

#TooCoolForPlastic

Iceland's Plastic Commitment



Iceland
Doing it Right

Another year of progress in 2019

A word from Richard

Two years since we made our bold pledge to remove plastic packaging from all of Iceland's own label products, we are pleased to have helped create something of a sea change in the sector, with UK supermarkets now making serious attempts to reduce single use plastic in their operations.

We have reduced our own label plastic packaging usage by 29% over the two years since we made our pledge to eliminate it by the end of 2023. That is a total of 3,794 tonnes out of the 13,000 tonnes a year we were using in January 2018. We remain the only supermarket making this bold pledge, and are achieving good progress against our long term plan.

Sadly, the case for change is more compelling than ever. Research published in the last year clearly shows the inadequacy of previous approaches to assessing plastic impacts on the environment and human health. Yet plastic production continues to escalate, with global output of ethylene and propylene set to increase by over a third by 2025¹.

Two years into our pledge, we remain passionately committed to achieving our goal and are working hard across our operations, with our customers, throughout our supply chain and by lobbying governments. In May 2019 we held meetings with our 100 top own label suppliers to brief them on our updated framework for plastic removal. Our buying, technical and packaging teams are working closely with these suppliers on detailed workstreams to remove and reduce plastic. We have established 11 category supplier working groups to promote and support collaboration and innovation through the supply chain.

We have also written to over 400 suppliers of our own label products and branded goods inviting them to get involved in the work of plastic removal, receiving a positive response.

Engagement with plastic removal and replacement continues to build both internally with our colleagues and externally through the work we do in our communities. This has included the Iceland Foods Charitable Foundation forging a new partnership with the environmental charity Surfers Against Sewage to support its Big Spring Beach Clean - Summit to Sea and to sponsor the UK's first Plastic Free Awards.

Much planning has been completed this year, laying the groundwork for accelerated progress in 2020 and beyond.



Richard Walker,
Managing Director



¹ Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), 2017

In January 2018, Iceland committed to becoming the first major retailer globally to eliminate plastic packaging from all of its own label products by the end of 2023.

29% reduction

on the amount of plastic we were using in January 2018

3,794 tonnes of plastic removed so far

10% reduction

in our overall packaging footprint by the end of 2023²

...we have made this commitment as we are conscious that plastic removal must not simply shift the problem of excess packaging from one material to another.

Our #TooCoolForPlastic Manifesto...

- 1 Remove plastic packaging from Iceland own label products by the end of 2023** – because it is essential to turn down the tap on global plastic production.
- 2 Collaborate with and support our suppliers,** and work with competitors and the packaging industry to find solutions.
- 3 Focus on materials that our customers can recycle easily at home** and provide clear on-pack recycling information.
- 4 Minimise or remove packaging** without creating more food waste or compromising food safety.
- 5 Go back to basics** and use traditional materials like paper, board, glass, metal and wood.
- 6 Work quickly** to remove PVC (polyvinyl chloride), polystyrene and black plastic, which are all very difficult to recycle.
- 7 Use widely recyclable plastic** such as HDPE, PE, PP and PET*, but in smaller and smaller quantities as our journey progresses.
- 8 Use composite materials** that are mainly made of paper and board but include small amounts of plastic – while we look for ways to replace it.
- 9 Lobby the Government** to put in place national food waste collections for industrial composting alongside the consistent collection of a core group of packaging materials for recovery and recycling.
- 10 Report on our progress** and what we have learned at the end of each year.

During 2019 we trialled a range of different approaches to removing plastic from our business

By no means all of these succeeded, but we have learned by our experiences and are excited about the major concepts these have helped to develop for launch in 2020.

Paper bags

In May 2019 we began new trials of paper carrier bags with a redesigned, super-strong bag that is now part of our range in 40 stores and will be rolled out across our UK store estate in early 2020. In July 2019 we also became the first national food retailer to launch a completely plastic bag-free supermarket in our Hackney store. Over six months, these trials collectively saved over 210,000 plastic carrier bags from being newly purchased.

We are trialling increasing the price of our entry level re-useable plastic bag by 50%, from 10p to 15p. At the same time, we are removing heavyweight woven plastic bags from stores to reduce the number of plastic bag options we offer and to reduce the weight of plastic bags being sold.

Plastic-free produce

In early 2019, we ran a plastic-free produce trial for three months in The Food Warehouse in North Liverpool, the learnings from which will guide our plans in 2020.

We have completed three successive trials of bananas with paper bands and based on ultimately successful results we are now working on our next steps to extend this approach in early 2020.


Black plastic meal trays

We have moved 74 frozen prepared meal lines out of non-recyclable black plastic and into paperboard-based trays, reducing the amount of plastic used by more than 80%.

