

for example, that even if metal stocks increase 10 times, the supply in raw materials will increase only by 2.5–3 times. Therefore, purposeful and systematic emphasizing of the role of secondary resources and the organization of technological substances cycle are needed for the rational development of the economy, which, in its turn, defines sustainable development of any country.

Environmental activities of JSC "Belaruskali" can serve an example of minimization of the production impact on water quality. Over the years, the company has been implementing a strategy aimed at water consumption reduction and the elimination of wastewater discharge into water bodies. Currently, all processing plants operate in a closed loop water supply without industrial wastewater discharge.

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ON PROMOTION OF 'ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT' IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

The Ecological Footprint was introduced at the beginning of the 90's by Mathis Wackernagel and William Rees. Originally, Wackernagel and Rees called the concept "appropriated carrying capacity". To make the idea more accessible, Rees came up with the term "ecological footprint" inspired by a computer technician who praised his new computer's "small footprint on the desk". In early 1996, Wackernagel and Rees published the book 'Our Ecological Footprint: Reducing Human Impact on the Earth'.

The Ecological Footprint represents the productive area required to provide the humanity with renewable resources and ways to absorb their wastes. The productive area currently occupied by human infrastructure is also included in this calculation, since built-up land is not available for resource regeneration. Ecological footprints can be calculated using any scale: for an activity, a person, a community, a city, a region, a nation or the humanity as a whole.

The Ecological Footprint is, in fact, one of the first comprehensive attempts to measure human carrying capacity, not as a speculative assessment of what the planet might be able to support, but as a description of how many planets would be necessary in any given year to support human demand in resources. Starting from its introduction into the academic debate, the concept has achieved increasing interest in society, from the scientific world to the common people. The results of the Ecological Footprint for 150 nations worldwide are well-known and rather striking: since the mid-1980's, the humanity's footprint has been larger than the planet's carrying capacity, and in 2008 humanity's total Footprint exceeded the Earth's biocapacity by approximately 44 per cent. In 2007, the Global Footprint Network estimated the global Ecological Footprint as 1.6 planet Earths: ecological services were used 1.6 times as quickly as they were renewed.

The sociological survey with the main topics “Environment” and “Ecological Footprint” of the residents of Minsk city and Minsk Region was conducted by the author in September – October of 2016. The survey based on the following parameters: housing, use of energy, transport, food, use of water and paper, recycling of municipal waste. The survey involved 51 people. Women (69% or 35 people) showed the greatest interest to the given topic. The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 70 years.

The results of the survey showed that the average Ecological Footprint of respondents was 4.3 Hectares (2.5 planets), given the fact, that the average norm is about 1.8 Hectares. The excess of the norm was 2.4 times.

For comparison, the average U.S. resident uses 12.2 hectares (5.3 planets!), the average European resident uses 5.7 hectares (2.8 planets) and the average resident of Mozambique uses only 0.7 hectares (0.4 planet), the average resident of Russia uses 4.4 hectares (2.5 planets).

According to the results of our survey only 47% of Belarusian respondents know what the Ecological Footprint is. In total the population shows the high interest in the information about the state of the environment (69% of respondents selected the point that includes high concernment in the receiving information about the state of environment in the Republic of Belarus). Likewise, respondents specified about the inaccessibility of information about the state of environment in the region of residence.

The use of Ecological Footprint in our country in large scale (at national, regional and local levels, as well as at the level of organizations such as universities) could be additional instrument of promotion of environmental values, and principles of sustainable development and “green” economy in Belarus.

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ON THE ISSUE OF THE RESTORATION OF AIR QUALITY IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

According to the latest data of the World Health Organization, published in October 2016, the mortality ratio caused by the effects of air pollution in our country (the ratio of the observed number of deaths among patients to number of deaths among people who are not suffering from the diseases) in the period from 2010 to 2012 was 100 per 100.000 population. With this index Belarus ranks the third place in the world. The first place in terms of relative mortality today belongs to Ukraine, the second to Bulgaria, and Russia ranks the fourth place. According to the data of the World Health Organization, about 3 million deaths a year worldwide are connected with the exposure to contaminated air.