



Carbon Neutral at Backsberg Estate

Information Sheet

Michael Back has recognised the fundamental importance of taking responsibility for our impact on the environment. We have started up the Environmental Initiative to assess the impact of all of Backsberg's activities on the environment and take measures to reduce that impact as far as possible. We are also taking steps to actively invest in the environment. One of the ways to measure impact is through a "carbon audit" which assesses the amounts of carbon based emissions which are generated as a result of one's activities.

Through a carbon technician, we have completed a full carbon audit of Backsberg and have come out with the amount of CO₂ equivalent (all factors are converted to equivalent amounts of CO₂) that Backsberg produces in one year. All figures were taken from the 2005 / 2006 financial year. We looked at everything from electricity and fuel consumption through to fermentation during harvest and air travel. Once we had the amount of CO₂ that Backsberg's activities generated, our carbon technician calculated the number of trees which would be required to absorb that amount of CO₂. This is referred to as "offsetting". We are working with national NGO Food and Trees for Africa (www.trees.co.za) to plant these trees and we are now certified as a "Carbon Neutral Estate since 2006". All of our products that are produced at Backsberg will therefore also be "carbon neutral". We will continue to carry out these audits at the end of each financial year and continue to offset our annual carbon through the planting of trees.

The first phase of the audit assessed everything which happens at Backsberg and covers up to the point that products leave the gate. The second phase of the audit looks at the distances which Backsberg products travel across the world to reach their destinations. We calculated the amount of CO₂ equivalent generated as a result of wine being trucked to Joburg or being shipped to New York. Again, from the last financial year's figures, we have calculated the total distance that our wine travels. This means that we will be a carbon neutral estate *and* that our products are carbon neutral all the way to the distribution centres. For this audit we used the Green House Gas Reporting Protocol, but from next year we will be certified under the new ISO standard for carbon auditing which has just come into place.

We place tremendous importance on the integrity of our Environmental Initiative, with our focus being on reducing our environmental impact and not just paying to offset our emissions and continuing to pollute the environment without changing our behaviour. This is often the criticism with companies that are certified as carbon neutral. Backsberg is actively taking measures to reduce our “footprint” as far as possible and that is why we are investing in biofuels, renewable energy and making huge efforts to reduce our energy demand. Furthermore, the organisation that we are working with does amazing work with planting trees in schools and housing projects that really need the greening and the trees are planted along with environmental awareness and education programmes. We are committed to the highest levels of environmental stewardship and are continuously aiming to improve our environmental performance.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact:

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