

COULD SINGLE-USE PLASTICS HELP PREVENT A PANDEMIC?

Whilst there is overwhelming agreement that SUPs, unchecked, are bad for the environment, they also play a vital role in preserving the health of major populations. As the world becomes increasingly gripped by Coronavirus its worth remembering that one of the most beneficial aspects of SUPs is their disposability, along with the germs they might carry after being used by someone infected with a disease.

As well as the hygiene and protection it provides to the foodservice industry, single-use plastic has also long been an attractive option for the medical world. It's cheap, durable, and easily tossed out; and each new fresh plastic container, or covering, offers a newly sterile environment. That's why clinicians cover themselves, and everything they use, in plastic.



Moving away from single-use plastics, therefore, may mean food and other products are more likely to be exposed to germs either through the air or by being handled. Indeed, hospitals probably couldn't operate without them. Which all illustrates the point that it's not always the product that's at fault; but rather the systems, behaviour and technology that is lacking to responsibly deal with it after use.

WRAP campaign to 'bust myths' on plastics

WRAP will launch a new campaign this week called 'Clear on Plastics', in an attempt to explain the rationale for using plastic packaging.

"The truth today is that plastic packaging has a carbon footprint but the footprint of wasted content may be much higher", says Peter Maddox, director of WRAP UK. Clear on Plastics is to be a social media-led campaign "amplified by influencer content and the support of UK Plastics Pact members, Pact supporters and other partners such as Local Authorities."

90% OF BPF MEMBERS WANT TARIFF-FREE TRADE IN EU DEAL

The UK plastics industry views tariff-free trade as a top priority for any deal with the EU, according to a recent survey.



The British Plastics Federation (BPF) has found that 91% of its members view tariff-free trade as a top priority for any deal with the EU, according to a recent survey. Predictable transport arrangements (60%), and retaining regulatory cooperation on REACH (47%) were also high up on the industry agenda.

The majority of businesses believe sales turnover would either stay the same or increase over the next 12 months.

Lidl reveals food packaging made from 30% ocean-bound plastic



In March, Lidl will become the first UK supermarket to launch new packaging using "ocean-bound plastic", collected from beaches and coastline around South East Asia.

The packaging is made from 80% recycled content, and a minimum of 30% of the weight of the tray is made up of ocean-bound plastic.

More than 50% of the Lidl's fish lines will come in the new packaging and plans to roll it out across its entire fresh fish range this year whilst also exploring uses across other product lines.

Zero Waste Scotland launches £1m project to ditch disposables



With support from the Scottish Government and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the 'Ditching Disposables' project will see more than a dozen organisations from across Scotland trial alternatives to single-use products over the next 12 months.

The project will include a deposit return scheme (DRS) for reusable coffee cups in Edinburgh, Stirling and Thurso and Wick in the Highlands, combined with the introduction of charges for disposable cups.

Other initiatives will see single-use water bottles removed from sale and replaced with water fountains and cordial dispensers, whilst another will trial a reusable 'event kit' which will include reusable items, such as cups, to be used for community events.

The Ditching Disposables project forms part of ZWS's £73-million Resource Efficient Circular Economy Accelerator Programme, which aims to support circular economy and resource efficiency projects with support from the ERDF.



'Sack the sachet' campaign to close plastic legislation 'loophole'

A global initiative, headed up by environmental campaign group, A Plastic Planet, is calling for UK and EU lawmakers to implement an all-out ban on disposable plastic sachets.

Supported by nearly 50 heads of business, politicians and campaigners, the campaign has revealed that 855 billion sachets are used globally each year, enough to cover the Earth's surface.

Yet, as one of the most conspicuous examples of single use plastic packaging, sachets are currently not covered by the EU Single-Use Plastics Directive nor the UK Environment Bill.

New powers added to Environment Bill at second reading



The Government has introduced three new additions to the Environment Bill including one that requires every Secretary of State, when introducing new legislation, to include a statement on whether the new Bill will reduce existing levels of environmental protection.

Additionally, the Bill also creates new powers to end the export of polluting plastic waste to OECD countries, with consultation on specific restrictions, and a biannually "taking stock" of international commitments on the environment.

IS RECYCLED OCEAN PLASTIC THE NEXT BIG PACKAGING TREND?



Last year, Coca-Cola revealed a bottle partly produced from marine waste, which had been collected by volunteers and fishermen off the beaches of Spain and Portugal. The company has pledged to have all of its bottles comprised of 50% recycled plastics within the next decade.

Whilst the use of ocean plastics may resonate with consumers, it faces many challenges to be re-used successfully and, therefore, should not be seen as a remedy for the larger issue at hand of rampant plastic pollution

Those plastics that float will usually be degraded by UV-radiation, mechanical action, hydrolysis, and micro-organisms. While this causes chemical compounds to be released into the water, it also means that a lower proportion can be easily incorporated into recycled products.

The biggest challenge of all, however, is the making the collection of plastic from the oceans more financially sustainable. Operating ships is costly and a cargo full of plastic hardly compares with the value of a hull full of fish.

But out of this challenge comes opportunity. According to research, the eight million tons of plastic discharged into the oceans each year equates to roughly \$10bn worth of packaging materials, based on today's market prices.



BA Declares Final Boarding For Single Use Plastics

By the end of this year, BA aims to remove more than 700 tons of single-use plastic from its flights by replacing them with recyclable or reusable items.

So far, the British flag carrier has swapped plastic stirrers with bamboo alternatives, removed plastic wrapping on bedding, blankets and headsets, removed inflight retail plastic bags and introduced water bottles made from 50% recycled plastic.