

Food Miles



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Background – Food Miles

- Food miles = distance from farm to plate
- Concerns over increasing food miles
- Environmental, social & economic impact
- Study for Defra (June 2006)
- Potential use of food miles as sustainability indicator
 - <http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/reports/foodmiles>



Why the Increase in Food Miles?

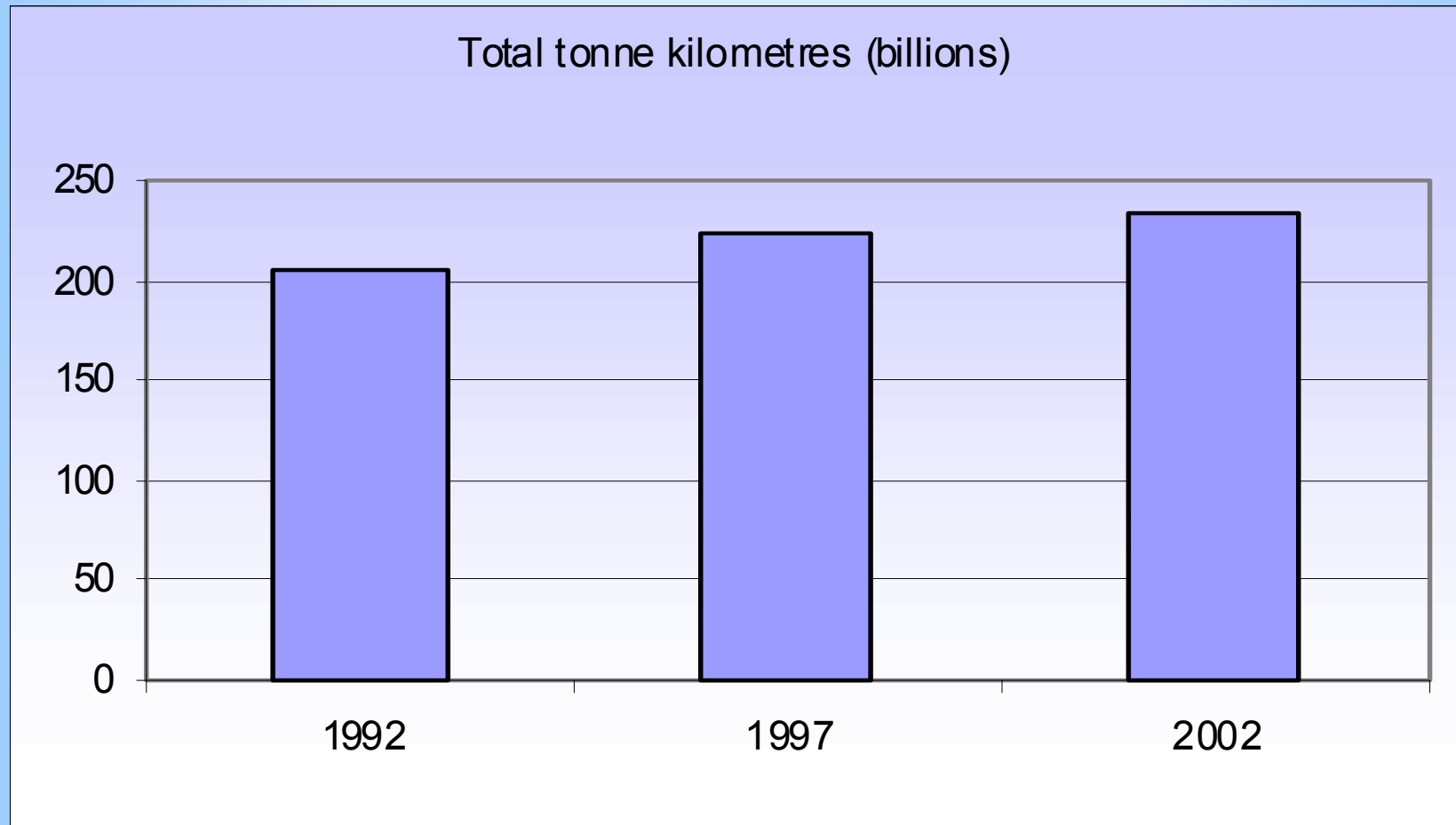
- Globalisation of food industry - wider sourcing, imports & exports
- Concentration of the food supply base - fewer, larger suppliers (yr)
- Major changes in delivery patterns
 - Food through supermarket regional distribution centres, more use larger HGVs
- Centralisation and concentration of sales in supermarkets
 - Switch from frequent food shopping (on foot), to weekly shopping by car
- Processing and packaging

