

The Wrap Up

PROMOTING THE SOFT PLASTICS CIRCULAR ECONOMY
RECYCLING.KIWI.NZ



Soft plastic scheme springs forward

Well, 2020 is certainly fast becoming the year of learning to 'pivot' with all the wide, ongoing disruptions being caused by Covid-19 – it really does seem such a long time since we first started hearing about this virus overseas. Our thoughts continue to be with all our members, in fact all businesses, that have been impacted by Covid-19 – we know many have had to change the way they operate significantly.

Here at the Soft Plastic Recycling Scheme HQ, we are also mastering the art of being nimble – after having restructured following the global impacts on plastic recycling in 2018, we again stopped collections during Level 4 lockdown this autumn, to phasing them back during Levels 3 – 1, only to end up back to Level 3 in Auckland in August.

Following all of these changes, we were very pleased that we were

able to safely continue collections at Countdown stores in Auckland during the latest Level 3 lockdown, and that Future Post was able to continue processing. We are getting better at this!

We have positive news to share – while we added new collection points in Matamata, Rotorua, Taupo, Tauranga and Whakatane in July, we will also be adding 14 new Countdown stores in Auckland and Northland from 14 September. We are also making plans to add Countdown stores in New Plymouth to the service.

Altogether this will mean that 60% of New Zealanders will have access to a drop off point to recycle their soft plastics within 20km of home or work. This is an incredible achievement over the past year, particularly given the challenging times we live in.

And the news gets even better. In October we will be welcoming five New World and PAK'nSAVE stores in Auckland back into the scheme

All of this expansion is only possible because of the success of our processing partners: Future Post and Second Life Plastics.

In July, Future Post processed a massive 43 tonnes of soft plastic. To put this into perspective, that is equivalent to 7.3 million individual soft plastic bags or wrappers in one month – enough to half fill an Olympic-sized swimming pool. We are now ramping up our collections to meet this demand.

Thanks to the growth of our processing partners, and with the support from all of our members, we have seen processing capacity here in Aotearoa quadruple in 12 months – this is an incredible achievement.

We would also like to take the opportunity to say thank you to our members and processing partners for all your continued support and understanding during this challenging time of Covid-19 – **Ngā mihi nui.**



All about labelling



More than 40 members, and prospective members, joined our second webinar in July and heard from Lyn Mayes, scheme manager, about the use our "Recycle at Store" logo by members. Steering committee members Michael Anderson, group sustainability manager Goodman Fielder, and Charlotte Haycock, senior advisory Sustainability & Government Countdown, talked about adopting the Australasian Recycling Label (ARL).

We are seeing a big increase in our members using our "Recycle at Store" logo on packaging, which is driving awareness of the scheme, and encouraging more consumers to recycle their soft plastic packaging.

However, currently the ARL does not recognise the New Zealand soft plastic scheme, and users are asked to put not recyclable on pack for New Zealand. For members which have consumables available in both New Zealand and Australia, it does create a challenge when it comes to packaging.

As a result of demand from members we have applied to the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation (APCO) for our scheme to be accepted as an alternative destination within the ARL to provide consistency for members that operate in both countries.

We welcome all our members to utilise our logo, and promote the scheme wherever appropriate.

Where can you recycle?



You can check out which stores are currently providing the service on our website bit.ly/SP-store-locator otherwise Google 'soft plastic stores'.

Legislative framework

We are seeing a raft of legislation, consultation and recommendations relating to packaging, in particular plastic packaging. The landscape is changing rapidly and we need to be ready.

To find out more join our next webinar on Monday 28 September at 11am: Recycling, Recyclability & Regulations.



ENVIRONMENTAL CLAIMS GUIDELINES

The Commerce Commission has released guidelines to help traders understand their obligations when making environmental claims, including how to avoid breaching the Fair Trading Act. Examples of environmental claims include statements made about recycling, biodegradability, and the use of recycled content or natural products.

bit.ly/enviro-claims-guidelines

PREP Home My Projects My Account Support About Log out

Bread Bags

Overview Items Draft Report Modify ARL Final Report Saved Reports

Overview

Project Bread Bags

Description Bread Bags used for Nature's Fresh, Vogels, Molenberg etc.

