

Tesco and Asda interview:

Retailers ACT ON CO2 –

Asda: Julian Walker-Palin – Asda Head of Corporate Policy for Sustainability & Ethics

Tesco: Chloe Meacher – Climate Change Manager

Julian Walker-Palin (Asda):

Asda's been working on sustainability as a coherent strategy since 2005 when Wal-Mart made global 3 aspirations on what they wanted to do on sustainability. Our plans are now far more mature and this year alone we will eliminate 100,000 tonnes of carbon from our business.

Chloe Meacher (Tesco):

Tesco has a 3 part climate change strategy and the first part is all about how we reduce our direct carbon footprint. The second part is about how we work with our suppliers and our partners to reduce emissions. And the third is about working with and empowering our customers to lead a mass movement in green consumption.

Julian Walker-Palin (Asda):

The retail industry interfaces with so many people on a day-to-day basis. The real crucial role we play I think is two fold. I think we can help educate consumers on climate change but educate them in a way that doesn't mean they need to be a scientist and understand, you know, part of a billion of carbon in the atmosphere etc. And secondly we can help them to do their bit by, certainly from Asda's perspective, bringing them products at an affordable price, and these products being more sustainable and helping them to do their bit.

Chloe Meacher (Tesco):

We believe we can play a really strong role in helping our customers to be green. There are 3 barriers they've told us. One is price, second is information and the third is a sense of hopelessness and a feeling of disempowerment and why bother when nobody else does. So on the first on price, for example, we've more than halved the price of our energy efficient light bulbs. On information, we've committed ourselves to carbon labelling and that tells customers what the carbon footprint of the product is and provides them with a tip on how they could reduce the footprint and it also gives them options on how to buy lower carbon products. For example if you buy ambient orange juice, it has a lower carbon footprint than freshly squeezed orange juice. To date we've now got 114 products labelled and we'll be labelling a lot more. We've most recently labelled milk. And on the third barrier about hopelessness, we have shown that through collective action we can make a real difference so we've offered in green Clubcard points on our plastic bags and if you re-use bags you get green Clubcard points, and through that we've more than halved the number of plastic bags we use.

Julian Walker-Palin (Asda):

We believe ourselves to be a responsible business and as a responsible business it's important that we help the UK government to tackle reducing the carbon emissions from this country.

Chloe Meacher (Tesco):

It's important because the scientific evidence tells us that we need to move faster and collectively to achieve the targets that will be discussed in Copenhagen in a couple of month's time.