

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Upgrading to energy efficient appliances**

*Every home is filled with electrical appliances and as a group, they can account for up to 30% of the home's energy usage. As energy prices rise, and our reliance on home appliances increases, choosing appliances that are energy efficient becomes ever more important. We speak to Mercia De Jager from leading appliance manufacturer, Miele, for some advice.*

24 February 2017, Johannesburg: The simple truth is that upgrading to more efficient appliances can save you energy, and hence money in the long run. So says Mercia De Jager from leading appliance manufacturer, Miele, who goes on to add: "When it comes time to replace your old appliances with new ones, then it is essential to think about both the purchase price and the energy requirements of the appliance in question. Although energy efficient models usually cost more, they will save you lots of energy and money over the course of the appliance's life-cycle, so the initial spend is actually a really good investment."

She notes that running costs can add up over time, so it's worth taking the time to calculate the running costs of your appliances: "If you are choosing new appliances, then this will help you to determine that real cost of the product over its lifetime. For example, it is estimated that on average, cooking appliances account for up to 11% of a South African home's total electrical consumption, while refrigeration uses up to 8%. If you manage to reduce the energy consumption of these appliances, you can greatly reduce the charges on your monthly utility bills – a saving that can add up over time."

She says that the best way to determine the energy requirements of any appliance is to look out for its energy ratings label, but that it is essential to understand the energy usage beforehand.

### **Understanding energy usage**

Mercia explains that energy usage in all appliances is measured in watts: "One thousand watts is equal to one kilowatt. Electricity consumption is measured in kWh (kilowatts per hour). One kWh means that one kilowatt (1000 watts) have been used over a period of one hour. This in turn means that a 1kw appliance requires one kilowatt of electricity to operate for one hour. As such, the higher the wattage of an appliance, the more electricity it requires to function."

However, although some appliances have much higher energy requirements, Mercia notes that it is essential to also take into account how long you use them for every day: "Although a tumble dryer uses much more power than a television, since you use the tumble dryer for far less time every day, they both require similar energy requirements. For example, a 3.3 kW tumble dryer used for 20 minutes will require 0.66 kWh, while a 0.2 kW television used for 4 hours will require 0.6 kWh. So you can see it is important to factor the usage of the appliance in as well."

Also, Mercia says that it is imperative to choose an appliance that serves your needs: “Choose an appliance that can accommodate your requirements – for example, it is no use investing in a huge fridge/freezer if it is just you and your partner living in your home. A smaller model will serve your needs far better and use a lot less energy.”

### **Energy rating labels**

Energy ratings labels provide an independent verification on how energy efficient an appliance is. “Although energy labels are optional for appliances manufactured in South Africa, it is not wise to purchase an appliance without one, as an appliance without a label could be an energy guzzler that will cost you lots of money to run. If you cannot see the label on the appliance, it is always a good idea to search the make and the model on the Internet and find the rating so that you can compare it to other makes and models and choose a truly efficient model,” notes Mercia.

In South Africa, there are three main energy labels:

- **The South African Energy Label:** The current South African Energy Label provides a rating from A (the most energy efficient) to a G (the least energy efficient) for various appliances, including dishwashers, washing machines and electric ovens. In addition to the rating, this label should carry an energy consumption number in kilowatt-hours. It is often more useful to compare this number between models than to compare the letter rating.
- **The European Union Energy Label:** This label is mostly seen on appliances that are imported from Europe, such as those from Miele. The look and ratings are similar to the South African label, so a B-rating on the EU label for example, will be the same to that on the SA label. The main difference however, is that the EU label is more helpful in that it has added higher grades as appliances have become increasingly more efficient – from A+, to A++ and A+++. Also, the EU label includes other helpful information, such as the water consumption on washing machines and dishwashers, and the noise levels (measured in dB or decibels), which is especially great for appliances that will be used in open-plan living areas.
- **The Energy Star Label:** Developed in the United States of America, the Energy Star Label is blue in colour and in South Africa, it appears mostly on imported computers and entertainment equipment. Although the label does not provide any further gradings, making it impossible to compare different products with the same label, you can be rest assured that if you purchase something with an Energy Star label, it is fairly energy efficient in its particular class of products.

### **How to use energy labels for particular appliances**

**Refrigerators:** Today, the vast majority of refrigeration appliances come with a minimum A-rating, but some really efficient models such as those from Miele, go up to A+++. Mercia says it is important to look beyond the rating: “Look at the size of the model - you may find that a smaller fridge with an A-rating uses less energy than a larger fridge with an A-rating for example. The estimated kWh/annum matters most, as it dictates what it will use over 1 year – and seeing that you never switch your fridge or freezer off, it makes an easy way to compare the efficiency of different models.”

**Washing machines:** Energy labels on washing machines only compare how much energy is used on hot water washes. However, Mercia explains that cold water washes use far less energy, so if you are really planning to save electricity, it is always best to run cold water washing cycles: “Thanks to the advanced and highly efficient wash technology from Miele, the cycle temperature can be reduced to 20°C or even to "Cold" in most programmes. If laundry is only slightly soiled, these programmes can save energy noticeably.” Mercia says that any high-end washing worth its salt should boast an A+++ energy efficiency rating, but that water consumption is also an important consideration: “The large majority of Miele’s washing machines are incredibly energy efficient, boasting A+++ ratings, however they are also really water-friendly as well. All Miele washing machines feature intelligent automatic load recognition. This feature analyses the current load and uses only the amount of water and electricity needed for excellent cleaning and rinsing results.”

**Tumble dryers:** It has long been believed that tumble dryers are just not that efficient, however, this is just not true says Mercia: “Tumble dryers can be environmentally friendly – Miele heat pump tumble dryers for example, achieve an A++ energy efficiency rating with ease. Appliances with the highly efficient Miele ProfiEco motor and a regulated compressor work even more economically and actually achieve an A+++ energy efficiency rating. This saves money and you have the advantage of drying laundry with a clear conscience. In fact, heat-pump tumble dryers by Miele set worldwide standards for highest quality and reliability requirements. With the EcoDry technology you will save money over the entire lifespan of your tumble dryer because Miele keeps energy consumption and drying times on a low level for the entire life of your appliance.”

**Dishwashers:** Like a washing machine, it is important to understand both the energy and the water requirements for a dishwasher, says Mercia: “The vast majority of modern dishwashers now have an A-rating, however, some high-end models like those from Miele, go all the way up to A+++ - offering highly economical performance and excellent cleaning and drying results. Water consumption is also important here – Miele’s models are incredibly efficient, using only 6,5 litres for a full load, making it even more efficient than filling the sink!” She notes that other useful features to look for that will make your dishwasher more efficient include automatic load recognition that adjusts the water and electricity consumption according to the size of the load being washed, a smart start function that allows your dishwasher to start when electricity tariffs are at their most affordable, if the dishwasher can be connected

to a hot water connection it can reduce its energy consumption by as much as 50%.

**Ovens:** When looking at the energy labels on an oven, it is best to look for a kWh figure for the electricity used per 'cycle'. This will show you how much electricity is required to heat up the oven. Generally speaking, convection ovens are far more efficient because they are better insulated, and smaller ovens also use less electricity compared to larger models. Says Mercia: "A large percentage of Miele cookers and ovens are categorised in energy efficiency class A+. This protects the environment, and your household budget. Miele also offers smaller 43- and 48-litre capacity ovens, which are also more efficient than regular-sized ovens. Even better energy efficiency can be achieved if you use the Miele's food probe or programme the cooking time. In this case, the Miele oven switches off early and finishes the cooking process with the residual heat, without affecting the overall cooking result."

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