

Ambition 2025: Alara

Alara believe that sustainability has four foundations: social sustainability, financial sustainability, sustainable governance and environmental sustainability. They have developed a simple measure for each foundational element, and chose the evaluation of CO2 equivalent (CO2e) as their environmental measure. This is because, at 33% of CO2e emissions, the global food supply chain is the largest emitting sector. The urgent need to reduce CO2e emissions, and temper the effects of climate change, puts food at the very centre of the step change required for global environmental sustainability.

Alara calculate and take responsibility for all the embedded CO2e in the food they produce, from farming, through transportation, processing and packaging. Alara started exploring this calculation ten years ago during a project with the Carbon Trust working on carbon footprinting different foods. It became evident that it was not possible to reliably carbon footprint any food as yield, weather, transport distance and many other factors effect CO2e in the same foods. Rather than give up, Alara decided to take a reasonable average for each ingredient they use and integrate that value into their database.

Alara have taken many steps as a company to reduce CO2e: minimised transport usage and banned air freight, installed 25KW of solar PV and champion organic production. They have been a zero-waste food company for the last ten years, have a permaculture forest garden at their Kings Cross factory producing over 1000Kg of zero carbon food annually, have a compost hub producing 150 tons of compost annually and they are a lead proponent of the Camley Street Sustainability Zone

(aiming to build 1000 carbon neutral homes in Kings Cross).

Alara recognise that as a food production company they will always have embedded CO2e in their supply chain, and decided to find a way to offset this. Alara work with charity Rain Forest Saver who work with indigenous farmers in sub-Sahara Africa and Central America introducing a farming system called 'inga ally cropping'. This system fixes nitrogen, puts carbon in the soil and makes permanent agriculture possible negating the need for slash and burn farming. Alara estimate that each inga tree fizes one tonne of CO2 over a twenty-year period, and the contributions they make to this charity pay enough inga to be planted to offset the embedded climate change gas in the food they produce and sell.

For copies of all CO2e reports, see the [sustainability section](#) of the Alara website.

"I believe that it is vital that food businesses start to measure the CO2e in their products as without measurement it is not possible to take effective action. Nothing is more important now that effective action by the food supply chain to avoid disastrous climate change which is already starting to effect harvests, costs and supply chains."

Alex Smith, Founding Director, Alara

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