



OXO-BIODEGRADABLE PLASTICS ASSOCIATION

Website www.biodeg.org E-mail info@biodeg.org
Registered office 12 Compton Road, London SW19 7QD

A not-for profit Association limited by Guarantee
EU reg. no. 186937011291-26



OPA STATEMENT ON DEFRA TENDER

10th January 2014

DEFRA issued a tender in December 2013 for a publicly-funded Project on Biodegradable Plastic Carrier Bags.

The successful tenderers were Aquapak Polymers and Axion Consulting.

Although these companies seem to have expertise in recycling, the tender was for a project on biodegradable plastic carrier bags, and they appear to have no expertise with biodegradable polymers.

Indeed, Axion's evidence to the Environment Select Committee is AGAINST an exemption for biodegradable bags.

A Consortium consisting of Europackaging and Symphony Environmental and Nottingham University submitted a tender.

Euro Packaging have an extensive expertise in blown film extrusion, with an annual capacity of circa 100,000 tonnes, and currently supply carriers into the UK's major grocery retailers. They have experience of working with biodegradable technologies. They have on site recycling capabilities, and a vast know-how of the implementation of recycled materials into flexible film products.

They said in the tender "Through a partnership with Symphony Environmental Technologies, Euro Packaging intend to utilise the d₂w additive as an environmentally responsible solution for vest carrier manufacture. ... Oxo-biodegradable products have successfully overcome the commercial obstacle often associated with added value films due to their additive based application, and their compatibility with polyethylene has enabled carrier bag manufacture with uncompromised mechanical performance ... It has been demonstrated by independent LCA (Intertek Report May 2012 A Life Cycle Assessment of Oxo-biodegradable, Compostable and Conventional Bags) that a high-density polyethylene carrier bag incorporating oxo-biodegradable technology is the most environmentally efficient method of manufacture of a carrier bag. The addition of oxo-biodegradable technology enhances the overall environmental impact. .. At the end of its useful life the bag can be collected and recycled along with conventional plastic packaging waste. However, if the bag escapes this path and becomes litter- the oxo-biodegradable technology will allow a rapid and harmless bioassimilation of the waste material....."

"In a landfill scenario the oxo-biodegradable bag will continue to degrade whilst oxygen is available. Once the anaerobic zone is reached the bag will cease degrading and become a carbon sink- preventing the uncontrolled emission of methane (a greenhouse gas 23 times more harmful than CO₂). As the oxo-biodegradable carrier bag does not interfere with the conventional recycling stream the costly exercise of detection and separation is not required... Symphony's d₂w additive is an already proven technology, and critically, as the

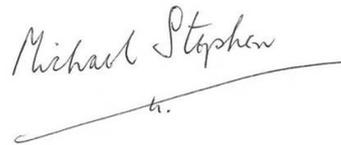
technology is based upon being compatible with Polythylene, film has already been proven to be extruded using existing blown film equipment and technology, with no need for process modification...."

"With existing UK manufacturing sites already established, Euro Packaging are perfectly positioned to develop a UK based dedicated flexible film extrusion and conversion facility in conjunction with this proposal....As the bio-based materials are 3 times more costly than conventional and/or oxo-biodegradable plastics, cannot be recycled, have a much poorer LCA score and cannot offer the same efficient functionality as modern well developed plastic polymers- their use is highly unsatisfactory. Their state-of-the-art warehousing and customer-driven transport strategy enable them to distribute up to 1,300 pallets of products every day to customers in over 20 different countries. They also employ more than 1,000 professionals worldwide; generate revenues exceeding £150 million. "

The combined expertise of Europackaging, Symphony and Nottingham University is exactly what is required for this project.

The OPA would like to know who DEFRA appointed as assessors for this tender. We would be concerned if they included some of the people well known to be prejudiced against oxo-biodegradable plastics to whom DEFRA so often turn for advice.

We may have to ask the courts to rule on this matter if a contract is awarded to Aquapak and Axion.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael Stephen". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line that extends to the right.

Michael Stephen
Chairman
OPA