SFA

Packaging that sells

SFA Packaging

Sustainability Mission Statement

SFA Packaging has always had a very strong connection with both its immediate environment and the world as a whole. We feel responsible for the well-being of the people around us: from our employees to our customers; from our suppliers to our consumers. The common thread in all these connections is formed by the core concepts of ‘safe’ and ‘responsible’.

Sustainable packaging

In the market place in which SFA Packaging has been operating for years now, it is a constant balancing act between combating food waste, on the one hand, and minimising the ecological footprint, on the other. This is how we want to make a positive contribution to creating a better and, above all, more sustainable world. We continuously focus on the optimisation of food-safe, thin, lightweight and 100% recyclable packaging. In addition to companies being able to provide food-safe delivery of their products to the consumer, the product also has a longer shelf life! This is how we are combatting food waste.

CO2 emissions from food waste

In the Netherlands, 2 billion kilograms of food are wasted annually (1,649 - 2,568 kilotons. Source: Food Waste Monitor Update 2009-2018). For every kilogram of food we waste, we emit an average of 3 kilograms of CO2 in the Netherlands. This means that globally - after the United States and China - the Netherlands is responsible for the highest CO2 emissions from food waste in the world (WRI, 2015 - based on CAIT, 2015 & FAO, 2015). Reducing food waste is - together with wind and solar energy - the most important way to reduce CO2 emissions worldwide. It is also the most feasible and effective step towards establishing a more responsible and sustainable food system (Source: Project Drawdown).

By reducing food waste worldwide, we save every year:

- 1.4 billion hectares of land (an area larger than all of Europe)
- 250km3 of water (over 4x the contents of the Lake Michigan)
- A year's supply of food for 1.23 billion people

* Sources: FAO (2013) and FAO (2021)

Taking responsibility

SFA Packaging feels an enormous sense of responsibility to make a substantial contribution to the reduction of CO2 emissions by reducing food waste, and contributes to this by producing food-safe packaging. We are very aware that the production of plastic packaging can have a potentially polluting effect on the environment if the packaging is not properly collected, sorted and recycled after use.

Because the Western world has insufficient (rubbish processing/recycling) capacity, plastic waste, for example, is widely exported to distant countries to be destroyed. Since there is often a lack of sufficient processing capacity there as well, excess waste is dumped externally, with a high probability of it eventually ending up in the sea. In this respect, there is still real progress to be made in achieving a sustainable world.

Developments in the recycling industry

At the same time, we should note that the plastic packaging recycling industry is still in its infancy. While this may be a threat in the short term, in the long term it does in fact offer plenty of opportunities. With the recycling industry developing at a rapid pace, and consumers becoming increasingly aware of the need to separate waste at home, the sustainable reuse of plastic packaging is gaining momentum.

The SFA mission

Since it was founded, SFA Packaging has focused on producing mono-material packaging that is 100% recyclable. Our mission, therefore, is to convince as many food-producing companies as possible to move away from non-recyclable packaging that consists of multiple materials, and move to mono-material packaging that is 100% reusable.

In addition, we are continuously optimising existing packaging by minimising its weight. This means that much less plastic is used. In combination with the 100% recyclable mono-material solutions, this actually contributes to a more sustainable and especially food-safe world, in which food waste is reduced to a minimum.

Biobased and biodegradable packaging

Above we have outlined how we as a company are taking our responsibility when it comes to how we carry out our core activities. But it doesn't stop there. About 5 years ago, SFA started a project in cooperation with, among others, the University of Wageningen, to produce fully biobased and biodegradable thin-walled packaging. We eventually decided on PLA. This material is extracted from sugar beet and/or corn. What's special about PLA is that its carbon foodprint is 75% lower than that of conventional plastics and it is currently fully compostable in a professional facility. The possibilities of making the product suitable for 'home-compostable' solutions using available additives are currently being investigated. Because even the InMould Label is made from PLA, this packaging is 100% recyclable.

Mechanical recycling

Developments are also taking place in the field of plastic recycling that are making it increasingly possible to sort waste and recycle it in the correct stream. High sorting requirements and decreasing material quality when reused are just two factors that are restricting mechanical recycling. This is why we need to develop innovative technologies that improve plastics recycling. These include new materials and additives that facilitate recycling processes, as well as various chemical recycling processes to create value from plastic waste.

Chemical recycling

Chemical recycling makes it possible to recycle plastics for which there have previously been no recycling solutions, so serving as an additional option for mechanical recycling. The process converts recycled material into secondary raw materials such as pyrolysis oil or monomers. These recycled raw materials can then be used in place of fossil raw materials, to produce new plastics suitable for food packaging (Read more here). The availability of this material is currently still very limited and therefore expensive, but SFA continues to monitor this development closely.

Continuously taking steps in a sustainable

In addition to these sustainable product developments, we are also continuously examining all kinds of processes within our operation, to see where we can make sustainable improvements. Our production process is energy intensive. By using as much sustainably generated electricity as possible to run our injection moulding machines and to let the increasingly important automation do its work, we try to produce our products as cleanly as possible. This is, of course, a continuous process, with new developments and insights constantly providing new steps in the right sustainable direction.


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