



PRESS RELEASE

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No need to force supermarkets to reveal packaging - it is openly arranged along their shelves.

The LGA's call for supermarkets to be 'forced to reveal' the amount of packaging they produce is nonsense. Supermarkets don't hide packaging. They put it on their shelves.

For over fifty years industry has worked to reduce the amount of material used to protect goods. In the last few years, supermarkets and manufacturers have also worked closely with councils and the waste management sector to increase the recyclability of packaging as well as reducing the total amount used.

The LGA's concern is rightly for reducing costs met by local authorities, and waste management is a costly service. Although on average only around a £1 a week per household is spent by Councils for dealing with all household waste - and packaging is less than one fifth of household waste.

"Instead of asking for yet more packaging data to use to attack supermarkets, we invite the LGA to work in partnership with INCPEN – and our members which include supermarkets - in our continuing push for better, more efficient packaging systems that save more resources than they use and help consumers live more sustainable lifestyles," says INCPEN Director Jane Bickerstaffe, "We would also like all councils to help increase packaging recycling rates by ensuring that their collection programmes are best practice".

Bickerstaffe says, "Government and industry recognise that the carbon impact of a product is a more important measure to address. Focusing on reducing packaging misses the point. We have moved on from single-issue thinking to considering the whole product journey, where packaging plays a significant positive role."

Supermarkets give shoppers a wide choice of food – loose fruit and vegetables, packed produce, chilled foods, frozen foods and different portion sizes so consumers can choose what suits their lifestyles and avoid wasting food, which has on average a ten times larger environmental footprint than packaging.

Food packaging has a vital job to do in these days of recession with shoppers feeling the pinch. Not least because it helps keep food costs low, as well as reducing waste.

"No-one is trying to hide anything," says Bickerstaffe. "Manufacturers and retailers declare all of their packaging tonnages, and how much of it is recycled, in great detail as a requirement of the Packaging regulations – the law that also requires industry to contribute to the cost of recycling."

"Packaging costs money. In the current economic climate it's madness to suggest businesses are deliberately incurring costs by adding unnecessary packaging"

"INCPEN believes shoppers do recognise packaging's invaluable role in getting food from the field or factory to them in safe, wholesome condition," adds Bickerstaffe.

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Notes to editors

1. INCPEN – the Industry Council for Packaging & the Environment is a research organisation set up in 1974 to study the environmental and social impact of packaging. It draws together an influential group of companies that operate throughout the supply chain and share a common interest in packaging, the environment and sustainable development.

Amcor Flexibles, ASDA, Ball Packaging Europe, Boots, Britvic Soft Drinks, Cadbury, Coca-Cola Great Britain, Colgate-Palmolive, Corus, Crown Europe, Diageo, Dow, DS Smith, Duracell, Elizabeth Arden, Gillette, Green and Black's, Imperial Tobacco, J Sainsbury, Kellogg's, LINPAC Group, Marks and Spencer, Molson Coors (UK), Nestlé UK, Procter & Gamble, Rexam, Tesco, Tetra Pak, Trebor Bassett, Unilever

2. The UK actually uses less packaging per head than many other major EU countries (UK 147 kg per person; Germany 158 kg per person; France 162 kg per person).
3. The LGA is the Local Government Association

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