

## University of Cambridge Colleges Low Carbon Meals Scheme

The global food scheme is responsible for up to one third of human-made greenhouse gas emissions. From product, processing and transport, to packaging, cooking and waste – **the food we eat has a major carbon impact.**

The aim of the University of Cambridge Colleges Low Carbon Meals Scheme is to create a wider awareness of the carbon impact of producing and serving food, and to subsequently encourage our customers to choose more carbon friendly meals.

The 'carbon foot print' of meals served within all areas of catering can vary considerably and at present there is no way of recognising this. The cafeteria presents the best opportunity to encourage the college community to consciously act by deciding to choose the lowest carbon footprint meal. In addition, the scheme will help catering departments identify particularly carbon-hungry foods and production procedures, and seek to reduce them.

### *So, what's the real benefit to the environment? Will changing our meals choices really make a difference?*

In the UK, a fifth of each person's annual carbon footprint comes from the food they eat. If we are to limit our impact on the environment and reduce global carbon emissions it is critical that we take steps to understand the carbon impact of our food choices

### *What is a low carbon meal?*

A low carbon meal is a meal where conscious effort has been made to reduce its carbon emissions by choosing ingredients which have lower greenhouse gas emissions from farming/feeding, processing, transport and storage.

The foods with the lowest carbon footprints are local seasonal vegetables, cereals and fruit. Grains and pulses are also low carbon foods. Food flown from across the world, or grown in heated greenhouses produces considerably more carbon emissions. Animal products are generally higher in emissions, and the worst of all these are beef, lamb and hard cheese. In addition, frozen meals produce high emissions due to the power used to maintain food at such low temperatures.

### *What guide will be used to evaluate which meals are low carbon and which are high carbon footprint?*

Using guidelines produced from websites including [www.eatlowcarbon.org](http://www.eatlowcarbon.org) and <http://www.preventclimatechange.co.uk/> along with help from our local environmental organisations, the Cambridge Carbon Footprint, Transition Cambridge and the University of Cambridge Environment & Energy Assistant, we have produced guidelines to providing low carbon meals, in order for you to identify your low carbon dishes.

**Guidelines:**

A low carbon meal will:

- Never contain red meat, other than local game
- Never contain hard cheeses
- Never contain frozen produce or produce that has been stored chilled for long periods of time.
- Where feasible contain seasonal fruit and vegetables/limited hothouse-grown produce
- Not contain or contain very limited amounts of air-freighted goods
- Typically be a vegan dish in addition to any other dishes that fall within the above guidelines

King's kitchens will follow these guidelines to produce 'low carbon dishes' within the Servery.

Finally, we attempt to serve Low Carbon meals at adequate portions, so please let the Cafeteria staff know if you prefer a small portion.

***How will the carbon friendly option and the high carbon impact meal be identified?***

A blue footprint will indicate the carbon friendly meals served on that particular day.

