

Sust-it calls for tougher Energy Label enforcement

Submitted by: Sust-it

Tuesday, 22 March 2011

It needs to be harder for manufacturers and retailers to 'green-wash' consumers with their eco-claims on washing machines, dishwashers, fridges, other 'white goods' and soon TVs, if the EU is to reach its target of reducing energy usage by 20 per cent by 2020.

The National Measurement Office (NMO), took over the role of enforcing the EU's energy efficiency standards (<http://www.rohs.gov.uk/energylabelling/press.aspx>) and labels, from Trading Standards, after Defra research showed the rate of non-compliance with the energy efficiency regulations was at least 15% – and for some products was 25% or higher. In one case, John Gillman and Sons (Electrical) Limited of Gloucester, (<http://www.gillmans.co.uk>) pleaded guilty to advertising and selling chest freezers with incorrect energy ratings. The Ice King (<http://www.ice-king.co.uk/>) DM-35 chest freezer, made in China, was advertised online as having a B energy rating, but arrived with labels showing an A+ energy rating and an energy consumption of 215 kilowatt hours per year. Subsequent tests carried out on the appliances found the energy rating to be E or F and that on average the energy consumption was 382 kilowatt hours per year - some 77% higher than shown on the label provided with the appliance. This could cost consumers £22.03 extra per year, which over the products lifecycle could end up costing more to run than it did to buy! The company had to pay a £5,400 fine and £9,400 in costs. More recently, tests carried out by Which? found Beko's claim that its WMB81445L washing machine used 50% less energy than a standard A-rated machine, making it, they said, an 'A+++++' was not all it was cracked up to be (<http://www.which.co.uk/news/2011/03/50-less-energy-washing-machine-disappoints-247381/>). The energy used per kg of washing on a small load was the second highest of all the Beko washing machines Which? tested last year, and only got an average rating of three stars for energy efficiency.

Ross Lammas, creator of sust-it, the energy efficiency website (<http://sust-it.net/>) for electricals said, "Energy Labelling and eco-design standards have been crucial in getting manufacturers and retailers to recognise the value of energy efficiency and in raising consumer awareness, but if the predicted environmental benefits are to be achieved, it is vital that it is properly enforced, especially as brands feature their eco credentials so heavily in marketing."

At last year's International Energy Agency Conference, Defra Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Lord Henley said "Consumers who are choosing more efficient products – to either save money or to reduce their emissions or both – deserve to be 100% sure that the product they are buying delivers the standard it promises."

And, as energy labelling on TV's comes into force later this year, (<http://www.sust-it.net/blog/?p=485>) (it's currently a voluntary scheme), stiff penalties for non-compliance and rigorous market surveillance are vital. The NMO will soon have an additional range of civil sanctions at its disposal, without needing to go to court, including imposing fines which will reflect the harm caused to consumers and the environment.

Notes:

About Sust-it

Sust-it's energy efficiency website ranks electricals by their energy usage and CO2 emissions (<http://www.sust-it.net>). It does this through its unique calculations of average usage, combined with carefully researched energy usage data published by manufacturers. The site is constantly updated and contains a wide range of products from TVs to chest freezers.

You can compare electricity tariffs and calculate your CO2 emissions at the same time. The electricity unit rates used to calculate the costs per hour/cycle/year are based on the BIS (Department for Business Innovation & skills) Quarterly Energy Prices. CO2 Calculations taken from National Energy Foundation.

The sust-it website has been conceived and developed by turnround new media - an independent production company, after its proprietor Ross Lammas (49), became increasingly frustrated by the difficulty in finding the data on the energy consumption of products, whilst he was building an environmentally sustainable office and home. The site is independent from any manufacturers, retailers or energy companies, and does not receive any funding from any Government agencies, trusts or independent charities.

EU Energy Labels

Energy labelling was first adopted by the EU in 1992.

Mandatory EU energy labels are currently required to be displayed on household electrical goods, e.g. refrigerators & freezers, washing machines, electric tumble-dryers, combined washer-dryers, dishwashers, household electric ovens, air conditioning units and lamps at the points of sale. They will soon cover other products including televisions, boilers and vacuum cleaners.

Information is displayed via a green (most efficient) to red (least efficient) label. New A+, A++ and A+++ (<http://www.sust-it.net/blog/?p=485>) energy ratings for fridges, washing machines and dishwashers were launched on a voluntary basis in December 2010. It will be compulsory for all new models on the market to carry the new labels by the end of 2011. These were introduced instead of recalibrating the existing A-G at regular intervals. About 95% of dishwashers and 98% of washing machines now claim to be A rated.

An A to G energy labelling system for televisions was also introduced in December 2010, initially voluntary, but it will be compulsory for all new models to carry a label by the end of November 2011 (changing to A+ to F from 2014).

Contact: Ross Lammas 01242 808071