

Increase usage of the On-Pack Recycling Label (OPRL) on plastic films

Post-consumer film plastic

The collection of post-consumer film plastic in the UK is mainly through retailers' front of store collection points and, until recently, was exclusively for carrier bags. It is estimated that over 100,000 tonnes per annum of the non-carrier bag fraction is placed in the UK market, with less than 3% being collected for recycling.

The OPRL scheme and a cross retailer initiative by Asda, The Co-operative, Morrison's, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose, developed a new label exclusively for film plastic with the message 'recycle with carrier bags at larger stores – not at kerbside'.

The new label is applicable to films that meet a quality criteria and covers products from bakery, breakfast cereal, household goods, grocery produce, multi-pack shrink film and more recently newspaper and magazine wrap.

The objective of this work was to engage with OPRL members in order to accelerate the use of the new plastic film label and increase the collection of plastic film at front of store collection points.

Inking methodology

An inking methodology was also developed to assist OPRL members to ensure that the ink level used on films is below '5% by weight', according to the OPRL Guidelines.



FILM PLASTIC	Recycle with carrier bags at larger stores Not at kerbside
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Labels for plastic film collection.

As a result of the engagement between WRAP and OPRL members, summarised in this case study, the new film label will be implemented in packaging that corresponds to approximately sales of 15 million units per annum and approximately 70 tonnes of film.

The Co-operative Food

The Co-operative Food has over 2,800 food stores across the UK, with carrier bag recycling bins located at approximately 1,000 of these locations.

Current application of the film label

The film label is currently applied by The Co-operative Food to a total of 70 product lines, as well as being applied to bags for loose produce. These lines represent an increasing number of mainstream volume lines, accounting for approximately 50% of total product lines currently meeting the criteria to use the film label.

The Co-operative Food achieved successful roll-out of the new film label by effective collaboration across the supply chain. This required liaison across the business to raise awareness of the film label and with packaging manufacturers and printers to ensure the appropriate application.

Opportunities to increase the application of the film label

The Co-operative Food is currently exploring a number of opportunities to extend the film label to additional product lines. In some cases the speed of application will be driven by the planned schedule for artwork changes, whilst in others this will be reliant upon a change of packaging material, for example PP to PE film for onions. The change of film for onions required packing trials to ensure that there were no unforeseen problems.

Impact of changes

Packed onions, organic apples and organic pears were highlighted as target product lines and WRAP provided support to accelerate the label's application. In total the label was applied to 17 lines, converting The Co-operative Food's entire onion range (i.e. 15 lines), including brown, red and shallots, as well as one line each of organic apples and pears. This accounts for annual sales of over 7 million units and 32 tonnes of film placed on the UK market.



The Co-op's film recycling label on onion packaging.

A.G. Barr

A.G. Barr is a national soft drinks business, manufacturing and selling a number of brands including Irn-Bru, Rubicon, Barr, Strathmore, Tizer, Rockstar and Orangina.

Current application of the film label

Following the introduction of the new OPRL film label in 2011, A.G. Barr embarked on a roll-out programme to add the logo to all the relevant packs, i.e. drink cans and PET bottle multipack formats. The film logo appears on 75% of the multipack sales units, with the largest volume being the 330 ml x 8 can multipack format which was introduced in March 2012. This 75% pack coverage represents circa 150 tonnes of plastic film packaging.



A.G. Barr's recycling label on Irn-Bru multipacks.

The multipacks have ink coverage on all the visible facings to make full use of the branding on pack. The average ink weight has been investigated with the film printer and found to be an average of 4%, which falls within the <5% ink weight requirements for the use of the label.

Opportunities to increase the application of the film label

A.G. Barr will continue to replace the old version of the film label with the new label as and when new multipack artwork is required for the brands. As 75% of the multipack sales units already carry the new film label, the focus will now be on extending the use to the remaining packs, the highest volume of which is the 250 ml x 8 PET multipack.

Impact of changes

WRAP supported A.G. Barr with artwork changes ahead of the planned schedule. This enabled the application of the label on the 250 ml x 8 PET bottle multipacks. This will increase the pack coverage for the film label to 83% of the multipack sales units, which represents circa 173 tonnes of plastic film packaging; the direct support equated to 1.3 million unit sales and 22.7 tonnes.



A.G. Barr

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The Economist

The Economist is a weekly magazine focusing on international politics and business news and opinion. The Economist was the first magazine publisher to join the OPRL scheme.

Current application of the film label

Prior to the commencement of this project, The Economist was only applying the Recycle Now swoosh on the inside cover of the magazine. This provided limited guidance to consumers on where to recycle the plastic film wrap.

Opportunities to increase the application of the film label

The new film label will be positioned on all wrapped issues of The Economist distributed to UK subscribers. The label will provide the consumers with enough information to recycle the film wrap with carrier bags at larger stores.

Impact of change

The new film label will appear on film wrapped copies distributed weekly to 130,000 subscribers, amounting to 6.5 million copies per annum or approximate 14 tonnes of film carrying the new label.



New film recycling labelling applied to The Economist outer film wrapper.

Britvic

Britvic plc is a British producer of soft drinks. It is the number two soft drinks producer (by volume and retail sales value) in the UK and supplies brands such as Robinsons, J20, Tango and Fruit Shoot, and holds exclusive agreements to make and distribute global brands like Pepsi and 7UP on behalf of PepsiCo.

Current application of the film label

Prior to the commencement of this project Britvic Soft Drinks were applying the old version of the film label to multipack shrink film. This indicated that plastic film was 'not currently recycled'.

Opportunities to increase the application of the film label

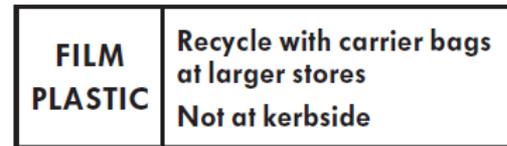
The principle reason for not updating shrink film packaging with the new film label was due to a lack of awareness of this updated label. Once the appropriate contacts within Britvic had been made aware of the new version, there was a commitment to include this on all appropriate product lines. This will initially concentrate on the highest selling lines, which covers Pepsi, 7UP and Tango multipacks.

Impact of change

Following contact with WRAP Britvic Soft Drinks will now apply the film label to all shrink film once updates have been scheduled for multipack artwork. Within 12-18 months the Pepsi, 7UP and Tango multipacks will all contain the film label (sales and tonnage not provided due to sensitivity).

Impact of change

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New labels to be applied to multipacks.

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