

# ENVIRONMENTAL LABELLING: WHO PAYS ATTENTION?

*LCA Annual Conference, Lille  
Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2013*

Professor Roland Clift

Centre for Environmental Strategy

University of Surrey

Executive Director of the International  
Society for Industrial Ecology



# EU ECOLABEL



**Simple logo: the “Eurodaisy”**

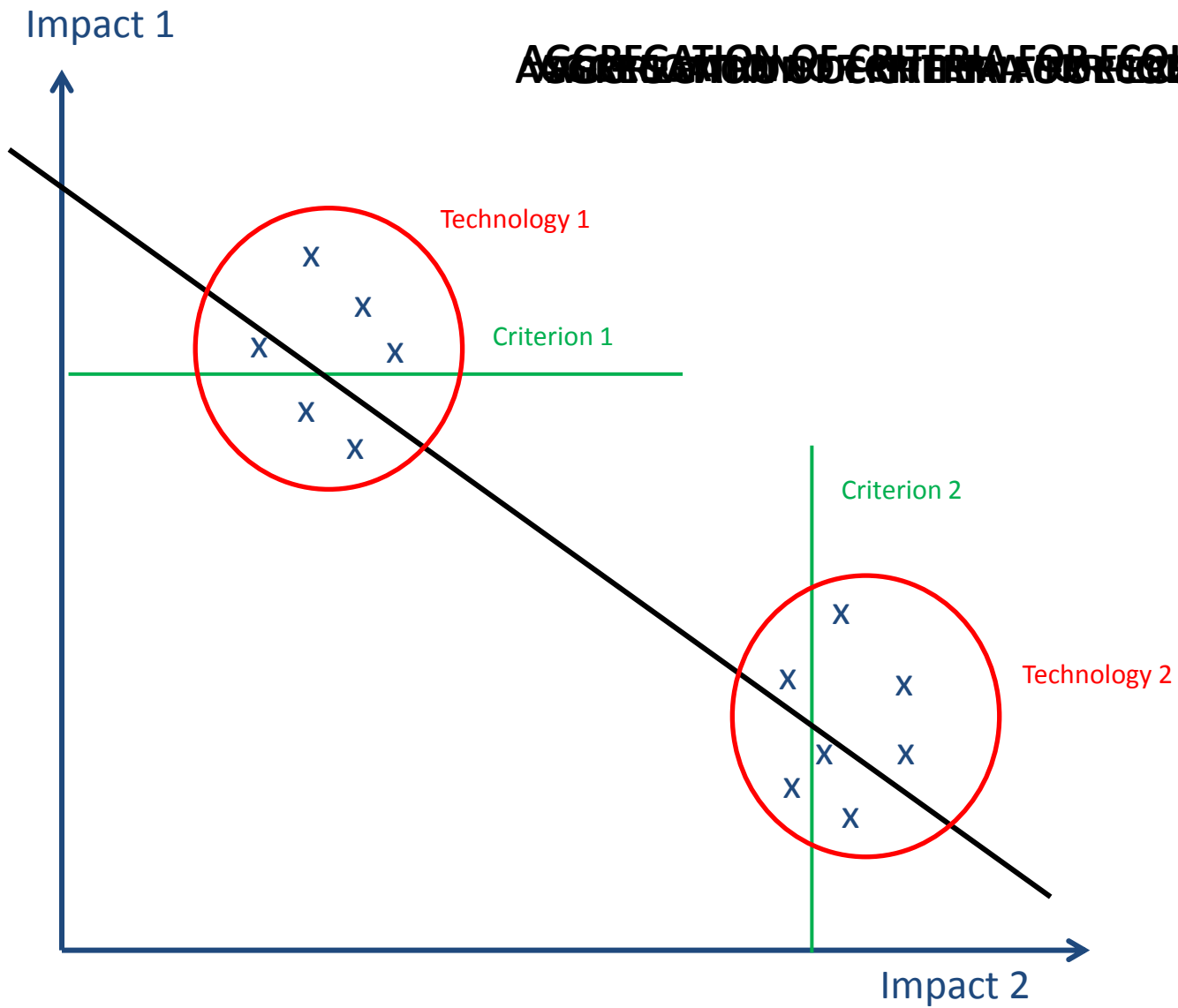
- **voluntary Type I label**
- **applies throughout EU**

