

The Manufacturer

Packaging the Future



By Julian Money, Founder of RAP, designers and manufacturers of sustainable food packaging

The UK leads the world in packaging innovation, demonstrating continuous excellence in both design and production. However, whilst this success story is one to be proud of, the impact of food packaging on the environment and society as a whole remains firmly under the spotlight, especially over the festive season.

Latest figures from the Waste & Resource Action Programme (WRAP) highlight that a staggering 7.2 million tonnes of food and drink are thrown away every year - the majority of which could have been eaten.

With Christmas fast approaching the issue is even more pertinent as we eagerly splash out on celebratory treats. However, the day's feasting is estimated to create an extra 50m bags of rubbish, or £600m* of wasted food, as we will throw a fifth of what we have purchased in the bin.

As the environmental impact of the seasonal celebrations is felt across the nation, retailers are facing mounting pressure to make better use of packaging to keep food fresher for longer. In addition, there's also the role of educating customers about the vital role packaging plays in this process.

To help address the issue, WRAP's Courtauld Commitment, which was first agreed in 2005, is now in its third phase. This latest version is known as CC3 and the initiatives it sets out aim to reduce food waste even further with ambitious targets of a further 1.1 million tonnes of waste reduction by 2015.

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Importantly, the resulting benefits of the Commitment aren't constrained to those organisations directly involved. The current situation presents an ideal opportunity for the entire industry to assess its own circumstances and priorities in relation to enhanced packaging optimisation.

When it comes to implementing change, the modern packaging manufacturer is, of course, no exception. That's why RAP has recently launched its own White Paper, 'Packaging the Future'. An informative guide to reducing food waste, it explores the critical role the packaging manufacturer has to play in the ongoing development of sustainable packaging.

As such, RAP knows only too well how essential it is for manufacturers to continue to launch new and innovative products to cater for current demand and ease consumers' environmental concerns, especially over the festive season. Significantly, this will not only mean companies are able to deliver sustainability, but will also drive sales to bolster and boost the bottom line.

However, improving packaging optimisation through the introduction of new technology requires a collaborative approach. Importantly, it must also be delivered throughout the supply chain, as reducing food waste requires different approaches for retailers and consumers. The benefit of this approach is that it can often result in more possibilities for the manufacturer, as it enables a variety of packaging options to be cost effectively combined, or used separately.

There's no doubt that the critical role of packaging in helping retailers meet their sustainability targets presents a number of challenges. However, the changing landscape is continuing to open up a raft of new opportunities and technical innovations across the industry. Encouragingly, continued innovation by packaging experts is helping to keep food fresher for longer, in turn, saving money and reducing waste.

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RAP's free White Paper on reducing food waste is available for download at <http://www.rapuk.com/about-us/packaging-the-future/>

***2011 (Source: InSinkErator)**

About RAP

Founded in 1997, to exploit the packaging designs of Julian Money, RAP has become the market leader in food-to-go packaging. The company combines technical, creative and commercial expertise to design and manufacture revolutionary food packaging that delights and influences consumers. A truly global organisation, RAP is headquartered in London with its design and technical centre and has manufacturing capabilities in Ireland, South Korea and Malaysia and the ability to distribute on a global basis.

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