

Austria's egg sector is a pioneer in low-carbon egg production thanks to Donau Soja / Europe Soya

The Austrian egg sectors shows that using certified European soya reduces Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by ~ 40% compared to the average EU egg and is a scalable climate solution for egg production across Europe.

Product Carbon Footprint (PCF) studies conducted by BOKU University Vienna show that Austrian eggs produced with Donau Soja / Europe Soya-certified soya feed are associated with ~40% lower GHG emissions than an average EU egg. The results show clearly that feed production is the main hotspot in the climate footprint of eggs – and therefore certified European soya is one of the key levers for reducing GHG emissions in egg production.

Austrian is a long-standing best-practice example for Europe

The Austrian egg sector is a pioneer in sustainable egg production for more than a decade now: Since 2013, the whole sector has switched to Donau Soja-certified soya feed. With 1.22 kg CO₂e/kg of egg, emissions are ~40% lower than for an average EU egg, which emits around 2.1 kg CO₂e/kg of egg. More than 95% of the reduction is linked to the feed and mainly due to the use of Donau Soja.

This demonstrates that large-scale change and a broad market shift towards low-carbon feed are feasible under commercial market conditions.

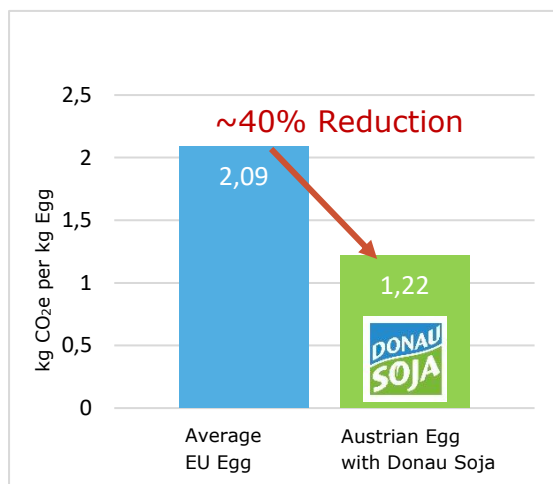


Figure 1: Global warming potential of 1 kg of shell eggs. Comparison between average EU egg and Austrian eggs fed with Donau Soja.

The assessment followed the FAO-LEAP guidelines for poultry and the ISO 14067 standard for the carbon footprint of products, using a system boundary from cradle-to-farm-gate, and showed consistent results for the allocation approaches economic, protein and system expansion. The average EU egg model represents ~ 75% of EU egg production based on the main producing countries France, Germany, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands and Poland. This makes the studies relevant for the wider European market.

The findings are in line with previous studies on GHG emissions of animal products. This strengthens the robustness of the findings and shows that the core conclusion remains consistent: feed, and especially soya sourcing, matters significantly for the climate footprint of eggs.

Climate action and resilience go hand in hand

The benefits shown by the Austrian egg sector go beyond carbon reduction and show that climate action in agriculture can also strengthen food system resilience.

The EU imports more than 90% of its soya each year, mainly from Brazil and the United States, and most of it is used as animal feed. This heavy reliance on imports poses a major risk to our food security and food system resilience due to geopolitical tensions and developments beyond our direct control.

Switching to certified European soya therefore supports lower GHG emissions and also stronger regional value chains, more resilient feed supply chains, and greater strategic autonomy for Europe.

Conclusion

The study shows where decarbonisation action in egg production is most effective: certified European soya is the key lever for reducing GHG emissions. The Austrian egg sector shows that large scale supply chain transformation is possible in practice and supports both climate goals and supply chain resilience.

The message is clear: shifting to Europe Soya certified soya feed helps reducing emissions while strengthening resilience and strategic autonomy. The evidence is there. Now is the time to act.

About Donau Soja

Donau Soja is an independent, member-based non-profit organisation based in Vienna, with offices in Serbia, Ukraine and Moldova. The vision of Donau Soja is a sustainable, safe and European protein supply. To achieve this, Donau Soja supports, among other things, the sustainable production of soya in Europe and the development of regional value chains. Donau Soja unites over 330 members in 34 countries.

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The quality labels Donau Soja / Europe Soya guarantee non-GM, sustainably produced soya of European origin. By relying on Donau Soja / Europe Soya, the Austrian egg sector protects the climate, forests and other valuable ecosystems: Soya is only cultivated on land that was dedicated for agricultural use not later than 2008 and supporting responsible agricultural production.



The Europe Soya / Donau Soja quality labels stand for and quality- and origin-controlled soya feeds