Key Findings – Significance of Food Miles

Environmental, social & economic burdens from food transport are significant

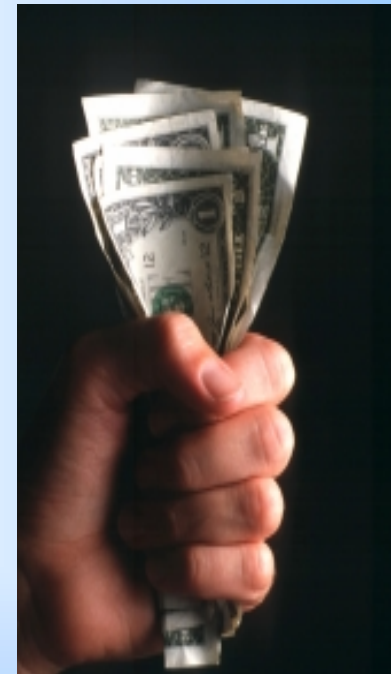
- Food transport accounted for estimated 30 billion vehicle km in 2002
- Food transport 25% of all HGV vehicle kilometres in the UK
- Food transport produced 19 million tonnes of carbon dioxide in 2002
- Significant emissions of air pollutants
- Important because trend toward more food miles

Key Findings – Trends on Food Miles



And significant in economic terms

- Direct environmental, social and economic costs of food transport
 - Costs of congestion
 - Accidents
 - Infrastructure
 - Emissions (CO₂, Air Pollutants)
 - Noise



Estimated at £9 billion / year !

Study Recommendations

- Recommend indicator is needed, but food miles alone is too simplistic
 - **Urban food kilometres** – increased by 27% since 1992 – captures car use
 - **HGV food kilometres** - 25% of all HGV kilometres – captures lorry transport
 - **CO₂ emissions** - 1.8% of total reported UK CO₂ - increased by 12% in ten years
 - **Air food kilometres**
 - Air transport highest CO₂ emission per tonne – 1% tonne km but 11% of CO₂ emissions
 - Fastest growing mode - doubled over ten years
- Government accepted recommendations

But.....(complexities)

- Transport alongside other environmental, social and economic effects
 - Food prices
 - Consumer choice and nutrition
 - Trends affecting UK suppliers
 - Changes in food retail structure and accessibility
 - International trade and developing countries

