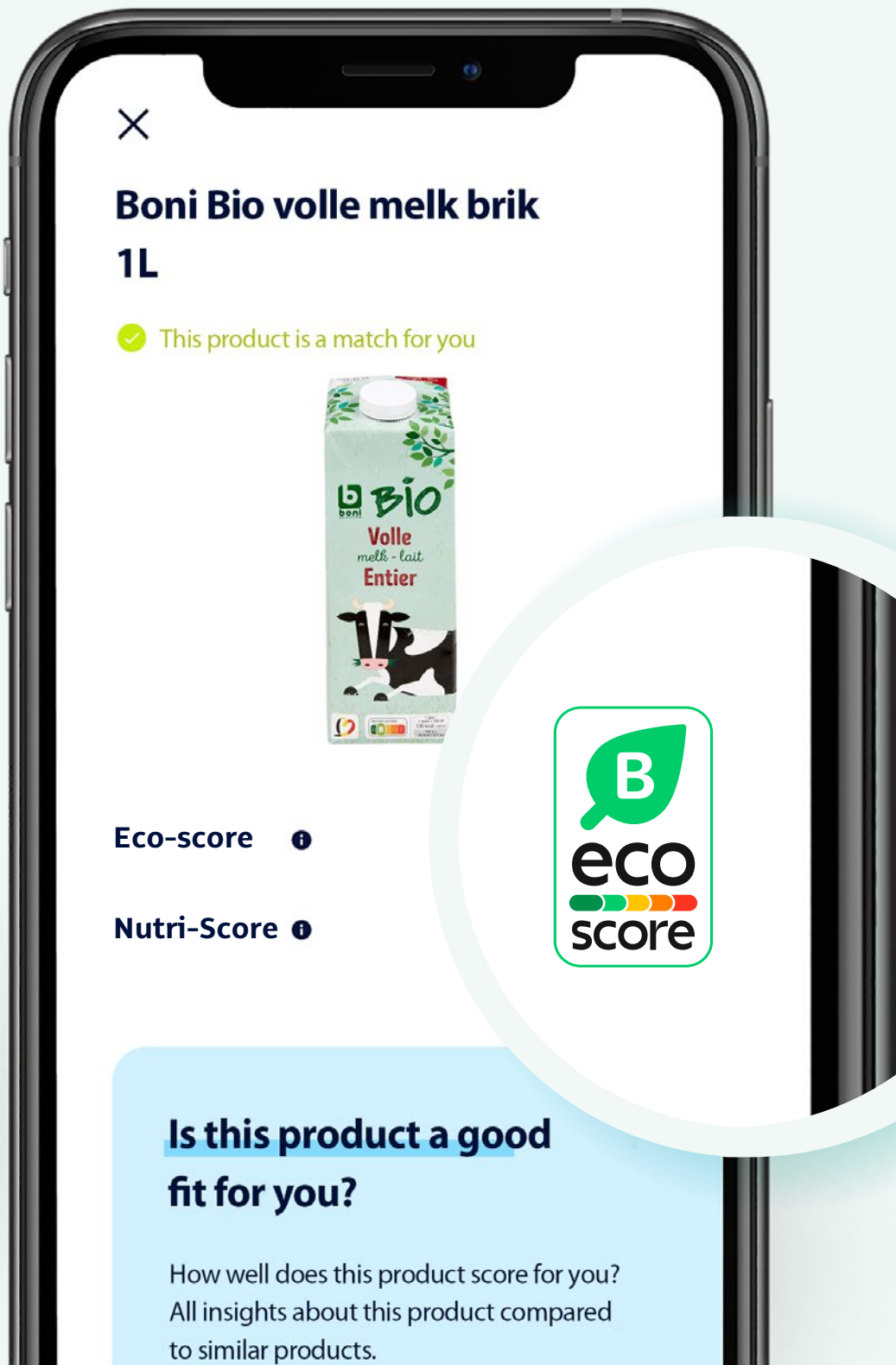


# Questions & answers

## Eco-score



**Boni Bio volle melk brik**  
**1L**

✓ This product is a match for you



Eco-score ⓘ

Nutri-Score ⓘ



### Is this product a good fit for you?

How well does this product score for you?  
All insights about this product compared to similar products.

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# 1. Which aspects does the Eco-score take into account?

