

POST-CONSUMER RECYCLED CONTENT IN BAKERY PACKAGING

2025 is a critical year in terms of sustainability because many companies have made commitments to make their packaging more sustainable by the end of the year. Some of these commitments include designing 100% of their packaging to be recyclable, compostable or reusable; and incorporating a minimum of 30% post-consumer recycled (PCR) content.

Being able to incorporate recycled content in direct food contact applications does not come without challenges, but there are commercial products available in the market today, both in North America and Europe. St. Johns Packaging launched the first polyethylene bread bag incorporating 30% PCR content in the UK market in 2021 and in the US market in 2023. These products are being manufactured using PCR resins from mechanical or chemical recycling processes, depending on the regulations in each region. St. Johns Packaging has also invested time and resources to find the right sources of PCR materials to guarantee quality and consistency in the final product, a critical factor in this space.

The bags with PCR content provide an improved environmental footprint vs. traditional bags and allow brands to contribute towards their sustainability goals, offering more sustainable packaging solutions to consumers. They are still recyclable, offer reductions in the use of fossil-based materials and lower the carbon footprint of the packaging. In addition, the performance of these bags is very similar to that of traditional bags, minimizing the impact on the filling/ bagging equipment.

However, one of the many challenges faced by the recycling industry is a lack of investment due to the limited uses of recycled plastics. Brands have an opportunity to incentivize the recycling industry by utilizing recycled



materials in their products and creating a driving force at the end of the supply chain, fostering investment and growth in this critical industry. If companies with sustainable packaging commitments stay true to their pledges, demand for recycled plastics is expected to grow as we approach 2025, and it will therefore be more and more challenging to source those materials. The opportunity is here today for more brands to join the movement and be part of the circular economy.

With a focus on the bakery market, St. Johns Packaging is truly committed to developing sustainable and economically viable packaging solutions for the baking industry, while at the same time reducing food and plastic waste. The incorporation of recycled content is essential in the journey towards circularity and Net-Zero.

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