Reference All Varieties

Into what markets will this product be sold? Select one or more
 Australia New Zealand

Use the table below to define separable items

Item (2)

Main Item e.g. Bottle

Material	Item Name	Description
Plastic	Bag	LLDPE Bags

Separable Items e.g. Bottlecap [+ Add Separable Item](#)

Material	Item Name	Description
Plastic	Tag	Kwiklok PS Tag X Delete



PLASTIC BANS CONSULTATION



The government has announced proposals to phase out:

- some hard-to-recycle PVC and polystyrene packaging and oxo-degradable plastic products
- seven single-use plastic items, including plastic straws, drink stirrers, produce bags, tableware (e.g. plastic plates, bowls, cutlery) and non-compostable fruit stickers.

The consultation is open until 4 November. From a soft plastic perspective our focus will be on the inclusion of produce bags in the consultation process. The proposal refers to “lightweight bag under 70 microns thick, without handles, for carrying fruit and vegetables”. The government proposal recommends using no bag or reusable produce bags made from hessian, hemp or cotton.

We are keen to hear from our members who manufacture or use single use produce bags, and those who have introduced alternatives so we can incorporate members’ views in our submission.

It is good to note that the document identifies LDPE (4), which is the main plastic resin in our scheme, as “mainly used for making soft plastic packaging and is difficult to replace with other materials”.

bit.ly/MFE-plastic-bans

Priority products

The government has announced its decision to regulate product stewardships for single use plastic packaging. From a soft plastic perspective our voluntary product stewardship scheme is already delivering on many of the new requirements.

As Malcolm Everts, Chair says:

“As a voluntary scheme, we already have over 70% of industry, by volume, funding the recycling programme and membership has increased by 20% in the past year to 75 companies. We are also working with members on the design of their packaging, reducing creation of plastic packaging waste, and advocate using our “return to store” labelling system.”

“Scheme members’ levies fund collections from stores, quality

checks, baling, transport to end markets and contribute to the processing costs as well. This is different from the traditional model where the processor pays the collector/recycler for the materials, so we are well prepared to transition to a regulated scheme model.”

As an existing scheme, unless the scheme is revoked by the Minister, we theoretically have the five years remaining of our voluntary scheme to apply for priority product accreditation. We will however start work so that we transition as painlessly as possible. It will mean more reporting and more compliance costs. But our scheme is heading in the right direction.”

bit.ly/MFE-prod-stew





Member update

PROMOTION OF THE SCHEME BY OUR MEMBERS

Be proud and share our work!

huckleberry

“ In one year, our amazing customers saved 3.5 tonnes of soft plastic from landfill by putting it in our collection bins ”



We are proud supporters of the Love NZ Soft Plastic programme, which gives New Zealanders the knowledge and tools to help keep plastic bags and packaging out of landfill.

bit.ly/ME-spr



“ oob organic are proud to sponsor the Love NZ Soft Plastic Recycling initiative. ”

bit.ly/00B-spr

Welcome to our newest members of The Packaging Forum's Soft Plastic Recycling Scheme

- Animals Like Us
- Foodstuffs
- Jenkins FreshPac Systems
- Little Beauties
- O F Packaging
- Pams
- Sherbourne Packaging
- Suntory Coffee
- Tegel
- Thermogard
- Tropeaka



TC Transcontinental Packaging

Member TC Transcontinental Packaging is excited to introduce its new stock line of courier bags, which are manufactured using up to 80% of recycled New Zealand LDPE waste.

TC Transcontinental Packaging is proud to manufacture this range of courier bags in its Christchurch facility, and to be able to offer a sustainable courier bag solution to New Zealand customers.

If you have any news or would like us to profile any innovative programmes your organisation is working on, please let us know!

And it's not just our members that are proud of our scheme



Earthlink collects our soft plastic from Countdown and The Warehouse stores in Wellington and The Hutt Valley.

bit.ly/earthlink-spr



O F PACKAGING – ISSUES AND INSIGHTS

We welcome new scheme member O F Packaging. Paul Ehrlich, Research & Innovation Engineer provides his insight into the benefits of using soft plastics, and the issues impacting their recycling in Australia.

WHY AREN'T SOFT PLASTICS COLLECTED IN THE KERBSIDE COLLECTION SYSTEM?

There are two main issues when we look at recycling soft plastics:

Firstly, the physical make-up of soft plastic mimics the qualities of paper, which is problematic when trying to separate each material category in the current MRF process. Very thin plastics (such as shopping bags) also caused issues with the machinery itself—wrapping around rollers or becoming stuck in conveyor systems.

