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White goods are becoming greener

New UBA study on market development of “green” products

With a few exceptions, sales of “green” products are on the steady rise says a new study for the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) about the market development of environmentally relevant products. Sales of environmentally friendly white goods in particular are becoming more and more significant. About one half of all freezer units on the market are high energy efficiency. Energy-efficient washing machines and refrigerators have a similar market share. It is therefore clear that “green” products are suited for the mass market. Other industries such as food production have a much lower share of environmentally friendly products. In 2011, less than five per cent of food products met the criteria to be labelled with the EU organic farming logo. Says Jochen Flasbarth, President of the Federal Environment Agency, “The study shows that demand for environmentally friendly household products is growing. If we accelerate this trend, “green” products stand to become a success story for the environment.”

Phenomenal growth rates have been observed in particular in sales of electrical household appliances with high energy efficiency standards. For example, the market share of efficient refrigerators rose from 28.6 per cent to 38.2 per cent between 2010 and 2011. Compared to the respective range of all household appliances, efficient freezers have a market current share of 50 per cent; washing machines have 40 per cent; dishwashers have 38 per cent. Sales of organic food products have also seen a nearly double-digit rate of growth. However, organic food products have only a 3.7 per cent share of the overall food market.

Jochen Flasbarth remarks, “Industry, merchants and policy-makers can count on a solid market environment for green products. Consumers are very disposed to buying environmentally friendly products which have been sustainably produced. This disposition often surpasses actual sales.” For example, 34 per cent of respondents said they intended to purchase more organic food products, 24 per cent would do the same as concerns green electricity, and 12 per cent would be willing to make voluntary compensatory payments for greenhouse gas emissions. These results are based on a study of the market development of 24 products that have high environmental relevance, carried out by the Swiss INFRAS institute on behalf of the Federal Environment Agency. Besides determining coincidental growth rates for these products, the study aims to establish a well-founded approach to observing green products’ market performance. The Federal Environment Agency plans to repeat a green products monitoring

programme once every two years. It will enable a more systematic observation and targeted promotion of the market development of green products. The study investigated the sales and market share of these products, which presently meet the highest environmental standards of energy and material consumption.

Consumers in Germany spent a total of some 36 billion euros in 2011 on the green products observed in the study. This figure is equal to about 2.4 per cent of total private consumer expenditure. The majority of expenditure - 14 billion euros - was in the area of energy efficiency improvements and energy-efficient appliances. Expenditure for public transport, car-sharing and hybrid cars was 13 billion euros. Roughly 8 billion euros was spent on organic food products and products sourced from sustainable fisheries. Sales of green alternative consumer products such as textiles or cleaning products were less significant, amounting to some 1.5 billion euros. In addition, consumers invested about 22 billion euros in financial assets that deliver ecological or social added value.

The study entitled *Grüne Produkte in Deutschland: Status Quo und Trends* [Green products in Germany: status quo and trends] can be downloaded here (in German):

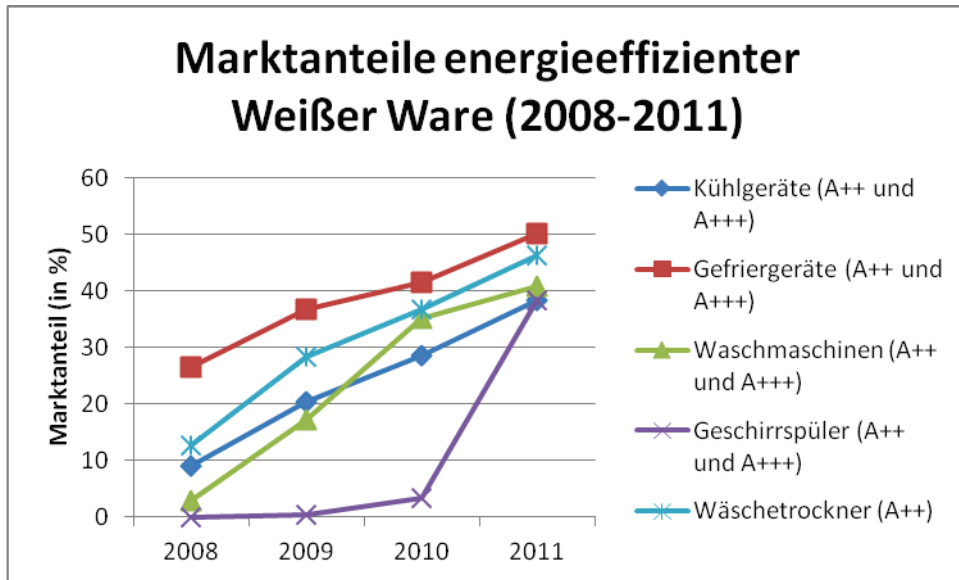
<http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/uba-info-medien-e/4465.html>

