

Please read the latest interview with Vice President Sustainability & Save Food, for the WPO, Nerida Kelton by DLG e.V. - German Agricultural Society for the Anuga FoodTec magazine where they discussed the Australasian Institute of Packaging developed Save Food Packaging Design guidelines, how they are being globalised by the WPO World Packaging Organisation Foundation FSSC SAVE FOOD Initiative, FAO, UNIDO Food Business, Wageningen University & Research and more.



Nerida Kelton FAIP
Vice President
- Sustainability & Save Food
World Packaging Organisation



AIP Australasian Institute of Packaging

AIP SAVE FOOD PACKAGING DESIGN CRITERIA GUIDELINES

Designing packaging that protects food, reduces waste and delivers better outcomes for people and the planet.

SAVE FOOD
VALUE OUR FUTURE

AIP in collaboration with
World Packaging Organisation (WPO)
and End Food Waste Australia



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1 DESIGN TO CONTAIN & PROTECT THE PRODUCT	2 DESIGN TO PRESERVE & EXTEND SHELF LIFE	3 DESIGN TO PROVIDE CONSUMER CONVENIENCE	4 DESIGN TO COMMUNICATE TO CONSUMERS	5 DESIGN TO BALANCE FOOD & PACKAGING WASTE TARGETS
 Protect food from physical damage, contamination and spoilage throughout manufacturing, transport, warehousing and distribution.	 Maintain food quality, freshness and nutritional value for as long as possible to reduce spoilage and extend shelf life.	 Make packaging easy and convenient to open, use, reseal, portion and empty to help reduce food waste in the home.	 Provide clear, accurate and helpful information to support better storage, preparation and use of food.	 Optimise packaging to minimise both food waste and packaging waste across the entire lifecycle.
 Consider the entire supply chain – from producer to consumer. Design for strength, stability, tamper evidence and safe delivery.	 Use appropriate materials and technologies such as barrier, MAP, vacuum, active and intelligent packaging.	 Design for ease of use, portion control and features that help consumers store and enjoy food with less waste.	 Include storage, preparation and date-label guidance, leftovers ideas, reuse information and recycling instructions. Use QR codes for more.	 Use life cycle thinking to balance environmental impacts. Preventing food waste delivers greater environmental benefit.



The best packaging is the **right balance** – enough to protect food, less to protect the planet.



Learn more at
aipack.com.au/save-food-packaging



SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING
FOR A BETTER FUTURE

Packaging plays a fundamental and integral role, if designed intuitively at the start, to minimise food loss and waste across the value chain. The Save Food packaging design guidelines will help you on this journey.

Nerida will also be speaking at Anuga FoodTec 2027 about this very topic (Cologne 23-26 Feb 2027), and she will be on the WPO stand all week so please come and join the WPO.

The Save Food Packaging Design Guidelines are a practical set of guidelines that help packaging designers, manufacturers, and brands reduce food waste through smart packaging. They bridge the gap between preventing food loss and achieving global sustainability goals. Nerida Kelton, Executive Director of the Australasian Institute of Packaging (AIP), Vice President for Sustainability & Save Food at the World



SAVE FOOD PACKAGING DESIGN CRITERIA GUIDELINES

1

DESIGN TO CONTAIN & PROTECT THE PRODUCT

FROM SPOILAGE &
DAMAGE THROUGH
MANUFACTURING,
WAREHOUSING & VARIOUS
STAGES OF DISTRIBUTION



2

DESIGN TO PRESERVE & EXTEND SHELF LIFE

& ENHANCE
PRODUCT APPEAL



3

DESIGN TO PROVIDE CONSUMER CONVENIENCE

TO NOT WASTE FOOD
DURING HANDLING IN
THE HOUSEHOLD



4

DESIGN TO COMMUNICATE TO CONSUMERS

& PROMOTE HOW TO
HANDLE, STORE, PREPARE
& REUSE FOOD PRODUCTS



5

DESIGN TO BALANCE FOOD & PACKAGING WASTE TARGETS

FOR OPTIMAL PACKAGING



Developed By



Globalised By



Packaging Organisation (WPO), and WPO representative for the SAVE FOOD Initiative, explains in an interview how companies can use the guidelines to specifically design more sustainable packaging and thereby make a measurable contribution to reducing food loss.

