



C · H · E · F · S
 Charting Emissions from Food Services

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can use CHEFS?

CHEFS is designed to be used by college and universities, businesses, science centers and museums, national parks, hospitals, sports arenas and convention centers, or any other institution with dining facilities or concessions.

What do I need to know about life cycle analysis to use CHEFS?

The user is not expected to have any previous knowledge of dining service management or of life-cycle analysis. Students or sustainability staff, working in conjunction with dining service managers to get the relevant input data, can easily use CHEFS.

What does CHEFS encompass?

Users will enter quantities of raw ingredients and processed foods. The data at the core of the CHEFS beta encompasses impacts from the agricultural phase to its arrival on campus (“cradle-to-gate”). Once the CA-CP Campus Carbon Calculator™ is brought online in 2011, CHEFS will also analyze on-campus energy and waste data to return accurate and comprehensive greenhouse gas impacts for all phases of the life cycle.

How precise is CHEFS?

In order to maximize the integrity and precision of inventory results, CHEFS strives for a low level of “product aggregation,” the technical term for the practice of consolidating different categories of similar foods – for example, organic, non-organic and free-range chicken – into one listing backed by generalized data. This type of aggregation is still relatively high in the beta version of CHEFS, but our goal is to continue to spur research and to incorporate new data as it becomes available.

What geographic assumptions does CHEFS make?

Another long-range goal for CHEFS is to incorporate data relevant specifically to the North American consumer. A report by the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future found that the majority of existing food life-cycle data assumes European consumers—an observation borne out by CA-CP’s own experience in the first pilot phase of CHEFS. The CHEFS v1 beta still necessarily draws upon much of this European data, but again, over the course of the project the data will be refined and replaced.

What if I (or my students) want to do research relevant to CHEFS?

One of the ultimate goals of CHEFS is to spur more academic and industry research, improving the availability of quality life-cycle data for North American consumers. To learn more, email Claire Roby, at croby@cleanair-coolplanet.org.