



Blackrock Green Home

'Get Wiser About Food Miles'



FOOD MILES

Food Miles represent the distance your food travels from where it is grown to where it is eaten. Scarce energy is used to transport food over these long distances, not to mention the carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere.

The image above highlights the Food Miles of food items being imported into Ireland, many of which are grown here. And remember up to a third of this is thrown away!

DID YOU KNOW?

Each Irish person eats on average a tonne of imported food a year, despite more than half of consumers saying they are concerned about its quality. From teabags to ice-cream, sugar and biscuits to vast quantities of milk, beef, chicken and potatoes, some 3.5 million tonnes of the food we consume each year originates somewhere else. Recent figures from the Central Statistics Office show importers are bringing in €5bn worth of foreign food and drink each year. Imports include €799m worth of cereals, €958m worth of fruit and veg, €282m worth of poultry and €711m worth of drinks (and that's only at wholesale prices). Some imports of course are down to our climate as we obviously can't produce coffee, cocoa or oranges. The total also includes €619m of animal feed and some food that is processed and re-exported. Even when it comes to the potato, we are shipping in a staggering 124,250 tonnes of them, some €75m worth. Kieran Rumley, executive director of Love Irish Food which promotes products made in Ireland, said: "We estimate that if every household switched just two items a week to Irish product it would be worth €300m to the economy."

WHY SHOULD WE THINK ABOUT FOOD MILES?

- Knowing more about Food Miles could help us in the challenge of food waste
- Rising transport costs
- Climate change link to increase burning of fossil fuels used in the transport sector
- Animal welfare challenges
- Local food security in a world of ever increasing food security risks and scares
- It may be easier to access information about the food we eat that has been grown locally
- Locally produced food can boost local employment opportunities

SO WHAT CAN WE DO?

We can become wiser about the amount of food that is imported and about the availability of locally produced foodstuffs.

When you next do your weekly/monthly shop check if the following items are available?		
Irish Mushrooms	Yes	No
Irish Carrots	Yes	No
Irish Potatoes	Yes	No