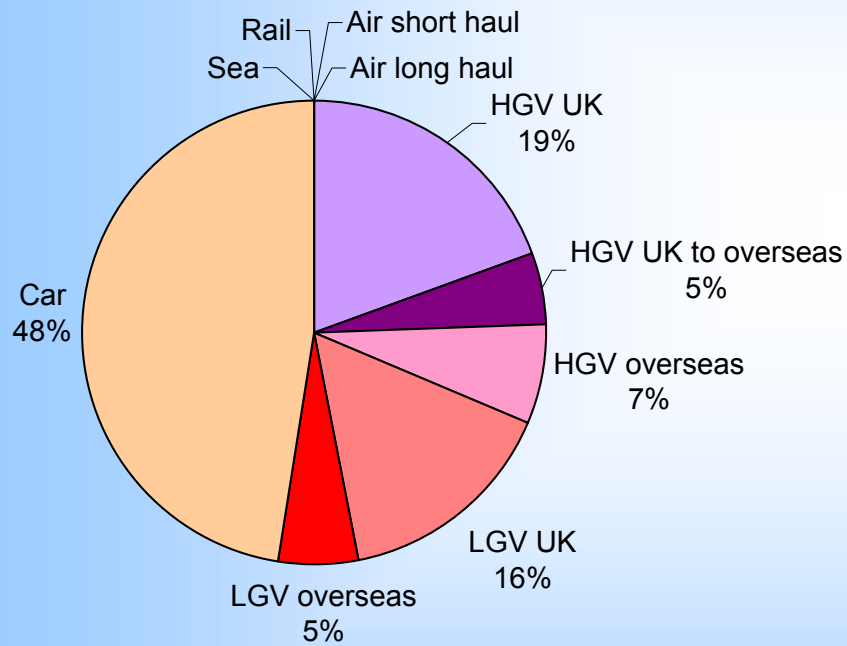
Potential policies

- Sourcing food more locally where appropriate
 - Consumer awareness/labelling, public procurement, support local food initiatives
- Reducing car food shopping
 - Home delivery, Support for local and in-town shops, Provision of cycle/pedestrian access
- Reducing transport impacts
 - Cleaner vehicles, Improved logistics, Rail freight
- Internalising the social costs of transport
- Improving the wider sustainability of the food chain
 - From energy efficiency to ethical trading

