



Is Locally Sourced Always the Best Option?

Discussion Exercise (approximately 10 minutes)

Task Description / Instructions for Teachers

Ask the following question to the whole class and let the students reflect individually for 1-2 minutes before discussing as a class:

Your friend claims that locally produced products are always better for the climate than products that have been transported over long distances – is that right or wrong? Why? Can you find any examples among the cards in Climate Cal that support your argument?

Bonus Task

Let the students make a list of five foods they consume that have been transported from afar, and another with five foods they consume that are produced locally. Let them compare with their classmates and discuss how their own eating habits impact the climate.

Suggested Solution

It is not entirely correct to say that locally produced products are always better for the climate than those transported over long distances. The impact on the climate depends on various factors, not just the transportation distance. To evaluate the climate impact of a product, we need to consider the entire lifecycle, including production, transportation, and usage emissions.

For example, let's look at the cards "Roses from the Netherlands" compared to "Roses from Kenya." While transportation from Kenya to other countries might involve longer distances, the production of roses in the Netherlands often requires energy-intensive heating in greenhouses, resulting in significant emissions (greenhouses in the Netherlands are often heated by burning fossil fuels). Therefore, in some cases, it might be more climate friendly to grow roses in Kenya compared to a colder country like the Netherlands, despite longer transportation. This demonstrates that assessing the climate impact is more complex than just looking at transportation distances, and that the entire carbon footprint needs to be considered.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Students will understand that the climate impact of products depends on multiple factors beyond transportation distance, encouraging them to consider the entire carbon footprint, including production and usage emissions, when assessing sustainability.