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Models for Sustainable Food Profiling To Produce Additional Food Labels

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Sustainable food profiling models (SFPs) provide the scientific foundation for labelling food items based on their environmental and nutritional effect, allowing customers to make educated decisions. We found ten SFPs that rate particular items based on at least two environmental variables, with greenhouse gas emissions and water consumption being the most prevalent. Six models also evaluated food nutritional quality and demonstrated various strategies for combining nutritional and environmental data. The recognised models have a wide variety of system boundaries, reference units, methodologies for determining cut-off values, design recommendations for food labelling systems, and the lifecycle inventory databases utilised in the development phase of the model have a broad geographical reach.

Inconsistent techniques for food classification and low dependability owing to unclear methodology, missing code for environmental and nutritional effect computation, and imprecise cut-off values are all major drawbacks of the discovered models. We discovered that few SFPs have taken into account at least two environmental impact criteria, and even fewer have taken into consideration nutritional values or other aspects of sustainability. To allow uniform food labelling, this systematic study emphasises the need of using consistent components and developing national and international reference values for the categorization of sustainable food.

It presents a synthesis of methodologies and resources for selecting or developing sustainable food profiling models as the scientific foundation for developing national or worldwide sustainable nutrition policy. The findings of this systematic review contribute to the resolution of several open questions about the compatibility of nutritional and environmental values, as well as the integration of nutrition and health aspects in environmental assessments of food products, including regional specificities, determining cut-off values for classification, and transforming lifecycle assessment results into easily understandable information tools. To make model comparison easier, we provide a new scoring method for model dependability as a crucial quality parameter. Moving forward, research that focuses on

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the creation of absolute reference values for identifying foods as long-term and consistent approaches will be required.

Sustainable food profiling models are an important tool for providing the evidence base for environmental and nutritional assessments of foods, with an increasing number of sustainable food labelling schemes and national dietary guidelines incorporating sustainability dimensions. They should be further developed. In terms of restrictions, we know from contacting researchers that certain SFPs were planned or in development at the time of our assessment. Given the growing interest in sustainable food profiling and labelling, as well as the significant time and resources necessary to assess eligibility and extract data, maintaining a systematic review up to date is a demanding undertaking. Although SFPs that have been published or that have come to our attention after the last eligibility evaluation in September are not included. Although this systematic evaluation does not include SFPs that have been published or those we became aware of after the final eligibility assessment in September, we are sure that we have retrieved the most relevant models to date. Strength of this work is the thorough searches of both peer-reviewed and grey literature, as well as the detailed and on-going eligibility checks with the research authors.