

## Information sheet

# Reducing Easter egg packaging

**In 2009, Easter egg packaging was cut by 25% and, in some cases, by as much as 50%. This achievement was the direct result of a WRAP-led industry initiative set up to reduce the 3,000 tonnes of chocolate egg packaging generated each year in the UK.**

## Introduction

Consumer perceptions around over-packaging are often linked to specific product lines and seasonal confectionery is one area of concern. The iconic Easter egg came out top of the list for excessive packaging in a 2008 poll<sup>1</sup> on 'Public attitudes to packaging'.

In 2009 this sector dramatically cut the environmental impact of its chocolate egg packaging. They did this without affecting brand value or gift-worthiness, as well as continuing to protect the product. This is how it was achieved:

## Seasonal Confectionery Working Group (SCWG)

In 2006 WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme) set up the SCWG aimed at reducing packaging. It was felt a collective approach was crucial to the project's success so it included the whole supply chain. This would make it easier to deliver environmental and economic benefits.

It comprised leading confectionery brands, manufacturers and retailers and focussed initially on medium-sized Easter eggs.

## Objectives

The SCWG set out to identify and act on opportunities for their industry to optimise packaging, establish voluntary industry standards about 'size on-shelf' and to promote a packaging reduction programme.

As well as lightweighting packaging, the sector also investigated increasing the use of recycled content and designing for recyclability. Some developed on-pack, child-friendly advice on how to recycle the packaging and made use of [On-Pack Recycling Labels](#).

	Cadbury UK
	Kraft Foods UK
	Magna Specialist Confectioners Ltd
	Mars UK
	Nestlé UK Ltd

SCWG members

## Benefits of less packaging

- Material savings and cost benefits (primary and secondary).
- Better pallet optimisation and distribution efficiencies;
- Increased stock on-shelf in shops, leading to less frequent re-stocking.
- Meet consumer expectations.

## Significant results in 2009

The sector widely promoted the following results:

**Cadbury UK** delivered a 25% reduction in packaging across medium shell eggs resulting in 220 tonnes less plastic, 250 tonnes less carton board and an additional 90 tonnes less transit/display packaging.

The company also made savings on its large shell egg range with a 30% cut in packaging, saving 108 tonnes of plastic, 65 tonnes of carton board and 44 tonnes of corrugated cardboard.



<sup>1</sup> Poll: 'Public Attitudes to Packaging 2008'

Cadbury's un-boxed 'eco eggs' range won best packaging at the Green Awards 2008.

**Mars Chocolate UK** achieved a 42% reduction in carton board weight of its medium-sized eggs (pictured), saving 200 tonnes of carton board p.a. and reduced the amount of plastic used by 35%.



The remaining packaging now uses 100% recycled carton board and carries advice to consumers on how and where to dispose of the packaging.

**Nestlé UK** removed all plastic packaging from their eggs, making them easier for consumers to recycle. The company cut the weight of packaging across its entire range by 30%, saving 784 tonnes.

All small and medium eggs, which are 80% of their entire range, come in smaller cartons, leading to transport efficiencies. Their packaging carries advice to help consumers to recycle more.



2008 (left) and 2009 boxes.

## Sector agreements

*"The SCWG model is a great example of how industry can work collectively on a small scale to make significant change. The results of this initiative feed directly into the targets of the Courtauld*

*Commitment.*" Andy Dawe, Head of Retail Programmes, WRAP.

The [Courtauld Commitment](#) is a responsibility deal with about 50 signatories specifically aimed at improving resource efficiency and reducing the carbon and wider environmental impact of the grocery retail sector. Below are further Easter egg examples from signatories.

**Marks & Spencer** reduced its packaging by almost 30% and is using its highest ever percentage of recycled materials. The 'Max the Bunny' egg has seen material reduced by 90% by replacing the plastic drum with a lightweight printed plastic film.



Over 85% of packaging across the M&S Easter range is recyclable and 68% of all plastic used contains recycled materials, reducing the need to use virgin plastics.

**Sainsbury's** increased recycled content across its *Taste the Difference* boxed egg from 0% to a minimum of 75%. Overall, packaging on the showcase egg has been reduced by 55% and packaging across the whole range has reduced by 37%. All of Sainsbury's boxed egg packaging is now 100% recyclable.

## Sphere of influence

The SCWG members have continued to make changes around chocolate eggs, as well as other areas, such as Christmas selection packs. The supply chain approach has helped to replicate the group's good work.

See also '[Consumer testing new packaging in seasonal, gift and luxury products](#)' research report (2009).

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