

## Information sheet

# The Courtauld Commitment

## Making efficiencies around food, drink and packaging waste in the UK from both an industry and a consumer perspective.

The Courtauld Commitment is a responsibility deal aimed at improving resource efficiency and reducing the carbon and wider environmental impact of the UK grocery sector.

It supports the UK governments' policy goal of a 'zero waste economy' and the objectives of the Climate Change Act to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 34% by 2020 and 80% by 2050.

### How it works

WRAP is responsible for the agreement and works in partnership with leading retailers, brand owners, manufacturers and suppliers who sign up and support the delivery of the targets. The British Retail Consortium and the Food and Drink Federation are both aligned with its principles.

It was launched in 2005 at a Ministerial event at the Courtauld Gallery in London. Courtauld Commitment 1 looked at new solutions and technologies so that less food and primary packaging ended up as **household** waste.

Over the four year period Phase 1 was running, it saved 1.2 million tonnes of food and packaging waste, with a monetary value of £1.8 billion. To give you an idea of scale - the tonnage saved is equivalent to filling 128,000 waste refuse lorries that, if lined up, would stretch from Truro to Inverness. And the saving of 3.3 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, which is equivalent to the emissions from 500,000 round-the-world flights.

### Current agreement and progress

Phase 2 was announced in March 2010 following consultation with industry and runs until December 2012.

It builds on Phase 1, still aiming to reduce primary packaging and household food and drink waste, but now includes secondary and tertiary packaging, and supply chain waste. Phase 2 will report results using both tonnage and carbon impact metrics and its targets will be measured against a 2009 baseline.

Phase 2 aims to encourage the sustainable use of resources over the entire lifecycle of grocery products sold in the UK. Retailer signatories are responsible for reporting on their own-label products and direct sourced or private label brands. Brand owners are responsible for their own product portfolios.

### Who has signed up?

Grocery retailers, brands, manufacturers and suppliers whose grocery products are sold in the UK market, regardless of country of origin. It includes household and personal care grocery products. See [signatory listing](#).



### The targets

Signatories work with WRAP to develop individual and collective 'sector' strategy plans to deliver the targets below.

1. to reduce the weight, increase recycling rates and increase the recycled content of all grocery **packaging**, as appropriate. Through these measures, the aim is to reduce the carbon impact of this grocery packaging by 10%.

Why? Packaging plays an important role in protecting products and preserving food. A lot has been done to optimise it already but there is scope to do more.

Over 10 million tonnes (mt) of packaging is placed on the UK market every year and about half that amount goes to households where it accounts for about 20% of the waste stream.

2. to reduce UK [household food and drink](#) wastes by 4%.

Why? Every year consumers throw away 7.2 mt /£12 billion of food and drink that could have been eaten, which equates to £680 for the average family. Preventing waste could save 17 mt of CO<sub>2</sub>eq. per annum – that's like taking 1 in 5 cars off UK roads.

3. to reduce traditional grocery product and packaging waste in the grocery [supply chain](#) by 5%. This includes both solid and liquid wastes.

Why? Food, drink and packaging waste in the UK supply chain is about 6.6 mt per year and costs £5 billion. Total food waste arisings for the supply chain and households are 11.9 mt and total packaging 5.1 mt.

### What can be done?

**Packaged product** innovation and optimisation can deliver real change and benefits. For example de-layering, lightweighting, recycled content, re-thinking the product (refillables, self dispensing, concentrates), designing for recyclability, supporting recycling collections, reducing food waste, bulk importation and improved supply chain and transport efficiencies.

**Household food and drink waste:** The grocery sector influences what we buy. Research shows consumers want value for money and less waste.

This sector can make it easier for consumers to buy the right amounts of food and drink (portioning, pack sizes, deli counter and loose fruit/vegetables) and to get the most out of what we buy (clearer date labelling and storage guidance, maximising shelf and innovative packaging).

Signatories also have extensive workforces who are consumers themselves and can help employees to waste less food at home, at work in the canteen or factory. Visit WRAP's [Love Food Hate Waste](#) partner website to find out more.

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### Supply chain product, food, drink and

**packaging waste:** The greatest efficiencies can be made by addressing the supply chain as a whole and working collaboratively across the chain.

WRAP is helping signatories and their supply chains by providing information, knowledge and tools to help them make the best choices for their business and to generate the biggest gains across the whole sector.

### The results so far

Significant progress has been made towards meeting the targets. For 2010 and 2011, the cumulative results of this 3-year agreement show:

- Packaging: 8.2% against a 10% target.
- Supply chain: 8.8% against a 5% target.

Household food waste data is not collected yearly but a 3% reduction was achieved in 2010 against a 4% target. Results will be available in the final year of reporting.

### What the Commitment can do

Courtauld helps businesses, consumers and local authorities to save money, improve performance and reduce their carbon footprint. It specifically helps businesses to:

- save costs, cut waste and reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions;
- deliver against consumer demand for less waste;
- improve industry practice and help to drive sector innovation;
- improve resource efficiency of products and their packaging;
- create a support network and vehicle for change;
- better position organisations for a carbon – constrained future and support for delivering the requirement of future UK and EU legislation.

Visit [www.wrap.org.uk/courtauld](http://www.wrap.org.uk/courtauld) for more information.

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(Note: all figures are approx. See our online [Handy UK Retail Waste Figures](#) for more data).  
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