**Two objectives:**

1. **“Benchmarking” – to guide and encourage development of environmentally sound products**
2. **Consumer Information – objective identification of products and services whose environmental performance goes beyond compliance with regulations**

**but it has been “upstaged” by other labels notably the “Nordic Swan”**

# AGGREGATION OF CRITERIA FOR ECOLABELLING



# Motivation for Carbon Labelling

- **January 2007: Initiatives by major retailers**
- **Advised to standardise “carbon footprinting” first (Summer 2007)**
- **Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)**  
*plus*  
**British Standards Institution (BSI) *plus***  
**Carbon Trust**  
**combined to produce a standard approach, mandatory for**  
**labels on consumer products**
- **Accompanied by Guidance on Reduction and Communication**

# **“PAS” – Publicly Available Specification**

- PAS 2050 was published on 29 October, 2008.
- Accompanied by Guidance on Reduction and Communication
- Revised specification published in September 2011

# Guide to PAS 2050

Three levels of verification:

- a) Independent third party certification... by a certification body accredited by an internationally recognised accreditation body (e.g. UK Accreditation Service, UKAS).
- b) Other party verification... by a non-accredited third party to demonstrate compliance with recognised standards.
- c) Self-certification, to BS/EN/ISO 14021

# Guide to PAS 2050

Independent certification is highly encouraged when companies want to communicate the carbon footprint publicly (*and is mandatory if you want to be recognised by the Carbon Trust*).

**What does this mean in practice?**

# No more cowboy consultants





# Key PAS requirements

- **Scope of emissions**
  - All GHGs specified by IPCC 2007 (Phys.Sci., Ch 2, Table 2.14)
- **GHG assessment basis**
  - 100 year GWP for specified emissions
- **Extent of the life cycle**
  - Whole life cycle (process-based, attributional), including use phase
    - Use phase requires use profile to be established and made available
- **Boundaries**
  - Establishes boundary criteria for the assessment
  - Where available, Product Category Rules (ISO 14025) to be used
- **Offsetting**
  - Does not allow offsets to be included in the assessment

# Types of Life Cycle Assessment

## ATTRIBUTIONAL

- “Accounting”
- Description of existing system with all activities leading up to product or service

## CONSEQUENTIAL

- “Change-oriented”
- Considers possible consequences of changes in demand or product system;

e.g. consequential land-use change

# A Salutary Example: Exported Brazilian Beef

Brazil is now the largest exporter of beef.

- Beef exports come from established pasture land in Southern Brazil

- On a strictly attributional basis, the “carbon footprint” is 25-30kgs carbon dioxide per kg