The method for calculating the Eco-score was developed by a French collective and consists of two components: first, the life cycle analysis (LCA) of a product and, second, additional plus and/or minus points. The combination of all these factors is what makes this score so special.

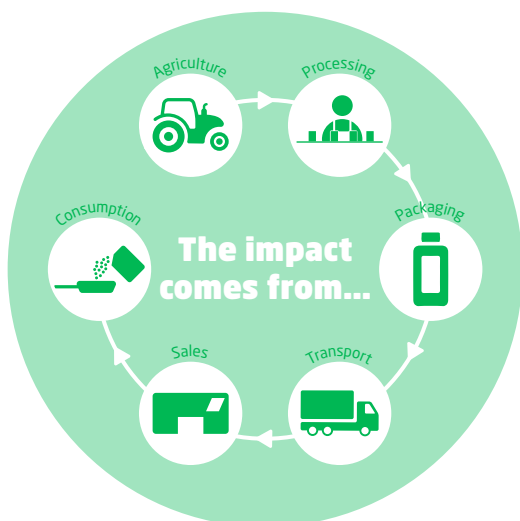
1. **The lifecycle analysis** takes into account **16 impact categories** that play an important role from the creation to the disposal of a product: climate change, water use, land use, particulate matter, acidification, etc. All these relevant impact types are measured in the different phases of the product's life cycle. This analysis is therefore much more than just measuring the CO<sub>2</sub> emission or 'carbon footprint'.
2. In addition, the Eco-score also takes into account **additional criteria** such as biodiversity, transport, recyclability and certification.

## What is the environmental impact?



$$\begin{array}{c} \text{Life cycle} \quad + \quad \text{Bonus-malus} \\ = \\ \text{score} / 100 \end{array}$$

### Life cycle



### Bonus-malus



## 2. Is the Eco-score the same as the 'carbon footprint'?

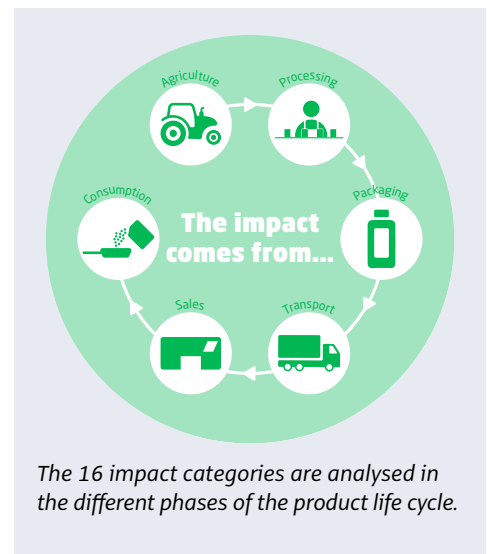
No, both concepts deal with the environmental impact of a product, but have a different focus.

- The '**carbon footprint**' focuses on **one factor** that has an impact on the environment: the total **emissions of greenhouse gases** - such as carbon dioxide and methane - caused by an organisation or product, for example.
- **The Eco-score goes much further.** It takes into account **16 impact categories** (see question 3) throughout the entire life cycle of a food product. The Eco-score also adds **additional plus and minus points** to the life cycle analysis to make sure a maximum number of factors are evaluated. That is what makes this score so special.

## 3. Where can I find the results of a life cycle analysis? Which aspects does the analysis take into account?

The life cycle analyses (LCA) of many product categories are available in the **French Agribalyse database**. At present, there is no database available with specific data for Belgium. The results show the environmental impact per kilogram produced and consumed. They are not calculated at product level, but **per product category**. For biscuits with chocolate, for example.

A life cycle analysis takes into account different factors that play an important role from the creation to the disposal of a product. These are the **sixteen impact categories**:



- **Depletion of the ozone layer**

The ozone layer in the stratosphere absorbs the sun's harmful UV radiation. The thinning of the ozone layer by certain substances has dangerous consequences for humans (e.g. skin cancer) and other organisms.

- **Eco-toxicity of freshwater**

Eco-toxicity refers to the potential toxic effects of certain substances on ecosystems.

- **Soil eutrophication**

Due to an excess of nutrients in the soil, specific plants grow faster, to the detriment of the original ecosystem.

