

Food waste battle heats up

With the goal of halving food waste in Australia by 2030, the National Food Waste Strategy and Fight Food Waste CRC have their work cut out. PKN asked AIP executive director Nerida Kelton to provide an update on progress.



WITH an estimated cost to the Australian economy of around \$20 billion each year, food waste is a serious problem. While the challenge of reducing food waste requires an end-to-end supply chain approach, the first step towards change is ensuring a long-term policy commitment by federal and state governments.

The good news is this step has been taken, with the development of the National Food Waste Strategy by Federal Government in November 2017. This strategy provides a framework to support collective action towards halving Australia's food waste by 2030.

Over the next two years Food Innovation Australia Limited (FIAL) will receive funding from Federal Government to develop the National Food Waste Strategy Implementation Plan, including a Voluntary Commitment Program and an evaluation framework to monitor progress. FIAL is an industry-led, not-for-profit organisation that collaboratively fuels growth throughout the Australian food and agribusiness industry.

Government recently appointed a National Food Waste Steering Committee, which will support the implementation of the National Food Waste Strategy. FIAL has been working with the National Food

COLES COMMITS TO PLANTIC TRAYS

SUPERMARKET retailer Coles has introduced packaging made entirely from a combination of recycled and renewable material for its Coles Brand fresh meat and poultry products. Coles will buy an expected 121 million recyclable trays in 2018 from Australian manufacturer Plantic Technologies.

The barrier trays are made from recycled PET, with a thin layer of Plantic's renewable barrier material, which helps keep the meat fresh.

During the recycling process, the thin Plantic plant starch layer washes away, allowing the PET tray to be recycled.

Plantic's materials carry the Australian

Recycling Label launched by the Australian Packaging Covenant Organisation (APCO), PlanetArk and PREP Design (see page 22).

Coles also recently pledged to halve food waste across its supermarkets by 2020, make all packaging of Coles Brand products recyclable by 2020, and reduce plastic wrapping on fruit and vegetables.

Coles also has plans to divert 90 per cent of all supermarket waste, including food, cardboard and plastic, from landfill by 2022.

The retailer will donate the equivalent of 100 million meals to people in need by 2020 by redistributing surplus food.



Waste Steering Committee to help identify the short, medium and long-term initiatives crucial to the delivery of the strategy against the four priority areas that have been identified: policy support, business improvements, market development and behaviour change. The Implementation Plan is due in March next year and will provide the road map for Australia to meet the goal of halving food waste by 2030.

The steering committee has also been working closely with FIAL to identify the pathway to success for an industry-led and championed voluntary commitment program. This program is a call to action for businesses that want to deliver a meaningful and collaborative reduction in food waste through partnerships, collaboration, shared expertise and innovation.

COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION

The Fight Food Waste Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) was approved in April 2018 to receive a \$30 million grant from Federal Government's CRC Program. The Fight Food Waste CRC involves 60 participants from around Australia and overseas, who collectively raised \$103 million in addition to the \$30 million from the CRC Program. This initiative marks an Australia-first, bringing industry, government and research bodies together to tackle, collectively and collaboratively, the food waste problem in this country.

MAIN:
Woolcool insulated packaging has given ready meals company My Muscle Chef a sustainable and profitable point of difference.

MORE FOOD FOR MORE PEOPLE GLOBALLY

THE WORLD Packaging Organisation (WPO) takes a holistic approach to the entire food-packaging supply chain, according to WPO president Pierre Pienaar.

"In the case of developing countries, the majority of loss occurs in the early stages of the food supply chain (production, handling and storage) due to insufficient storage facilities, lack of refrigeration, insufficient packaging, and challenging logistics, while for developed countries most food waste is in consumption," Pienaar says.

"The WPO will continue supporting the Save Food Project, an initiative of Messe Düsseldorf (Interpack organiser) and the UN's Food & Agriculture Organisation. Through WPO, these organisations aim to educate packaging professionals and society about the invaluable aspects of packaging: the fact that good and cost-effective packaging contributes to creating a more sustainable society," he adds.

Over the past four years, the WPO's Education Program has helped to bring packaging technology education to more than 1400 people in 32 countries through 41 training programs.



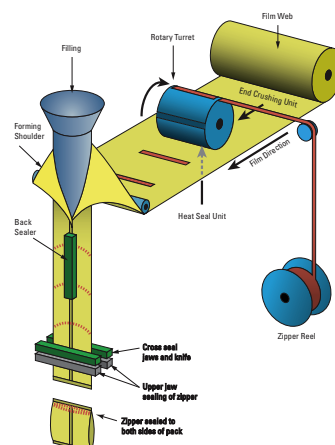
Pienaar believes there's a need for a globally collaborative approach to reducing food waste through the packaging industry.

"Countries like Brazil and South Africa, for example, have the infrastructure, the money, the skills and certainly the need to feed the masses and yet millions go hungry.

"Packaging alone cannot fix this problem. However, before we consider any packaging design, material, innovation, technology, or responsible, sustainable, reusable, environmentally friendly packaging, we must better understand and appreciate where the packaging industry really fits in the supply chain and how packaging can actually help to provide more food for more people," Pienaar said.

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FOOD-SAVING WINNERS

THE 2018 WorldStar Save Food Packaging Special Award winner was announced during the 2018 AIP National Conference earlier this year, with one of the AIP's Packaging & Innovation Design Award winners taking home the gold.

Sealed Air New Zealand was awarded the gold award for the Fresh Technologies Ltd and Sealed Air Cryovac Freshness Plus design, which was developed for New Zealand's Fresh Technologies to extend the freshness of avocado and reduce product spoilage by 7.2 tonnes. A 90-day shelf life supports wider distribution and the three per cent growth in global consumption. With consumers seeking preservative-free freshness, Fressure avocado spreads and guacamole in Cryovac Freshness Plus deliver this.