We reduced the amount of plastic packaging in ready meals by more than

80%





Plastic consumption increases significantly each Christmas, as a result of the excess packaging used on many gifts, the plastic found in wrapping paper, and additional grocery items purchased as families stock up for the season. Last year it was predicted that 125,000 tonnes of plastic waste went into UK landfill following the Christmas period.³

That's why we decided to help our customers by enabling them to opt for a reduced plastic Christmas dinner in 2019. This made Iceland the first UK supermarket to offer all three courses in either plastic-free or reduced plastic packaging.

We worked with our suppliers on the project for months, developing technologies and driving innovation with new and existing food and packaging suppliers across our supply chain. Many of the solutions we implemented were firsts to market in the UK, including those for the Three Bird Roast, Stuffed Turkey Breast Joint, Luxury Beef Wellington and Extra Tasty Turkey Crown.

The total range comprised 26 products, of which 18 were entirely plastic free, including Pork and Apple Stuffing Parcels, Luxury Toffee and Pecan Roulade, and Lemon Roulade, as well as a selection of party food favourites.

The changes made to the packaging delivered an average 97% reduction in plastic across the range, ranging from a 91% to 100% reduction for individual products.

Tackling 'difficult to recycle' plastics

#TooCoolForPlastic



As highlighted by the UK Plastics Pact⁴ and the Government's Waste and Resources Strategy⁵, black plastic, polystyrene and PVC are difficult to recycle plastics and should be eliminated. On our journey to be plastic-free we are committed to address these really challenging plastics first.

Across our range of approximately 1,500 own label products we had reduced the number of lines packed in black plastic to 81 by July 2019, and ended all packing in black plastic by the end of January 2020. We had removed PVC packaging from all but 26 lines by July 2019, will end packing into PVC by the end of March 2020⁶.

We had reduced the number of products using polystyrene (expanded and rigid) in their packaging to 22 by July 2019, and to 13 by the end of December 2019. We are working closely with the five suppliers of these lines to produce alternatives in the year ahead, and will have further reduced to just nine remaining products using polystyrene by the end of March 2020. We aim to stop using polystyrene packaging by the end of 2021.

We would like to thank all our suppliers for hard their work on removing these difficult to recycle plastics.

We have also issued guidance to our supply base on the use of expanded polystyrene (EPS) for packing product samples. In February 2020 we announced a total ban on the use of EPS boxes for product supplier sample submissions, instead supporting the use of reusable or non-EPS packaging. This ban comes into force in May 2020.

We also updated our On-Pack Recycling Label (OPRL) labelling this year, with 42% of single use plastics components now classified as widely recyclable. During 2019 we updated OPRL labelling across 80% of our own-label products.

⁴ <http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/eliminating-problem-plastics>

⁵ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/765914/resources-waste-strategy-dec-2018.pdf

⁶ Iceland still retails one product Iceland All Purpose Cling Film which is a PVC film.

Turning down the tap on plastic production

Working with branded suppliers

In November we wrote to more than 400 suppliers, accounting for over 80% of our sales, seeking their support in achieving our goal of turning down the tap of global plastic production. For some 300 suppliers of branded goods, which are not covered by our pledge to eliminate plastic packaging from our own label range, this meant outlining our progress to date, offering to share our learnings on plastic reduction, and proposing enhanced collaboration in the future. We were pleased by the very positive response we received to these suggestions, with leading branded suppliers confirming their support and their shared ambition.

What our suppliers have to say...



“

Young's Seafood continue to work closely with Iceland to turn down the tap on plastic packaging production. Iceland have approached their supply base with a spirit of collaboration that is helping us to meet Iceland's own objective to remove plastic by 2023 and helping Young's to reduce single use plastics, completely remove black plastic and make the plastics we do use easily recyclable.”

Helen Nickells,
Head of Packaging at Young's Seafood

“

We share Iceland's passion for sustainability and are fully committed to playing our part in delivering the UN's Sustainability Development Goals where we have the knowledge and expertise to genuinely make a difference.

Nomad Foods is committed to achieving 100% recyclable packaging by 2022 and 75% of our portfolio will be recyclable by early 2020.

Birds Eye is constantly looking for ways to recycle and reduce excess packaging. A lot of our products are already packed into cartons and since our products are for in-home use we do not use single-use plastic consumer packaging. Our focus is on moving our bags to recyclable materials and reducing excess packaging, we have a number of projects underway in this area. Nomad Foods are actively participating with the Plastics Pact with WRAP to work towards a circular plastics economy.”

Annelie Selander,
Sustainability Director at Nomad Foods



Iceland reverse vending machines

#TooCoolForPlastic

We announced in August 2019 that we had recycled more than one million plastic bottles through reverse vending machines in just five stores since we began our industry-leading trial in May 2018. The total had reached more than 1.2 million by the end of the year.

Feedback gained from customers during the trial period showed extreme support for the deposit return scheme concept, with 96% of shoppers believing it should be extended to all retailers. Two thirds of customers used the machines at least once a fortnight, and 75% believed the introduction of 20p deposits on plastic bottles would be a good idea.

