



Better quality of life, through
better packaging, for more people

PRESS RELEASE

Packaging can help in a big issue: 4.4 billion tons of CO₂ are generated due to food loss and waste.



In a moment where more than 190 world leaders and thousands of government, business and citizen representatives joined at COP 26, WPO alerts for the importance of packaging to reduce greenhouse gas emissions generated by food waste.

November, 2021 - One third of all food produced in the world (around 1.3 billion tonnes) is lost or wasted, costing the global economy close to US\$ 940 billion each year. This equates to 4.4 billion tons of CO₂ emissions. Besides this, over 1 billion tonnes more food is being wasted than previously estimated, contributing in 10% of all greenhouse gas emissions. It is also estimated that less than 10% of temperature-sensitive perishable foods have access to cold chain systems worldwide and many developing countries have a negligible cold-chain capacity.

From the COP 26 results, it is clear that national leaders are under pressure to take the necessary steps to reduce their emissions, mobilize funds and drive adaptation and resilience. Countries are also being asked to move forward with ambitious emissions reduction targets by 2030.

“Recently, WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) and the retail chain Tesco published the ‘Driven to Waste – Global Food Loss on Farms’ (<https://wwf.panda.org>), a report that quantifies the total amount of food lost on farms, globally, revealing an estimated 2.5 billion tonnes of food go uneaten around the world each year. That is an increase of approximately 1.2 billion tonnes on the established estimates of 1.3 billion tonnes wasted each year. These new estimates indicate that of all the food grown, approximately 40% go uneaten, which is higher than the previously estimated figure of 33%”, explains **WPO** President, Pierre Pienaar.

The good news is that 25% of this food wasted can be saved by using better packaging. How? Applying packaging science and technology to make the food chains more efficient and, consequently, protecting food better and reducing food loss and waste. “Environmentally speaking, food that is lost or wasted is responsible for 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions. If food waste were a country, it would be the third largest GHG emitter behind the USA and China”, continues Pierre. And adds: “packaging can play an integral role in minimising food waste at the start of the value chain so that waste can be prevented in the households.”.

“Avoiding food waste is a critical packaging issue and one that food producers, manufacturers, brand owners, retailers and consumers need to better understand. Without adequate intuitive packaging design features and fit-for-purpose packaging, food can potentially be wasted all the way through the supply chain to the consumer”, comments Nerida Kelton, **WPO** Vice President Sustainability & Save Food.

As part of its activities in this field, **WPO** supported the ‘International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste’ celebrated on September 29th. During the celebration, **WPO** strength the idea that the most innovative and intuitive Save Food Packaging uses design features that can contain & protect, preserve, extend shelf life, easily open and reseal, provide consumer convenience and portion control; all the while meeting global sustainable packaging targets.

Opportunities for packaging design to minimise food waste can also include better facilitation or communication around portion control, date labelling, extension of shelf life, protection, resealability and openability, serving size, food safety/freshness information, information on storage options and improved communication on packs.

WPO has been working on the issue of Food Waste and the role that packaging plays for many years and as the organisation developed a special award category for innovative and intuitive ‘Save Food Packaging Design’ in the annual WorldStar Packaging Awards. As Nerida Kelton explains: “The Packaging that Saves Food Special Award is designed to raise the profile of the critical role of packaging to reduce food waste and therefore reduce product’s overall environmental impact and recognises companies that are developing innovative and sustainable packaging that minimises food losses and food waste, extends shelf life and improves the supply of food. The **WPO** encourage all businesses to consider entering this award category to help showcase Best Practice Save Food Packaging Design across the globe.”

About WPO


World Packaging Organisation (WPO) is a non-profit, non-governmental, international federation of packaging institutes, associations, federations and other interested parties including corporations and trade associations. Its mission is “Better quality of life through better packaging for more people”. WPO joins 53 different countries.


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