- **Salt water eutrophication**

Due to an excess of nutrients in the sea, algae and other specific plants grow faster, to the detriment of the original ecosystem.

- **Freshwater eutrophication**

Due to an excess of nutrients in freshwater, algae and specific plants grow faster, to the detriment of the original ecosystem.

- **Particulate matter**

Particulate matter and other inorganic substances can get into people's lungs where they can have harmful effects.

- **Photochemical ozone formation**

While ozone in the stratosphere protects us, ozone on the ground (in the troposphere) is harmful: it affects organic compounds in animals and plants. Photochemical smog (summer smog) can cause respiratory problems.

- **Use of fossil fuels**

Fossil fuels are non-renewable resources. If we consume them in large quantities, there will be none left for future generations.

- **Use of raw materials: minerals and metals**

Minerals and metals are non-renewable resources. If we consume them in large quantities, there will be none left for future generations.

- **Ionising radiation**

Exposure to ionising radiation (radioactivity) may have harmful effects on human health.

- **Climate change**

Due to the increase in the number of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the earth's temperature is rising and the climate is changing.

- **Land use**

The use and transformation of land for agriculture, roads, mining and other purposes can lead to soil erosion, lack of organic matter in the soil and loss of biodiversity.

- **Toxic to humans: carcinogenic**

Absorbing certain substances through the air, water or soil can have toxic, carcinogenic effects on humans.

- **Toxic to humans: non-carcinogenic**

Absorbing certain substances through the air, water or soil can have toxic, non-carcinogenic effects on humans.

- **Acidification**

Emissions to air, water and soil can cause acidification. Acidification contributes to a decline in coniferous forests and an increase in fish mortality.

- **Water consumption**

Withdrawing water from lakes, rivers or groundwater can lead to water scarcity.

## 4. Why does the Eco-score take into account other criteria, in addition to the life cycle analysis?

The additional criteria are intended to also integrate some aspects not taken into account by the generic life cycle analyses from the Agribalyse database:

- Life cycle analyses do not take into account **certain essential negative effects**. For example, the influence of the use of pesticides, antibiotics and anti-parasitic agents on soil richness or biodiversity.
- Life cycle analyses do not take into account the **positive impact** of, for example, organic or extensive production on animal welfare or landscapes (pastures, mountain pastures, hedgerows, etc.).
- The database **does not distinguish between production and farming methods**. As a result, some foods from conventional agriculture score better than alternatives from organic agriculture, which often has lower yields.

## 5. Which criteria does the Eco-score take into account? How many pluses and minuses are involved?

Food products can earn additional plus and/or minus points in addition to the life cycle analysis score based on:

1. The awarded **labels** such as 'organic/bio', UTZ, Rainforest Alliance ... → depending on the environmental benefits of the label: **+5 to +20 points**
2. The degree of circularity of the **packaging**: is it recyclable? Packaging from recycled, non-renewable or non-recyclable raw materials? → **-15 to +0 points**
3. The **origin**:
  - o The origin of each **ingredient** of a product → **+0 to +15 points**
  - o The **environmental policy** of the producing country → **-5 to +5 points**
4. The impact on **biodiversity and ecosystems**: this aspect takes into account the depletion of fish stocks and deforestation, among others. → **-10 to +0 points**

## 6. Can a product go from Eco-score C to B?

Yes, that's possible. For example by **making the product more sustainable** and by focusing on the possible bonus points or other factors (see question 1), but it is a long-term process.

At Colruyt Group, we actively want to **further reduce the environmental impact of our private label products**. Together with our suppliers, we want to take the right actions that will have the greatest impact on the environment.

## 7. Can the calculation method of the Eco-score change in the future?

The method consists of various parameters such as the life cycle analysis and additional pluses and minuses. It will be **further refined and adapted to the Belgian reality**.

- The life cycle analysis was elaborated by several partners from France and works on the basis of average product scores. Not much will change about that.
- The possible additional pluses and minuses allow us to make interesting nuances at product level. We can refine that system, taking into account the reality and specificity of the Belgian market. We are looking to adjust the algorithms and are consulting with the French collective in this respect.

## 8. Which sustainability labels add extra points?

In Belgium, products with the following labels receive 10 plus points. Those with a European organic label even get 15.



### ASC

Aquaculture Stewardship Council, an international label for sustainable farmed fish.



### Label bio de l'UE

A label for products that meet the standards of European organic legislation.



