AVAMOPLAST
FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION

Corporate social responsibility as a manufacturer of plastic food packaging

Respect for the environment is one of our most fundamental responsibilities. Plastic is viewed as *the* packaging material for food these days.

- ✓ Plastic packaging can *increase the shelf life of food significantly*, so it does not have to be thrown away so quickly. Think, for example, of how long shops could store yoghurt or fresh vegetables without plastic packaging.
- ✓ Plastic packaging is *light*, reducing transport CO_2 emissions to a minimum.
- ✓ Plastic packaging is *flexible in terms of shape and production process*, and can be made for any food. This is why 'form follows function' is our baseline.
- ✓ Plastic packaging is exceedingly *affordable*, meaning it has no considerable impact on the final price of packaged food.
- ✓ Plastic packaging is great in terms of *food safety* thanks to the high-quality inert materials we use. Our packaging is tested regularly to ensure there is no contamination between the packaging and the food inside.

At the same time, however, we realise that plastic has received a lot of bad press in recent years. Everyone surely remembers the images of the plastic soup in the Pacific. As for other materials, we find it a shame that valuable products are lost by essentially viewing our packaging as something to be used once to then be thrown away after.

Renewability - recyclability

As a packaging manufacturer, we focus on making our materials recyclable. This is why the products we make consist of one mono material so they are easy to be repurposed. Though unfortunately the recycling chains in our world are not always equipped for this yet. Take the classic PET bottles with soft drinks, for example. We make packaging with the exact same material, but unfortunately they are banned from the plastic waste recycling chain in Belgium, though this should be changing soon.

Just like our clients, we also advocate the use of alternative raw materials in the future. However, practice has taught us this will not be instant. After all, switching to sustainable alternatives takes time, though we follow the latest sustainable trends in our industry very closely.

By using quality materials, we also make sure our packaging can be reused by end consumers. High-end pots, tubs and lids are dishwasher proof, so you and me can use them again to store food once we have eaten what was inside them originally.

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Bioplastics

Biomaterials either stem from biological sources or from materials that break down or can be composted, either at home or in industrial facilities.

Materials in the first category hardly differ or are no different at all from the materials we use already, although at the moment the range of types is smaller and they still need testing to see if they can be used in these applications (e.g. bio-PP, bio-PET, bio-PE).

However, materials that can be composted or broken down have very different characteristics and must be assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account things like transparency, heat and moisture resistance, suitability for food storage and unfortunately cost as well.

In terms of marketing, the issue is also very sensitive, as the result is still the same at first sight, but at a significantly higher price.

Therefore, consumers are not out of the woods yet on this issue. And marketeers often abuse the matter in that they make something seem 'greener' than it really is, termed 'greenwashing'.The ever growing number of EU ecological logos is not helping either in seeing the wood for the biological trees. Indeed, consumers will only consider packaging to be biological if they can compost it themselves in their gardens, which is unfortunately only really given to a minority of materials. Not to mention the question if throwing away valuable materials just like that is really a good thing. This is why we believe in recycling and reusing packaging.

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Corporate social responsibility

We try to manufacture our products as efficiently as possible with as little loss as possible (when it comes to materials and energy obviously, but also in terms of transport, packaging changes, etc.), producing packaging that is safe and extends the shelf life of food. Environmental requirements have become more stringent in recent years, but we have been trying to do better in this area for a long time, in terms of production as well as more generally across the entire company.

Avamoplast takes its social responsibility on 4 levels:

- ✓ *Waste management*

Every packaging design is calculated down to 1/100 of a mm, as this way we ensure our products are as thin and as sustainable as possible and make sure we use only as much material as we need to store the food inside safely and leak-free.

This in turn limits production waste. The little waste we do have is ground down and returned to our supplier who reuses it for new foil and recycled products.

- ✓ *Quest for renewable materials*

We follow the latest sustainable trends in our industry very closely, while trialling alternative raw materials if we notice they may have real potential for us. Think, for instance, of bioplastics. They could become the renewable and recyclable material of the future.

- ✓ *Saving energy*

We reuse the heat generated by our compressors in our central heating.

We also have solar panels on the roofs of our buildings, which supply almost a third of the total energy we need.

- ✓ *Doing business with a heart for people*

Investing in the health of our staff is as important as caring for the environment. This is why our conveyor belt covers the entire production process. Our boxes are also tilted at a particular angle so our packers do not have to bend down to fill them with our finished products. And since last year, we have had a stacking robot that moves the boxes from the conveyor belt directly onto the right pallet.

All these small things make sure the work is a lot less demanding on the backs, necks and general health of our staff.