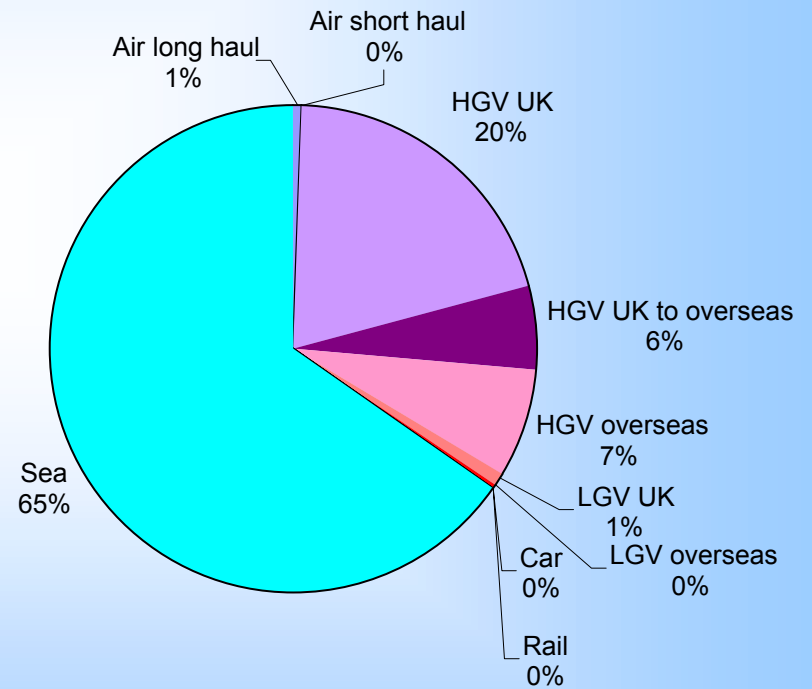


DATA

Vehicle km

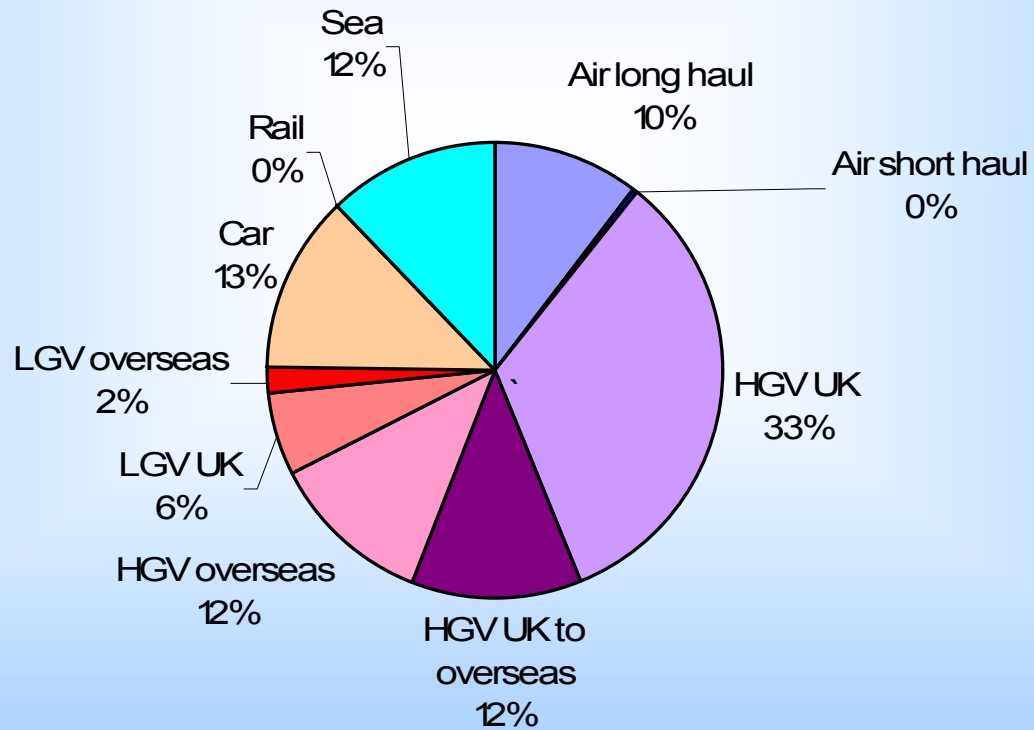


Tonne km



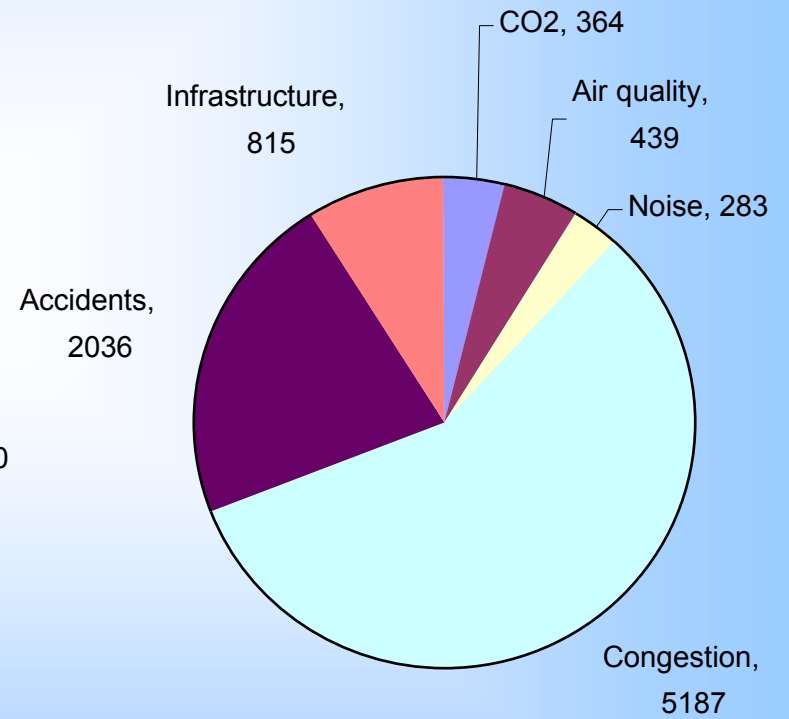
