

## SYMPHONY REPLIES TO ATTACK ON OXO-BIODEGRADABLE PLASTIC

The statement issued by “European Plastics Recyclers” (EuPR) (10 June) is a disgraceful attack on oxo-biodegradable plastic, which shows a fundamental misunderstanding of the technology. This statement is worthy of King Canute’s foolish advisers, as degradable plastics are now well established and their benefits are being realised all over the world. Last year Symphony alone sold enough to make 5 billion plastic products. Instead of publishing alarmist nonsense, the recyclers’ association should sit down with the oxo-biodegradable industry and discuss the matter sensibly.

The main cause for their concern should be “Hydro-biodegradable Plastics” “Compostable Plastics” and “crop-based Bioplastics”, these will certainly compromise a normal oil-based plastic recycling process, but there is not a word in the EuPR statement about this danger.

Policymakers have concentrated on waste which can be collected, and have encouraged people to re-use, and recycle it. Educating people to dispose of waste responsibly may have some effect, but in no country will all the waste be collected, and some will always remain to disfigure the landscape.

Until recently there was no answer to this problem, but for the past five years it has been possible to make ordinary and recycled plastic oxo-biodegradable at very little extra cost with Symphony’s d<sub>2</sub>w formulation. It will self-destruct in a much shorter time than non-degradable plastic if it gets into the open environment, and it is made from a by-product of oil refining which used to be wasted, so nobody is extracting or importing extra oil to make it. It does NOT contain heavy metals, and it does NOT leave behind methane or fragments of petro-polymers.

There is not a shred of evidence for the allegation that degradable plastic (whether oxo or hydro) has encouraged littering.

We agree that plastic has a value. Oxo-biodegradable plastic can be recycled during its useful life but if a carrier bag has not been recycled within 18 months it probably never will be. If it has escaped into the oceans or forests and cannot realistically be collected, how can you recycle it at all?

Recycling of oxo-bio plastics is explained at [www.biodeg.org/recycling.htm](http://www.biodeg.org/recycling.htm). In short there is no issue unless the recyclate is used to make long-life film products such as building films. However, these are usually made from virgin polymer, or from recyclate whose provenance is known. Long-life films are not normally made from mixed rubbish whose provenance is unknown, but in such a case stabilisers should be added whether the recyclate contains oxo-bio plastic or not. These stabilisers will neutralise the effect of any residual additive.

NOTES TO EDITORS: Symphony Environmental Ltd is part of the Symphony Environmental Technologies Group, a British public company dedicated to using technology to solve environmental problems, and with Distributors in more than 70 countries worldwide.

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