Trial machines were installed in all four nations across the UK. Customer feedback confirmed our belief that a simple model of accepting all sizes of plastic drinks bottle – and extending this to include drinks cans – is the only sensible way to roll out a deposit return scheme nationally.

Reverse vending machines of this size could be accommodated in all of Iceland's nearly 1,000 stores across the UK.

Extending the scheme to include glass bottles, as proposed in Scotland, would require much larger vending machines that we and other high street retailers would struggle to fit into our stores, and also create significant health and safety challenges for our colleagues and customers. For this reason we are lobbying strongly against the inclusion of glass in the scheme and also against the current proposed model for handling online returns, which would add over £3m to our costs and also increase carbon emissions.



Supporting community action



“

over 45,000 volunteers across the UK joining over 750 community clean up events.



The Big Spring Beach Clean: Summit to Sea

The Iceland Foods Charitable Foundation (IFCF) partnered with environmental charity Surfers Against Sewage (SAS) in 2019 to expand one of the UK's largest ever environmental 'clean-ups', the Big Spring Beach Clean, to include mountain and street cleans, alongside hundreds of rivers and beaches.

The Big Spring Beach Clean: Summit to Sea took place in April, and was the biggest yet for the organisation, with over 45,000 volunteers across the UK joining over 750 community clean up events. Many of these were away from beaches for the first time, taking place on riverbanks, mountains and urban streets.

Beach cleans took place the length and breadth of the UK; from Ronas Voe Beach in Shetland to Le Braye in Jersey, and from Lowestoft in East Anglia to Enniskillen Island, Northern Ireland.

For the first time, SAS worked with The Wave Project to pilot 'Accessible Beach Cleans', making it easier for volunteers with physical and mental disabilities to take part with trained helpers, specific equipment and a more inclusive environment.

The 2019 Big Spring Beach Clean collected almost 72 tonnes of marine plastic, equal to 18,000 full bin bags, more than doubling its target.

IFCF will continue its sponsorship for the campaign in 2020. The Big Spring Beach Clean 2020 will take place between 18th – 26th April.

Find out more and register your beach, river and urban clean events at www.sas.org.uk

The world's first Plastic Free Awards

The Iceland Foods Charitable Foundation (IFCF) and its charity partner Surfers Against Sewage were delighted to host the world's first Plastic Free Awards in Bristol on 22nd November, honouring and celebrating the remarkable campaigners, entrepreneurs, community volunteers, youth activists and influencers who are playing leading roles in the fight against plastic pollution.

The 12 award categories, which included 'Best Plastic Campaign', 'Plastic-Free Hero' and 'Youth Plastic Pioneer' were judged by a panel including Autumn Watch presenter Gillian Burke, author and broadcaster Lucy Siegle, multi-gold-medallist Olympian Helen Glover, and Iceland MD Richard Walker.

Winners included Youth Plastic Pioneers Ella and Caitlin McEwan, who successfully petitioned for the removal of plastic toys from fast food kids' meals; Sports Champion Lewis Pugh, United Nations Patron of the Ocean; Iceland's own #TooCoolForPlastic Champion Matt Downes, for his tireless work on our reverse vending machines trial; and overall winner Sir David Attenborough, who received the Sir Malcolm Walker Award for his unparalleled work in raising public awareness of ocean plastic pollution and persuading the world to take action.

Iceland Foods Managing Director, IFCF Trustee and Plastic Free Awards judge Richard Walker said: "It was a fantastic night celebrating so many talented and committed environmentalists! Well done to all the winners, and to everyone who entered the Plastic Free Awards. We are thrilled to have helped establish these awards to highlight the great work that is being done by so many to tackle the scourge of single-use plastic. We are making progress and invite everyone to play their part in protecting the planet from plastic pollution."

IFCF will continue its sponsorship of the Plastic Free Awards in November 2020.



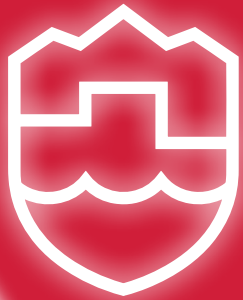
**PLASTIC
FREE
AWARDS**



Iceland
Foods 
Charitable
Foundation

Registered charity no. 281943





PLASTIC FREE AWARDS



Congratulations to all our award winners!

Looking forward to 2020

We have firm plans in place with almost 100 suppliers, accounting for over 80% of our own label sales, which will accelerate the pace of change in plastic reduction from 2020 as we move towards our goal of eliminating plastic packaging from our Iceland own label range by the end of 2023.

In support of Commitment 4 in our Plastics Manifesto (to minimise or remove packaging without creating more food waste or compromising food safety), the business has also formally committed to achieving an overall reduction to our packaging footprint of 10% by the end of 2023 against our base year in 2018⁷.



⁷ We have formally committed to reducing our Iceland own label overall packaging footprint by 10%, by the end of 2023 against our base year in 2018.

Iceland
Doing it Right

#TooCoolForPlastic

www.sustainability.iceland.co.uk

Iceland | the food
WAREHOUSE