



OXO-BIODEGRADABLE PLASTICS ASSOCIATION

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NONSENSE ABOUT OXO IN NEW ZEALAND

Peter Calder (New Zealand Herald 11 Feb) does not tell the whole story. If the little frog had teeth he would bite him where it hurts:

1. Landfill is irrelevant. Oxo-biodegradable plastics are intended to degrade, then biodegrade, in the open environment where there is plenty of oxygen.
2. Because oxygen is necessary the bags can't degrade deep in landfill and generate methane. WRAP is talking about vegetable-based plastics, not oxobio.
3. The Commerce Commission of NZ admitted in the court case that the scientific claims made by EcoPal in relation to its oxo-biodegradable plastic products were accurate, and the court made no findings to the contrary. The case was therefore based on allegations about advertising by EcoPal. In the opinion of the OPA these allegations were absurd. It was not EcoPal's responsibility to prevent consumers misleading themselves as to whether there are collection facilities for composting or recycling in their locality at a particular time.
4. If the bags just fragment into tiny pieces of plastic (as someone has told Mr. Calder) why did EcoPal win on biodegradability? And why have the US, British and French Standards organisations written tests for BIODEgradability of oxo-biodegradable plastics?
5. Of course we all want to avoid plastic litter, but so long as there are ANY plastic products in use, some of them will get into the open environment, where it is better for them to biodegrade instead of lying or floating around for decades.
6. Wrong again Mr. Calder about wasting oil to make plastics. Oil is extracted to make fuels, and plastics are made from a by-product of the refining process. So, the same amount of oil would be extracted even if plastics did not exist.
5. So oxo-biodegradability IS terrific, isn't it Mr. Calder?
6. Yes, cotton bags ARE a dire health risk, according to at least four scientific studies. These bags are hardly ever washed, and are a breeding ground for dangerous bacteria.
7. Two LCAs by Intertek show that conventional and oxo plastic has the best environmental credentials of all the materials used to make shopping bags.
8. Plastic bag bans and taxes are a really bad idea – see <http://www.biodeg.org/bagbansandtaxes.html>

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