

# **SUPERMARKETS AND SUSTAINABILITY**

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# What does sustainability mean?



Sustainability is the use of resources at rates that do not exceed the capacity of the Earth to replace them.

In other words, 'sustainable food' is the production of food, fiber, or other plant or animal products using techniques that protect the environment, public health, human communities and animal welfare.

A top quality mark/ label obtains a score of 4 or 5 in at least one of these sustainability areas:

- It is transparent: the requirements are easy to find and or concrete.
- The information about the quality mark is easy to understand and covers the content.
- The check is reliable: preferably by an organization approved by the Accreditation Council (or a comparable foreign institute).

# Testing our local supermarkets

Local supermarkets in Estonia, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands and Spain were tested on three different criteria and compared.

The three criteria:

- Does the supermarket provide a wide range of local products?
- Are the products biological, do they use pesticides etc.?
- How are the products packed? Are they made out of plastic, cardboard, paper, etc.?

Five different products: apples, eggs, milk, milk chocolate and tomatoes, were examined along these criteria.

# The range of local products

Does the supermarket provide a wide range of local products?

	Apples	Eggs	Milk	Chocolate (milk)	Tomatoes
Estonia	Poland, Italy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Morocco, Spain, Netherlands
Germany	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Italy	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
The Netherlands	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Spain	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

# The quality of products

Are the products biological, do they use pesticides etc.?

	Apples	Eggs	Milk	Chocolate (milk)	Tomatoes
Estonia	-	-	-	-	Biological
Germany	Biological	Biological	Biological	Biological	Biological
Italy	Pesticide in the limits imposed by the laws	Biological	Fresh pasteurized milk High quality	Non biological	Biological
The Netherlands	Planet Proof	Planet Proof, Beter Leven (3 stars)	Biological	Not biological; UTZ Certified	Biological
Spain	Planet proof	biological, with logo	biological	non biological	biological

# The packaging of products

How are the products packed? Are they made out of plastic, cardboard, paper, etc.?

	Apples	Eggs	Milk	Chocolate (milk)	Tomatoes
Estonia	Plastic or without any packaging	Cardboard	Cardboard	Plastic	Plastic or without any packaging
Germany	Without anything	Cardboard	Tetra pack	Plastic	Bio, with plastic no bio, without packaging
Italy	Plastic or without any packaging	Cardboard	Plastic (PET)	Plastic	plastic and cardboard or without any packaging
The Netherlands	Plastic or without any packaging	Cardboard, plastic (with plastic was not biological)	Cardboard, plastic	Paper	Plastic or without any packaging
Spain	plastic	cardboard	tetra pack	plastic	plastic

# Recommendation to stores

- Climate friendly ways for packaging
- Make clear if a product is sustainable or/and ecofriendly
- Promoting vegan/ vegetarian food
- Not throwing away not good looking food

In some countries it is better, than in others, but at the end every country in the EU is supposed to call their supermarkets sustainable, sell local products without pesticides and in ecofriendly packagings.