### Fairtrade

An international label for fair trade with the South.



### Label Rouge

A French quality label for animal products.



### MSC

Marine Stewardship Council, an international label for sustainable fish.



### Rainforest Alliance

An international label for sustainable agriculture. Only applicable to food products such as bananas, coffee, tea, chocolate and palm oil.



### UTZ

An international label for sustainable agriculture in the South.

The selection of these labels was based on a recent ADEME study on the reliability of sustainability labels. The points of different labels are added up. ASC and MSC are an exception: those bonus points cannot be added up.



## 9. How is the origin of ingredients determined and evaluated?

The **packaging** of a product can help. Useful information includes

- the origin stated in the **list of ingredients**,
- a **protected geographical indication**,
- a **registered designation of origin**
- a **specific product name** guaranteeing origin. This is often the case for cheeses.  
For example, Camembert invariably comes from France, Greek feta cheese or Italian Parmesan.

If the origin of an ingredient is not known, the least favourable score is given. Only the origin of the raw materials plays a role when we evaluate the 'origin' aspect, not the production location. Due to lack of data, this aspect is not yet included in the calculation of the Eco-score. The idea is to get more information from suppliers in the future, so that this can also be included in the calculation.

## 10. How does the Eco-score take into account the environmental policy in the country of production?

A product can get up to five plus or minus points based on the environmental policy of the producing country. The **Environmental Performance Index** is used to evaluate this factor. It was developed by Yale Columbia using 32 indicators and reflects the attitude of 180 countries towards the environment. Currently, every product gets five minus points as far as environmental policy is concerned because we do not yet know the origin of all the ingredients.

## 11. To what extent does transport play a role?

The transport of a food product plays a role in the **life cycle analysis**. In addition, **up to 15 bonus points** can be awarded based on the origin of each ingredient. The Eco-score takes into account the common distances and means of transport (road, rail and sea). Food products are rarely (0.1%, EuroStat 2016) transported by air, so air traffic is not included in the calculation.

## 12. Does the Eco-score take into account the recyclability of the packaging?

Yes. The **more recyclable** a packaging is, **the better the product scores**. The calculation of the Eco-score takes into account both the materials of which the packaging is made (e.g. recyclable raw materials) and the recyclability of the packaging. The greater the environmental impact of the packaging, the more **minus points** it gets. Products without packaging will of course not receive any minus points. This methodology is being further refined for the Belgian market.

## 13. Could the Eco-score and the Nutri-Score be confused?

We believe the difference is clear. Both scores look visually different. Moreover, [quantitative market research](#) in Flanders has shown that consumers can make a clear **distinction** between information about the nutritional values of food, on the one hand, and about its environmental impact, on the other.

Consumers find both aspects important and want a clearer overall picture. They want an easy way to find out whether their products are healthy and ecologically sound, without having to decipher complicated texts and labels. The Eco-score and Nutri-Score respond to this need. The **accessible design** of both scores makes them **easier** for consumers to **interpret**.



## 14. What is the difference between the Eco-score and the OEF?

The Eco-score indicates the environmental impact of a food **product**. OEF stands for Organisation Environmental Footprint and is therefore about the ecological footprint of an **organisation or company**.

Colruyt Group has years of **experience** in calculating the ecological footprint of both its products and its organisation. For example, in cooperation with the European Commission, we actively monitored the development of the **PEF standard** (Product Environmental Footprint) and co-signed the **OEF guidelines**. We were one of the first to do this comprehensive exercise for our group. We calculated the environmental impact of our business activities in order to develop reduction strategies based on a baseline measurement

## 15. Why was Eco-score developed for food products first?

Because the food sector has a significant impact on the environment. Before your food reaches your plate, it has to be produced, processed, packaged, transported, refrigerated, etc. This **requires a lot of energy and raw materials**. From the energy used to heat greenhouses, to the fuel to transport products to the shops. This all causes environmental pollution and gas emissions. Moreover, food production requires a large part of the available land and water. In addition, it brings with it environmental problems such as manure surplus and overfishing.

In total, about **one third of all climate impact** is caused by producing and eating food. It ranges from climate change and biodiversity loss to disruption of the nitrogen cycle. By **choosing sustainable food**, we increase the ecological carrying capacity of the earth and deplete the available raw materials less quickly.