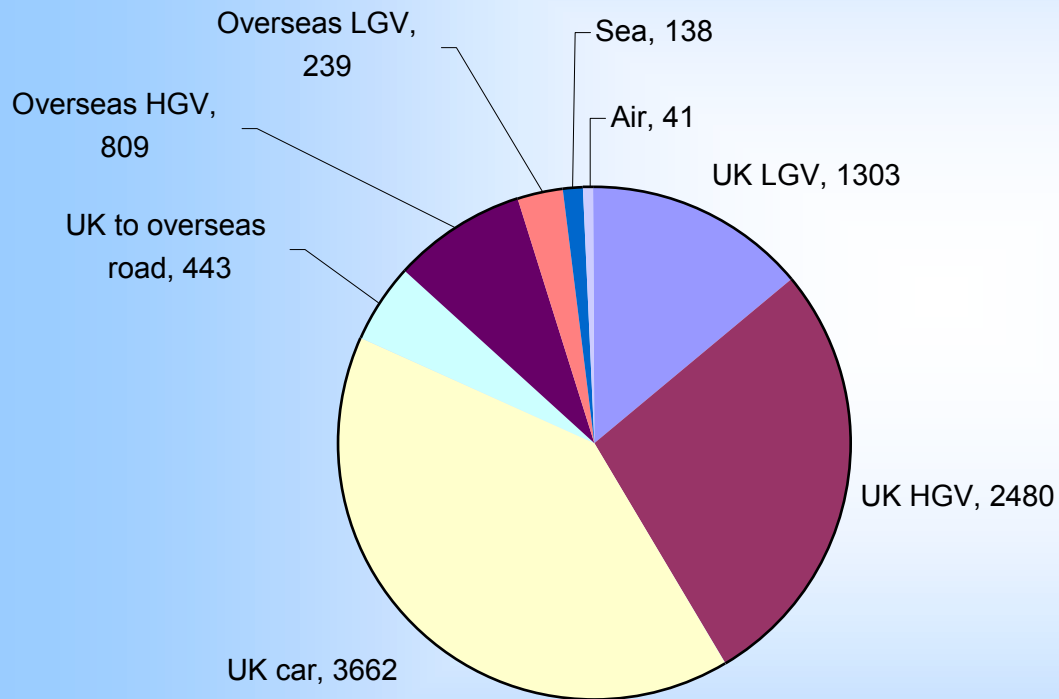
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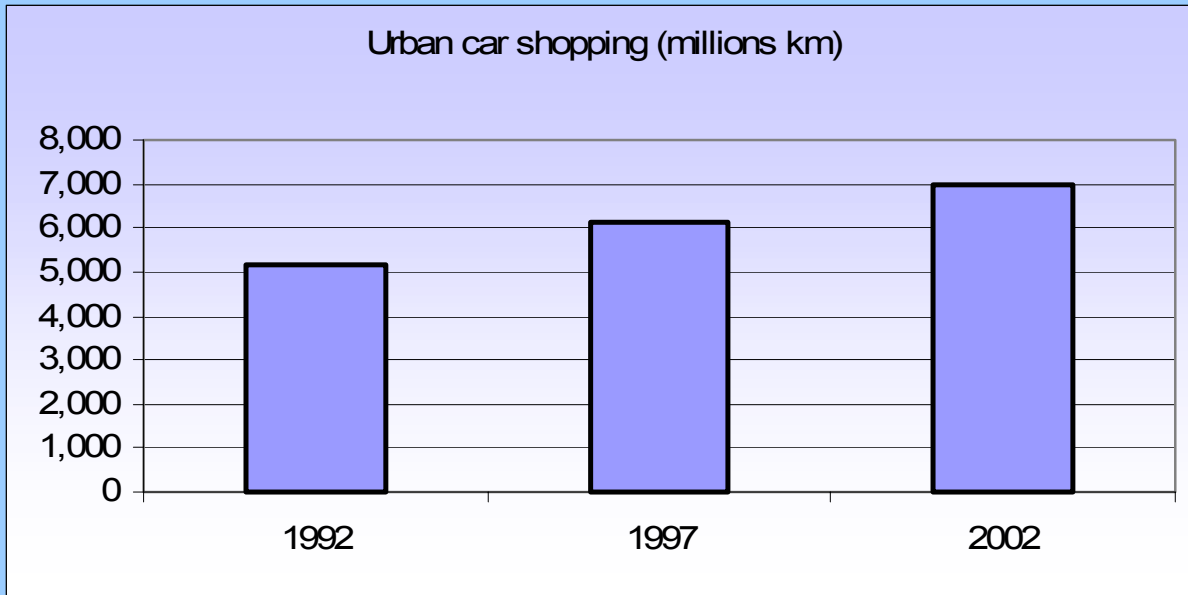
Tonnes CO₂