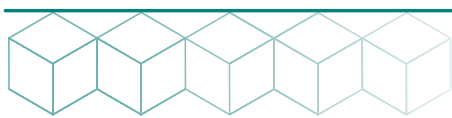
Could you provide us with a technical overview of the Save Food Packaging Design Guidelines and explain the development approach?

Nerida: The Save Food Packaging Design Guidelines are a systematically developed, scientifically sound guide for the targeted reduction of food waste through optimised packaging design. They were developed by the Australasian Institute of Packaging in partnership with RMIT University and End Food Waste Australia. They are now being globalised by the World Packaging Institute in collaboration with international research partners in the fields of packaging technology, food science, and sustainability.

The approach is based on the analysis of critical loss points along the product lifecycle – from transport and storage to use and disposal. Packaging is understood not merely as a container, but as a functional system that integrates mechanical, chemical, and microbiological product protection, usability, and information transfer. The goal was to translate these findings into clearly structured, technically feasible design principles, that any sized business can embed into their design processes.

What technical priorities do the Save Food Packaging Design guidelines for reducing food waste focus on?

Nerida: A key focus is on the protective function of packaging. The Save Food Packaging Design guidelines define requirements for mechanical stability, barrier properties against oxygen, moisture, and light, as well as protection against contamination, pests, and climatic influences during transport and storage. This includes addressing material and design solutions that extend shelf life without creating unnecessary outer packaging.



Furthermore, the Save Food Packaging Design guidelines emphasise functional aspects such as resealability, portion control, and intelligent opening and dispensing systems. These design features are crucial for minimising waste at the final consumer level, especially with multi-portion or long-life products. Additionally, the guidelines consider the use of active and intelligent packaging technologies, for example, for quality control or improved expiration date marking.

What role do targeted consumer information and on-pack communication play from a technical perspective?

Nerida: Misunderstandings by consumers are among the most frequent causes of avoidable food waste. The Save Food Packaging Design guidelines specifically address this problem by requiring clear, unambiguous, and user-centred on-pack communication. This includes easily legible storage and usage instructions, clear resealing instructions, and understandable explanations of best-before and use-by dates.

The integration of this information into the overall packaging design is technically relevant, for example, through structured information hierarchies, robust printing solutions, or digital enhancements. The guidelines thus consider information and communication as a functional component of the packaging that directly contributes to extending shelf life and preventing waste.

How do the Save Food Packaging Design guidelines address the conflict between food waste prevention and sustainability?

Nerida: A key principle of the Save Food Packaging Design Guidelines is the systemic approach to sustainability. Packaging design is always considered in relation to the food being protected. The guidelines make it clear that the environmental

footprint of the packaging is, in many cases, significantly smaller than that of the discarded food.

Accordingly, the guidelines recommend solutions that prevent food waste while simultaneously considering recyclability, material reduction, and separability. These include mono-material-based barrier concepts, recyclable closures, and design-for-recycling approaches. The goal is to provide companies with a sound, expert basis for decision-making, in order to enable them to design packaging that meets both regulatory sustainability goals and functional protection requirements.

How can companies practically implement the Save Food Packaging Design Guidelines? Are they supported by you in this, or do they have to rely on their own expertise?

Nerida: The Save Food Packaging Design guidelines are intentionally designed to be applicable independently and to integrate seamlessly into existing development, quality, and innovation processes. They serve as a structured reference framework for packaging development, quality management, and sustainability assessment, and can be used in early design phases as well as for optimising existing solutions. At the same time, companies are not left to their own devices.

The Save Food Packaging Design Guidelines are part of an accompanying knowledge transfer ecosystem from the World Packaging Institute, from the Australasian Institute of Packaging and supported globally by the World Packaging Institute and its 66 member countries, which includes professional exchange, practical formats, and assessment and benchmarking tools. The goal is to actively support companies in implementing effective, sustainable packaging concepts.

