



PRESS RELEASE

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SUPERMARKET REFRIGERATION SCANDAL UNCOVERED

Report exposes damage caused by supermarket refrigeration in the UK

The Co-operative Group's green and ethical credentials have been called into question in a new survey examining the impact of supermarket fridges and freezers on global warming.

The Chilling Facts survey found that the Co-operative Group is using the ozone-destroying refrigerant HCFCs in 50 per cent of its depots and has recently refitted stores with HFC-based refrigeration instead of more environmentally friendly alternatives. HCFCs (hydrochlorofluorocarbons) will be banned by the EU this year because of the gases significant impact on the environment.

The survey, carried out by London-based campaign group the Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), asked supermarkets about the global warming impacts of their refrigeration for warehouses, transportation and stores.

The Chilling Facts Report is launched today and reveals that only 2 per cent of all major supermarket retail stores throughout the UK are using HFC-free refrigeration systems, despite awareness of the enormous environmental damage caused by HFCs.

HFCs (hydrofluorocarbons), widely used by UK supermarkets and originally introduced to replace ozone depleting CFCs, have a global warming impact 3,800 times greater than CO₂.

Leaked refrigerants account for about one-third of a supermarket's direct climate change emissions. Leaked emissions of HFCs have a global warming equivalent to 1.13 million tonnes of CO₂. The level of leakage alone is equivalent to one billion car journeys to the average local supermarket - or 400,000 return flights to Australia.

"The Government needs to listen to the needs of the supermarket and refrigeration industry - many organisations are looking for clear direction and deadlines for the elimination of HFCs," says EIA campaigner Fionnuala Walravens.

"Though some supermarkets have made a good effort over the last year to tackle the issue of HFCs, the survey results are disappointing, showing that we

have a long way to go. We need serious action and a firm long-term commitment to the elimination of HFCs from the leading supermarket retailers.”

Governments need to act now as emissions from HFCs (used in refrigeration and air conditioning) are predicted to escalate in the next decade with a climate change impact equal to 2.6 billion tonnes of CO₂, about four times the UK’s current total greenhouse gas emissions.

Waitrose moves from near the bottom to the top of the league in the 2010 survey thanks to its commitment to rolling out HFC-free refrigeration in all new stores and major refurbishments. It was also commended for implementing innovative leakage reduction measures and trialling HFC-free options for transport refrigeration.

Following last year’s Chilling Facts survey, both M&S and Sainsbury’s have committed to phasing out HFCs by 2030 through the adoption of new environmentally friendly alternatives. M&S has already installed CO₂-based systems in 13 of its stores. There are currently 46 supermarket stores running climate-friendly refrigeration, up from only 14 stores in 2009.

There are viable alternatives that can be used for refrigeration. The climate-friendly alternatives have been adopted in countries such as Sweden and Denmark and by major multinationals such as McDonalds and Coca Cola. But UK supermarkets are slow to make the change.

EIA’s Chilling Facts campaign is supported by Julia Hailes, sustainability consultant and author of The New Green Consumer Guide. “Without government leadership, supermarket boards struggle to push the topic of HFC refrigeration to the top of the agenda. Given the impact of HFCs on climate change, there’s no excuse for government inaction on this issue. They should set and enforce a phase-out date rather than wait to be pushed by the retailers.”

“As much as 30 per cent of the climate change impact of supermarkets can come from refrigeration cooling gases. If we can get them to switch to climate-friendly alternatives, it would be vastly more significant than cutting back on carrier bags,” she comments.

Another finding of the survey was the continued shortage of engineers qualified to work with climate-friendly refrigeration.

Urgent Call To Action - from EIA

1. All supermarket retailers to phase out the use of HFCs in stores, distribution centres and transport by a deadline of 2015.
2. The use of HFC-free refrigeration systems in all new supermarket buildings and retrofits from January 1, 2010.
3. Government action on introducing legislation to reinforce the deadline for the removal of HFCs from refrigeration among major retailers.
4. Government and industry funding for training the refrigeration industry in installation and maintenance of climate friendly alternatives so that HFC options are even more accessible to supermarket retailers.

To download a PDF of the full EIA Report on the Chilling Facts Campaign, go to www.chillingfacts.co.uk.