DATA

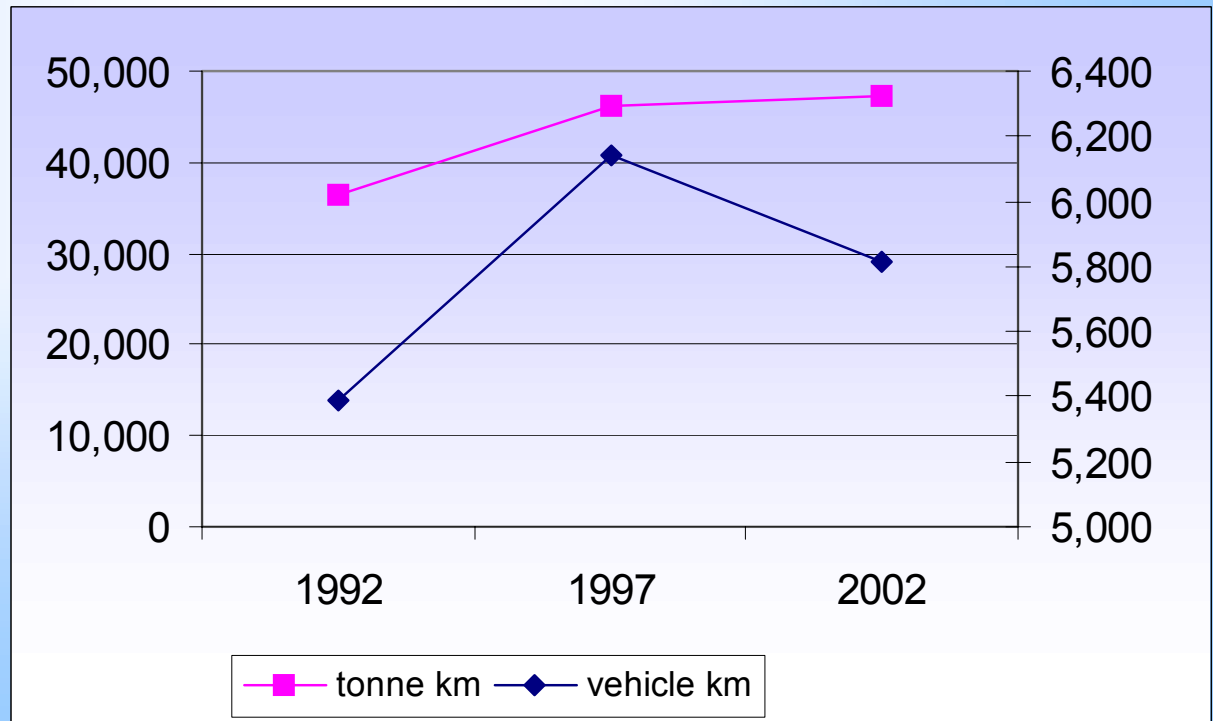
9 Billion





Cars

HGVs



Current Trends