Other study results according to area of consumption:

Specific market developments are different from one area of consumption to the next. In the area of living, building and household appliances are becoming more energy-efficient. The purchase of green electricity is gaining impact, but because the demand for energy in buildings is only decreasing slowly and because there is ever increasing demand for physical living space and furnishings, CO₂ emissions in the area of living are easing only slightly. As concerns mobility, the automobile is by far the most commonly used mode of transport in Germany. The market share of public transport in mobility remains below 10%, and car-sharing is less than 1%. However, there is some dynamic development in the modal split of transport services. The data is ambivalent on food. Whereas the consumption of meat shows little change, the MSC label for sustainable fishing has penetrated the mass market. Reliable market data is lacking for other consumer goods such as textiles, furniture and cleaning agents, which is why few conclusions can be drawn in this regard. Whereas donations for environmental causes are declining, consumer willingness to make green investments and voluntary compensation payments is growing.

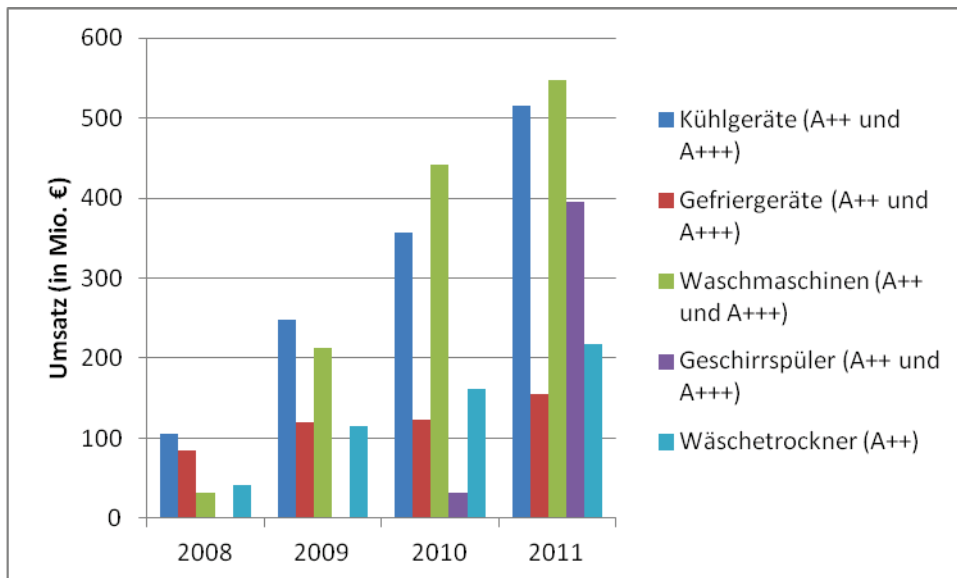
Dessau-Roßlau, 27 June 2013

figure: Market shares of energy-efficient white goods (2008-2011)



Remarks: Efficiency classes A++ and A+++ are considered efficient. The label was adapted to developments in 2011 (new energy label). Source: GfK 2012.

figure: Sales of energy-efficient white goods (2008-2011)



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