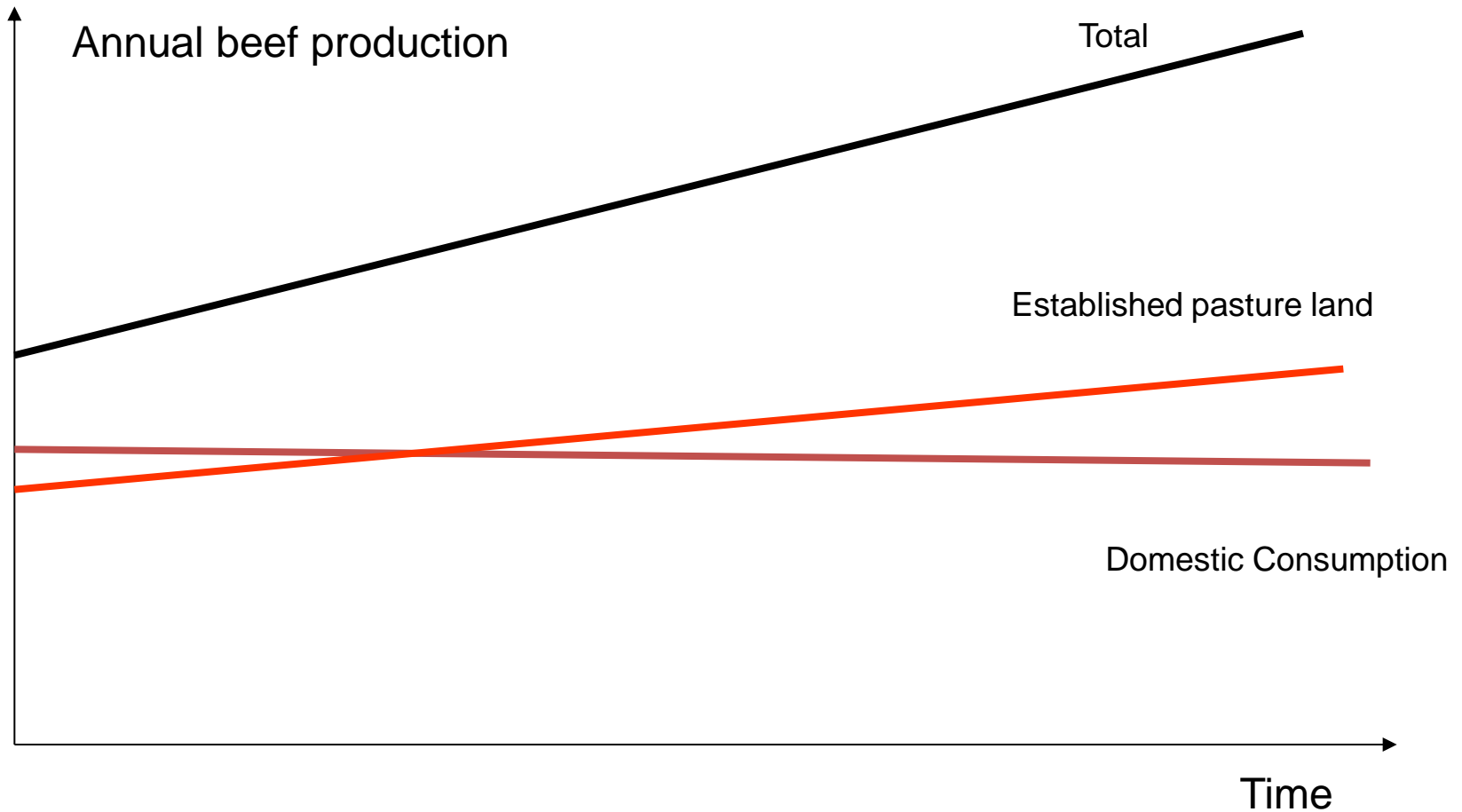
(cf. about 20kgs for European pasture-fed beef)

***but***

- The expansion in production which has enabled the growth in exports has come almost completely from the Northern States ( the “Legal Amazonas”)

- The amortised carbon releases for land converted to pasture from forest raise the “carbon footprint” for this beef to 800+ kgs per kg....

# BRAZILIAN BEEF PRODUCTION – SCHEMATIC



# BUSINESS IMPACT

Take-up by major retailers

e.g. Tesco - ???

and some suppliers

e.g. Pepsico (inc. Walker's crisps)

Response by suppliers, notably food and beverages:

e.g. New Zealand

Thailand

Influence on other organisations:

e.g. Wal-Mart

The Sustainability Consortium

# **But has it directly affected consumer purchasing?**

**See:**

**Clift, R., Malcolm, R., Baumann, H., Connell, L. and Rice, G.,  
“Ecolabels and Electric Monks”, J. Ind. Ecol., 9(3): 4-7 (2005)**

**Koos, S., “Varieties of Environmental Labelling, Market Structures  
and Sustainable Consumption across Europe: A Comparative  
Analysis of Organisational and Market Supply Determinants of  
Environmental-labelled Goods”, J.Consumer Policy, 34: 127-151  
(2011)**

**See also:**

**Clift, R., Basson, L. and Cobbedick, D., “Accounting for carbon”,  
The Chemical Engineer, Sept. 2009, pp.35-37**