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Courtauld 1 avoids 1.2m tonnes of food and packaging waste

Simeon Goldstein, packagingnews.co.uk, 23 September 2010

The UK grocery sector has not met the objective to reduce the amount of packaging it produces, but 1.2 million tonnes of food and packaging has been avoided from the waste stream over the past five years.

Some 520,000 tonnes of packaging and 670,000 tonnes of food waste were avoided between 2005 and 2009 with an estimated value of £1.8bn, as a result of the first Courtauld Commitment (CC1).

Of the three CC1 targets, only one was not met – reducing the total amount of packaging waste produced. The figure has remained constant at 2.9 million tonnes between 2006 and 2009.

Wrap special advisor Mark Barthel told *Packaging News* it was a "pretty impressive achievement overall".

"It's quite a substantial amount of waste that's been avoided and it's also worth highlighting packaging weight that has gone down during that time," he said.

Barthel also highlighted activities such as bulk importing of wine that was a benefit to glass packaging manufacturing in the UK.

He added that the continued focus on food waste would "provide lots of opportunity for packaging to come to the fore". "The benefits of good packaging can be substantial."

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Food waste focus

Packaging Federation chief executive Dick Searle said he was pleased about the references to the reduction in food waste rather than just packaging.

Proportionately, the savings in food waste have many times the environmental benefit of the savings in packaging.

"It would have been nice to see more made of the real challenge being food waste and particularly hot on the heels of the Sainsbury's excess packaging case it would be nice to remind people that so much of the lifestyle they enjoy relies on packaging."

British Retail Consortium Director General, Stephen Robertson said: "This is a spectacular achievement.

"Preventing waste is the holy grail of the drive for a zero-waste economy. Recycling is good as it produces environmental benefits, but dramatically more resources are saved by not producing that material in the first place."

The second generation of Courtauld launched in March. Click here for [Packaging News' analysis of Courtauld 2.](#)

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