fullana, director at the Unesco Chair in Life Cycle and Climate Change, Escola Superior de Comerc Internacional (UPF).

The growing importance of LCA in food packaging is confirmed by the fact that UNEP/SETAC Life Cycle Initiative (United Nations) is currently preparing a deep research about the *Analysis of Life Cycle Assessment in Packaging for Food & Beverage Applications*. UNEP intends to prove that LCA results are very useful to help decision makers in the Agri-Food sector about what kind of packaging is more suitable from an environmental point of view.

ARECO

The Asociación de Operadores Logísticos de Elementos Reutilizables Ecosostenibles (ARECO – Association of Logistics Operators for Eco-sustainable Reusable Items) is made up of IFCO SYSTEMS, Euro Pool System, Logifruit, CHEP and LPR. It handles the rental and transport of reusable crates, containers and pallets for transporting foodstuffs from the producer to the production chains. The work done by these

three companies represents 25% of the market share. ARECO's MISSION is to promote the usage of reusable containers, as a product which is ECO-SUSTAINABLE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY.

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