Extended shelf life ensures less of our world's hard-earned harvests end up in landfill, and this also includes the copious resources used during harvesting. With humanity consuming 1.6 times more resources than available, extending the shelf life of food is pivotal for a sustainable and less wasteful planet.

Another PIDA Award winner Woolcool Australia (see main image, page 40) was also shortlisted in the same category and was awarded the bronze special award. Summer temperatures, long supply chains and deliveries that sit on a doorstep for 12hrs+ present challenges for the fresh food/meal delivery sectors as contents must arrive fresh, with maximum nutrition but also be safe to consume. Woolcool keeps food packed at 1°C chilled below 5°C for at least 24 hours. Woolcool works by wool fibres absorbing moisture from the air and minimising humidity or condensation to create stable temperatures. When the wool is enclosed in a micro-perforated, recyclable, food grade liner the wool can 'breathe' and a natural cooling system results. As there is no odour, Woolcool will not taint contents, according to Woolcool Australia.

As there were only four finalists globally for this special award category this is a significant achievement for the Australia and New Zealand packaging industries and for the Australian Institute of Packaging (AIP) who have led the Save Food Packaging Award program for industry.

2018 WORLDSTAR SAVE FOOD PACKAGING FINALISTS:

1. Fresh Technologies Ltd and Sealed Air Cryovac Freshness Plus (Sealed Air, New Zealand)
2. Woolcool (Woolpack Australia, Australia)
3. Compostable Tray That Reduces Food Waste (Oneworld Packaging, S.L., Spain)
4. Vegetable Oil Wrapper with High Barrier Poly laminate Film (Shongai Technologies Limited, Nigeria)

The Packaging Innovation & Design (PIDA) Awards run by the Australian Institute of Packaging, in conjunction with Packaging New Zealand, are the exclusive feeder program for both Australia and New Zealand each year into the WorldStar Packaging Awards. The winners and high commendations for the 2018 PIDA Awards are now eligible to enter the 2019 WorldStar Awards.



Championing the cause: AIP executive director Nerida Kelton (centre) at the Save Food Packaging display at Interpack with George Ganzenmuller, Orora (left) and Craig Wellman of Wellman Packaging.



The CRC's mission comprises three main aims: to reduce food waste throughout the value chain; to transform unavoidable waste into innovative high-value products; and to engage with industry and consumers to deliver behavioural change.

The Fight Food Waste CRC directly supports Federal Government's National Food Waste Strategy, working on identifying priority projects for the next three years.

The Reduce Program within the CRC will focus on providing knowledge, tools and solutions to understand the weaknesses and opportunities that exist across the food supply chain. This will be delivered through four key activities:

1. Map resource flows, waste and root cause analysis.
2. Review functions and consumer perceptions of packaging and processing.
3. Investigate product specific supply chains and identify opportunities.
4. Investigate methods to increase food donation and measure its social impact.

PACKAGING INDUSTRY'S ROLE

The Australian Institute of Packaging (AIP) has already taken an active role in helping educate the packaging industry on the true role of packaging in minimising food waste by contributing to the National Food Waste Strategy, having a representative on the National Food Waste Steering Committee and as a core contributor to the Fight Food Waste CRC.

The AIP has also recently launched a new training course 'The Role of Packaging in Minimising Food Waste' which has run in Sydney, Melbourne, Auckland and Thailand so far this year.

In addition, the AIP is the first packaging institute in the world to develop the global Save Food Packaging Design awards.

The AIP have also been working on key criteria and guidelines for packaging technologists and designers to use as the standard for Save Food Packaging Design.

“The Implementation Plan is due in March next year and will provide the road map for Australia to meet the goal of halving food waste by 2030.”

The long-term objectives of the AIP are to:

1. Encourage all packaging technologists and designers to use Save Food Packaging key criteria and guidelines. The key criteria include, but are not limited to: resealability; openability; improvement of barrier packaging and extension of shelf-life; portion control; better understanding of Best Before versus Use By dates; improved design to reduce warehouse and transport damages and losses; better use of active and intelligent packaging; and use of Life Cycle Assessments.
2. Ensure all packaging technologists and designers are using Lifecycle Analysis Tools within their Save Food Packaging framework. Today there is a strong focus on the environmental aspects of food packaging, to ensure that at the end of its life (after use of the product contained) that it can be reused, repurposed, recycled or composted.
3. Encourage manufacturers to design innovative Save Food Packaging and communicate such initiatives to customers and consumers.
4. Recognise a wider range of Save Food Packaging innovations through the Packaging Innovation & Design (PIDA) Awards and the international WorldStar Packaging Awards program.
5. Showcase best-practice award-winning Save Food Packaging innovations across ANZ.
6. Contribute to consumer education and engagement projects to change the narrative around packaging's roles in minimising food waste. ■

SEALED AIR TEAMS UP WITH KURARAY

SEALED Air Corporation has a new agreement with Japanese company Kuraray, owner of Australian company Plantic, to supply packaging materials derived from Plantic bio-based resins.

Sealed Air president Karl Deily said the company was expanding its portfolio of sustainable solutions with bio-based materials.

“This solution enables us to offer a renewable packaging option and continue helping the industry address food waste by extending the shelf-life and freshness of food,” he said.

Sealed Air will offer Plantic materials to package perishable foods such as poultry, beef and seafood in the US, Canada and Mexico. The materials provide an effective oxygen barrier that's also cost-competitive with traditional rollstock barrier films, according to the company.



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