Interviews are available on request with EIA, independent analysts and supermarket retailers. Please contact:

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Notes to Editors:

- The Environmental Investigation Agency is an independent campaigning organisation committed to bringing about change that protects the natural world from environmental crime and abuse.
- The Chilling Facts Campaign has been set up by EIA to highlight the global warming impacts of refrigeration and air conditioning gases and promote climate-friendly alternatives.
- The Chilling Facts survey was conducted in the Summer of 2009 by sending a questionnaire asking supermarkets about their refrigeration in-store, behind the scenes and for transport – as well as about leakages, energy efficiency, the training of refrigeration engineers and future plans.
- The Chilling Facts Campaign Steering Group reviewed the information from the survey and awarded points. Its members were: Fionnuala Walravens from EIA; refrigeration expert, Nick Cox from Earthcare Products; and sustainability consultant, Julia Hailes.
- Leaking refrigerants accounts for about a third of a supermarket's direct climate change emissions.
- In 2005, the global warming impact of supermarket HFC emissions was equivalent to producing 10 billion plastic carrier bags, taking two billion car trips to the supermarket or flying from London to New York more than 2.5 million times.

CHILLING FACTS SURVEY – LEAGUE TABLE

Supermarkets	Points 2010 <i>(Plus 2009 ranking)</i>	Good Points	Not so good ...
1. WAITROSE	60/100 <i>(12/100)</i>	Commitment to roll out HFC-free refrigeration in all new stores and major refurbishments; Innovative leakage reduction measures; trialling HFC-free options for transport refrigeration	No deadline for total HFC phase-out; As yet only have three out of 197 stores fully running on HFC-free technology.
2. TESCO	55/100 <i>(32/100)</i>	Ambitious near term plans to reduce leakage and introduce HFC-free refrigeration in 120 stores; Pioneering use of HFC-free systems in developing countries; Good work raising awareness of the issue.	As the UK's biggest food retailer they are also by far the biggest HFC emitter; Commitment to HFC-free refrigeration roll out is dependent upon further trials; No firm HFC phase-out date set.
3. M&S	46/100 <i>(42/100)</i>	Have installed CO ₂ based systems in 13 stores; Given a date by which final HFC phase out will be complete; Established a training school to tackle skills shortage.	Not enough being done on HFC-free transport refrigeration; Need to move away from reduced HFC to HFC-free systems in-store.
4. SAINSBURY'S	44/100 <i>(20/100)</i>	Have committed to phase out HFCs by 2030; Increased focus on training of engineers to meet this target; Planning seven HFC-free stores in coming year and 135 by 2014.	Don't publish their refrigerant emissions data; Still have a quarter of stores running on ozone depleting HCFCs; Don't give information on leakage rates.
5. LIDL	33/100 <i>(0/100)</i>	Impressive roll out of HFC-free freezers, 1/3 now HFC-free; Drop in direct emissions despite an increase in number of stores; Innovative development of climate-friendly frozen food transportation.	Behind the pack by using HFCs in distribution centres; Disappointing reliance on HFC chillers-however they claim to be considering HFC-free alternatives; Don't send contractors on training courses.
6. MORRISONS	32/100 <i>(17/100)</i>	Have installed CO ₂ based systems in 21 stores; Retailer will most amount of stores converted to climate friendly alternatives so far; Have designed a training workshop.	Lack of transparency in data reporting; Unwilling to trial chiller doors; Need to move away from reduced HFC to HFC-free systems.
6. ASDA	32/100 <i>(24/100)</i>	Good apparent in store energy savings; Consistent leakage reduction; Improved training initiatives.	Reneging on previous commitments to phase-out HFCs; As the UK's second biggest retailer they are worryingly behind the leaders; No new HFC-free stores since last survey.
8. MIDLANDS CO-OPERATIVE	28/100 <i>(NA)</i>	Good leakage reduction; Developed HFC-free systems suitable for smaller stores; Committed to HFC-free system purchasing policy from 2010.	Unnecessary use of HFCs in distribution centre; 95% of all refrigerant used is still HFC; Need to set future leakage reduction targets.
9. CO-OP GROUP	19/100 <i>(23/100)</i>	Adopting HFC-free freezers; Have reduced leakage rates this year; Lower direct emissions from leaking refrigerant.	Heavy reliance on ozone depleting HCFCs in distribution centres; Have recently refitted lots of stores with HFC-based refrigeration; Unclear data reporting
10. ICELAND	14/100 <i>(0/100)</i>	low reported leakage; Some good energy savings	Not proactive at all; Incorrectly commercially produced HFC-free options are not available; Claim restrictions on quantity of hydrocarbons used limits their use-despite the fact other supermarkets are using them widely
11. ALDI	6/100 <i>(1/100)</i>	One entirely HFC-free store; Have used HFC-free freezers since 2007; Doing good work in Germany	Didn't complete survey so very limited info; Need to take this issue more seriously