

Subscribe

LOGIN

INDY/LIFE



Leon's LOVe burger, one of the chain's 'carbon neutral' burgers
(Leon)

CREDIBILITY OF LEON'S 'CARBON-NEUTRAL' BURGERS QUESTIONED BY SCIENTISTS

Carbon credits purchased by restaurant chain 'unlikely to represent real emission reductions', says investigation

Kate Ng | Saturday 21 August 2021 13:37 | comments



[Subscribe](#)[LOGIN](#)

Leon's claim that it will become the first restaurant chain in the UK to sell carbon-neutral **burgers** and fries has been called into question after an investigation found the company was using controversial **carbon credits**.

The chain first made the claim in January, when it announced the carbon neutral meals would be available at more than 60 locations. Leon said it will purchase carbon credits for every burger and portion of fries sold to offset their footprint.

As part of its pledge to become net zero by 2030, Leon excluded high-carbon meats such as **beef** from its menu and switched to a more sustainable energy



[Subscribe](#)[LOGIN](#)

partnership between a conservation NGO and logging companies.

The Guardian reported that the Redd+ (reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation) carbon credits were “unlikely to represent real emission reductions and threats to the forest had been overstated”.

Recommended



[My carbon footprint: just call me a luddite](#)



[Primark pledges to make sustainable clothing 'affordable to all'](#)



[Waitrose to eliminate 40 million plastic bags through price increase](#)

Carbon credits, which allow companies to emit a certain amount of carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases, are generated by preventing hypothetical polluting activity.

But Britaldo Soares-Filho, a deforestation modelling expert who modelled the hypothetical deforestation the Peruvian Amazon was preventing, told the *Guardian* that it was generating “phantom credits” that resulted in little environmental benefit.

Soares-Filho, also a professor at the Institute of geosciences at the Federal University of Minas Gerais in Brazil, warned customers to “beware” of the claims, adding: “Carbon neutrality of burgers sauced with Redd+ credits will not digest well.”

The findings were criticised heavily by US non-profit Verra, which administered the standard for certifying carbon emissions reductions. Verra maintained that the offset system they endorse contributes to the fight against climate change.

Leon also strongly disputed the claim it was purchasing “phantom credits” and



[Subscribe](#)[LOGIN](#)

It said in a statement **published on its website**: “Sustainability remains at the heart of the LEON business and that’s why we’ve committed to be Net Zero by 2030. We’re cutting the emissions in our restaurants by using 100 per cent renewable power and switching from gas to electric cooking.

Recommended



[Surge in second-hand sees eBay save 87 million items from landfill](#)



[Why The Independent is putting sustainability front and centre in our travel coverage](#)



[Tents left behind at Reading Festival spark environmental concerns](#)

“Of the 13 burgers we’ve had on our menu this year 6 have been vegan, giving our customers a wide range of naturally lower carbon products to choose from.

“Carbon offsetting forms just one part of our strategy to tackle the emissions we can’t currently avoid and the Madre de Dios Project is one of many projects we support. It has been independently certified by Verified Carbon Standard (VCS) and CCBS Gold Level (Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standard) globally recognised certification standards.”

More about: [Carbon Credits](#) [Leon](#) [Beef](#) [Burgers](#)



Join our new commenting forum

Join thought-provoking conversations, follow other Independent readers and see their replies

[View comments](#) ▼

[Subscribe](#)

[LOGIN](#)

[Jobs](#)



[Install our apps](#)

[Archive](#)

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

[International editions](#)

[Independent en Español](#)

[Independent Arabia](#)

[Independent Turkish](#)

[Independent Persian](#)

[Independent Urdu](#)

[Evening Standard](#)

[Novaya Gazeta](#)

LEGAL

[Code of conduct and complaints](#)

[Contributors](#)

[Cookie policy](#)

[Donations Terms & Conditions](#)

[Privacy notice](#)

[User policies](#)

[Modern Slavery Act](#)

EXTRAS

[All topics](#)

[Voucher codes](#)

[Compare](#)

[Independent Advertising](#)

[Syndication](#)

[Working at The Independent](#)

