

ECO-LABELING OF PRODUCTS AS A WAY TO IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

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The paper provides a brief overview of eco-certification and the results of a survey of the population in order to determine the attitude of consumers to eco-labeling.

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Environmental labeling of products is a graphic display of a set of environmental information about a product or service, which means that the product has less environmental impact than similar products and / or is produced using environmentally friendly technologies. The use of environmental labeling allows directing consumer choice to environmentally friendly products [1].

Belarus does not have a developed system of eco-labeling of food products, although there is mandatory state certification and quality control of products. On Belarusian products you can often find the marking “Natural product”. According to the regulations, products with this sign consist of natural raw materials, are produced without the use of genetic engineering methods, pesticides, hormones and artificial food additives.

We reviewed a number of international environmental labels with a total of 20 characters. Analysis allows separating them according to the following criteria:

- 1) The absence in the finished product of harmful, unnatural and other substances that adversely affect the human body (85 % of the total number).
- 2) The safety of the withdrawal / use of raw materials for humans and the environment (60 %).
- 3) Minimum negative impact on the environment at all stages of production (90 %).
- 4) Harmless disposal or recycling of waste and packaging (10 %).

A questionnaire was chosen to assess the interest of the population in environmentally friendly products. The aim of the study is to analyze consumer attitudes towards eco-labeling. The direct survey method was used. The survey was conducted in May 2019 among 62 consumers living in the Vostok microdistrict of Minsk.

As a result of the survey, it was revealed: 52% of respondents know what environmental labeling is, 32 % do not know, and 16 % of respondents have heard about environmental labeling. The most recognizable eco-labels by respondents are “Moebius loop” (52 %) and “Listok zhizni” (48 %), while 23 % of respondents noted a non-existent sign in international certification as familiar. It was found that 54 % of respondents believe that environmentally friendly products are products that produce minimal negative impact on the environment, 30 % of respondents believe that these are products that contain only natural components, 16 % mean products are safe for human health. The survey revealed that the majority of respondents (60 %) when buying goods look at the expiration date, and not the eco-labeling (6 %). 55 % of people are willing to buy environmentally friendly products more expensive than usual. It was found that 75 % of respondents are not familiar with the concept of greenwashing. Almost all respondents (96 %) know that the product and its packaging can harm the environment.

The study confirms that consumers have a positive attitude towards eco-labeling, but have general and partial knowledge about it. The information obtained as a result of a questionnaire survey can be used to develop measures that increase the environmental literacy of the population in the context of choosing environmentally friendly food products.

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