## 16. When will we see the Eco-scores of national brand products?

Calculating the score takes time. That is why we chose to determine them first for some 2,500 food products of **our private labels** Boni Selection, Boni Selection Bio, Spar, Graindor and Colruyt Lowest Prices. Gradually, this number will increase further. Apart from the Eco-scores of some 2,500 private label food products, customers can also consult the scores of many A brand products at Bio-Planet in the Xtra and SmartWithFood apps.

You can consult the Eco-score via the 'Productinfo' option in the **Xtra** app or via the **SmartWithFood app**: scan the product's barcode and the score will appear. In a next phase, the Score will also be available in other applications, including **MyColruyt** and **Collect&Go**, as well as on our websites. We will make the scores of even more products available and gradually add the label on the **packaging** of our Boni Selection food products in 2022.

## 17. Why does Colruyt Group use the Eco-score?

These are our main drivers:

- **Consumers have indicated to want more background** on the products they buy. They are (rightfully so) becoming more critical and more aware of what they are consuming. But sometimes it is not easy to see the forest for the trees. That is why we want to provide transparent and consistent information about products that will enable you to make informed choices.
- The Eco-score is clear and visual and we believe it is **the most suitable tool** to display all information about the environmental impact of a product at a glance. Research shows that customers make purchase choices on the basis of packaging. In less than 4 seconds, they decide whether the product will end up in their shopping cart.
- **Sustainable entrepreneurship is firmly embedded within the DNA of Colruyt Group.** With efforts for health, society, animal welfare and environment, we want to help our customers, **step by step**, to make more conscious choices. Therefore, we also want to inform them about the ecological impact of their purchases.

## 18. What do you want to achieve with the Eco-score?

By using the Eco-score, we want to **help customers to consume more sustainably**. Using the score as a guide, we also want to **reduce the ecological impact of our products** in the future. As a retailer, we are in a unique position: we are the very last link in the chain for the customers and therefore have a great impact on the factors that come before and after us in the chain.

## 19. For which products is the Eco-score available?

On 10 March 2021 we make the Eco-score available for some 2,500 food products of our private labels **Boni Selection, Boni Selection Bio, Spar, Graindor** and **Colruyt Lowest Prices**.

- The method of calculating them can be applied to many food products. **Water, soft drinks** and **ready-made meals** are currently not scored. Just like fruit and vegetables. We want to see how we can adapt the calculation method to these specific products as well and, for example, take account of **seasonality**.
- Today, the Eco-score exists **only for food**. This does not mean that we will not evaluate non-food products in the future. There are already various environmental labels for this purpose, such as the European Ecolabel, which is based on life cycle analysis (LCA).

## 20. Where can I find the Eco-score?

You can consult the Eco-score via the 'Productinfo' option in the **Xtra** app or via the **SmartWithFood app**: scan the product's barcode and the score will appear. Apart from the Eco-scores of some 2,500 private label food products, customers can also consult the scores of many A brand products at Bio-Planet in the Xtra and SmartWithFood apps.

In a next phase, the score will also be available in other applications, including **MyColruyt** and **Collect&Go**, as well as on our websites. We will make the scores of even more products available in these online tools and gradually add the label on the **packaging** of our Boni Selection food products in 2022.



Download the app  
here



## 21. Can I calculate the Eco-score myself?

It is possible to determine the Eco-score yourself, as a consumer, although **it is not obvious**. The calculation method is in our opinion the most transparent method at the moment. It is open source and almost all the necessary information is on the packaging.

## 22. Will meat products always get a bad Eco-score?

No, not necessarily. Meat **often** has a **greater CO<sub>2</sub> impact** than vegetable food because of the feed used in livestock farming, the agricultural area used, the excrement of ruminants, the use of pesticides, etc. But there are **several criteria by which the Eco-score of meat products can be significantly improved**. The type of meat or the production location, for example. Poultry has a lower impact than beef. And locally produced meat will usually score better than meat from far away regions. After all, local production earns extra bonus points (see question 5). Of course, the life cycle analysis remains the decisive factor.

## 23. Will a product coming from far away always have a worse Eco-score than the local variant?

No, it also depends on the other product properties. Depending on the product type, transport has an effect of 5 to 30 % on the final score. Agriculture, animal husbandry and processing usually have a greater impact.