

# PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE



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The world is growing. Our global population is expected to increase from roughly seven billion people today to nine billion by 2050. During that same time the percentage of people living in cities is expected to increase from about 50 per cent to 70 per cent. Another factor to consider is that more people are healthier and living longer than ever before, due in part to more sophisticated systems of agriculture and food distribution.

As a result, the demand for higher volumes and quality of food is increasing significantly. Meeting the needs of our growing urban population will depend on our ability to transport, preserve, and protect food throughout the supply chain.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC COST OF FOOD WASTE

In 2011 the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) estimated that each year approximately one-third of all food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted. Harvesting, handling, processing, distribution, and consumers all contribute to food waste in various ways. The cause of waste also differs by geographic region and type of food, dependent on factors such as climate or infrastructure.

This year an FAO study highlighted the environmental impacts of food waste. They found that food waste consumes significant resources, contributes to land use and degradation, water use, and loss of biodiversity. To put this into context, the estimated global carbon footprint of wasted food is more than twice the GHG emissions of all road transportation in the U.S. Furthermore, the annual economic cost of wasted food approximates the GDP of Switzerland.

The old adage, prevention rather than cure, has never been more poignant. Reducing the waste of food already available will be critical to meet the demand of the increasing world population. It will also lower the total impacts and cost of agricultural production, processing, and transportation.

## RESPONSIBLE PACKAGING

As a global packaging leader, and as a packaging provider to the world's leading consumer brands, Amcor plays a vital role in addressing this issue. At Amcor, our commitment to responsible packaging starts with our Belief Statement: We believe in responsible packaging.

Responsible packaging makes a valuable contribution to sustainability by protecting the products that consumers need – minimising product spoilage or breakage, preserving the resources invested in the product and ensuring that the product reaches the consumer fit and safe for its intended purpose.



Amcor Packpyrus uses renewable fibres and offers an impressive carbon footprint reduction of around 70 per cent



Amcor's Powerblock 3.0 Container has major sustainability advantages by utilising novel design, tooling, and process technologies

To address food shortage and wastage we need to consider the whole product life cycle, from the sourcing of raw materials through development and manufacturing, distribution and sale, use and disposal. Responsible packaging uses the optimal amount of appropriate materials to minimise impacts of the packaging while optimising protection of the product, resulting in lower overall waste and environmental impacts.

Many people are interested in finding ways to reduce or even eliminate packaging. In fact, packaging often accounts for only seven to 10 per cent of the total environmental impacts of many products. We need to partner with our customers and consumers to look at all options available to reduce the impact we have on the earth. For consumers, this could be about being more careful to buy only what is needed. For a packaging company we can help by actively innovating new ways to make our products more sustainable. For example single-serve packaging can reduce food waste and offers portion control. Innovations that offer user friendly opening and reclose features ensure product freshness and also help to reduce food waste.

## INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Amcor is working to reduce the primary impacts of the packaging we make. Our innovative approach to product sustainability has resulted in new packaging technologies that use fewer raw materials while maintaining or preserving strength and shelf life. We also look at better options for end-of-life recycling and composting for consumers through recycled fiber and PET resin.

For consumers, packaging provides preparation and use information, and allows for convenient portion control. What consumers may not realise, is that ready-to-eat foods can result in less waste than meals prepared in the home. Furthermore, waste from prepared foods is often used for other purposes, such as animal feed, which is not a good use of the food if you consider the resources used to get it into the home. The other benefit packaging delivers is to extend the shelf life of the food which means it can be stored for longer and is more likely to be used. For example, sweet cherries are highly perishable and if unprotected have a shelf life of 7 to 14 days. With well-designed packaging and proper handling their shelf life can be extended to 30–40 days.

As people move from farms to cities, they need to rely on preparation, distribution and transportation systems to assure freshness, quality and product safety. Packaging plays a major role in protecting the integrity and safety of food with sealing and tamper-evident technologies.

We are determined to strengthen our contribution to sustainability. The scale of our operations and importance of packaging in the supply chain means that through our dedication we will continue to make a powerful impact. ■

*With US\$12.8 billion in sales, over 30,000 employees, and more than 300 sites in over 40 countries, Amcor is the global leader in responsible packaging solutions and packaging innovation. Amcor offers a broad range of packaging related products and services, including packaging for beverages, food, healthcare, personal and homecare, tobacco, and industrial applications. Amcor continues to be listed on global and regional market indices, including the Dow Jones Sustainability World and Asia Pacific Indices, the Carbon Disclosure Leadership Index, Materials Sector, Australia and New Zealand region, and the FTSE4Good index.*