Secondly, unlike most rigid plastic containers (such as PET bottles), soft plastics aren't all made of a single, easily identifiable polymer type. Furthermore, attempting to identify different plastics once they're scrunched up, dirty, torn and mingled in with the rest of our recyclable waste, makes things even more difficult. While a select few MRFs overseas utilise speciality lighting frequencies and high-end technologies to scan and sort

different types of plastics (similar to how we sort different coloured broken glass), it is not a complete solution.

These two issues are why we cannot currently accept soft plastics into our commingled, kerbside recycling stream. However, here in Australia, we are currently working on innovation with how we dispose of soft plastics that will allow for easier collection and sorting through kerbside.

SO WHY USE SOFT PLASTICS AT ALL?

Plastic is involved in every aspect of our modern lives, from protecting the food consumers buy to protecting medical staff and patients, from making vital parts in vehicles or mobile phones, to vital parts in human beings.

Consumerism has changed drastically over the past 60 years, and our waste behaviours and infrastructure never changed with it. Economic factors also influence more than just company profits, with people in the modern world working more, but earning less in comparison to the cost of living. When price is the mitigating factor in purchase decisions, it's going to impact negatively on the quality and quantity of products we buy, and ultimately throw away.

So often we hear people questioning plastic in packaging

specifically because they view it without respect for the function it has in relation to product protection, shelf life and food safety. The question is raised—why not go back to the good old days of glass, paper and aluminium? The fact is that these materials don't have the same functionality and the low production costs of plastic—and that's not just cost in a fiscal sense; flexible plastics have one of the lowest carbon emissions of any packaging material in both production and transportation, while also helping reduce food spoilage and waste (which is another large sustainability concern). Sustainability, in regards to packaging and plastic, has to be viewed along the entire lifecycle of the packaging product—otherwise we cannot be sustainable at all.

WHERE IS THE MARKET MOVING?

Packaging manufacturers like O F Packaging can now supply single polymer alternative soft plastic materials, without losing packaging performance and barrier properties required for the majority of food applications. This means that when reclaimed, this packaging would be easier to sort into a polymer category, and provide a higher quality recycled feedstock for re-use into new plastic products in comparison to traditional multi-laminate structures.



News from our processing partners



Designed by a fencer, built by a farmer!
Designed, re-purposed and made in New Zealand.
Approved for use on organic farms (BioGro certified)

Following the increase in collections, Future Post has added a second shift and is churning out hundreds of posts using our soft plastic. The increased production brings new products and new designs.

Future Post square posts (top photo) looking smart in Thames. The ones shown are the 1.8m length posts, but they are also available in 2.4m.

Future Post fans here's the news you have all been waiting for. You can now buy a new Forever Box (photo bottom right) for your garden!

They are available in two sizes:

- 1960mm x 1040mm x 405mm \$395.00
- 2535mm x 1040mm x 405mm \$495.00

Prices exclude GST & freight.

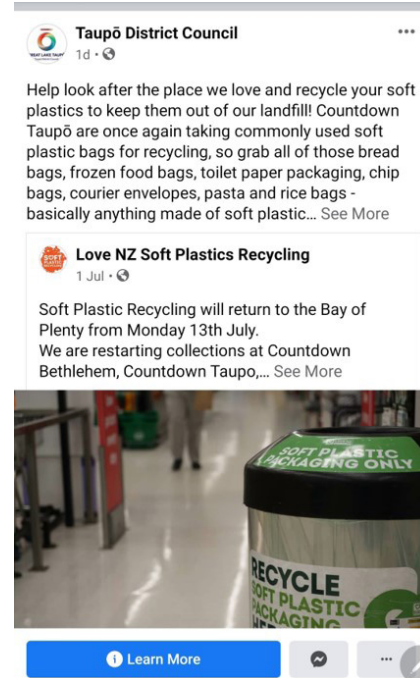
Ex-factory price.

If you or anyone you know is interested in one, please contact: info@futurepost.co.nz.

Future Post square posts are also being used as parking stops (bottom left). These are proving to be a highly versatile product.



Support from our soft plastic customers and stakeholders



Are you one of our 8500 Facebook followers?

If not, head on over and like the Love NZ Soft Plastics Recycling Facebook page and keep up to date with everything happening in the soft plastic space as well as promoting your support!

facebook.com/softplasticrecycling