

Column 6.10.25

MYTH-BUSTER

Myth – Compostable plastic converts into compost which is useful for the soil, and fits into a circular economy as organic recycling.

Fact – Plastic marketed as “compostable” is required by EN13432 and ASTM D6400 to convert into CO₂ gas, not into compost, and it is therefore deceptive to market it as compostable. Sending it to a composting facility is disposal, not recycling, and it is therefore a linear process, not circular. Industrial composters do not want plastic of any kind in their facility. See <https://www.biodeg.org/subjects-of-interest/composting/>

SYMPHONY’S CEO IN THE USA

Michael Laurier, was invited to speak at the prestigious Annual Conference of the Society of Plastics Engineers (SPE) in Pittsburgh USA on 24th September 2025.

SPE is the leading technical society for the global plastics industry. It fosters technical innovation and industry competitiveness through scientific development and commercialization. With over 22,500 members from 84 different countries, SPE is the largest and best-known plastics professional society in the world.

Laurier said:

“Plastics are immensely useful, but the problem is that they can create microplastics and lie or float around for decades if they get into the open environment, but if they are made with Symphony’s d2w masterbatch they will quickly biodegrade. **This is the only way to prevent plastic in the environment from accumulating there for decades.**

Traditional “Reduce-re-use-recycle” policies are not adequate, and the problem is getting worse.

- Symphony has for 25 years been testing and developing masterbatch technologies under its d2w® brand, that transform conventional plastics into biodegradable materials at end of useful life, addressing plastic pollution through scientifically proven biodegradable technology.
- Conventional plastics are hydrophobic and resist microbial degradation, so d2w technology includes a catalyst which accelerates oxidation. This converts polymers into hydrophilic short-chain materials that microbes can consume.
- This degradation process does not require special conditions, so there is no need to take the plastic to a composting facility. It will occur anywhere, in the presence of air and microbes. Light, and heat are not necessary.
- Independent studies demonstrate over 90% biodegradation of d2w polyethylene and polypropylene films, and confirm that no microplastics are left behind.

- d2w technology meets international standards such as ASTM D6954, British BS 8472, French AFNOR T51-808, SASO 2879, and UAE 5009:2009.
- Products made with d2w are conventional plastics with less than 1% prodegradant masterbatch, and are compatible with existing recycling streams without separation. This is proved by international recycling studies.
- Extensive research from universities and institutes worldwide, including marine biodegradation studies, supports the biodegradability and environmental safety of d2w-biodegradable plastics, and proves assimilation by microbes.
- Biodegradation of plastics made with d2w has been independently tested to prove no adverse effects on plant growth or earthworms, and no endocrine disruption.

NOVAMONT and ENI

In my column last week, I noted that the Italian Competition & Markets Authority had decided that Novamont abused its dominant position in the market by engaging in exclusionary practices targeting competitors. The Authority imposed a 30,359,000 euro fine on Novamont S.p.A., with an additional 1,701,052 fine imposed jointly and severally with its parent company ENI S.p.A.

I see now that ENI has been fined another 336 million euros for fixing the selling price of a fuel component, thereby restricting competition and harming end consumers.

In addition, for more than ten years Novamont and others have been lobbying against oxo-biodegradable plastic, ostensibly out of concern for the environment, but in reality to damage competitors who supply a more useful type of biodegradable plastic. They seem to think that this kind of behaviour is an acceptable business practice.

Although this behaviour is intended to damage competitors, is also damaging the environment, because not enough companies are using oxo-biodegradable technology, which is the only way to prevent plastic in the environment from accumulating there for decades.

It is time for the Environment Committee of the EU Parliament to investigate the lobbying of their predecessors by Novamont and others in 2018 when they were legislating on Single-use Plastics.

How was it that the Committee included a clause restricting “oxo-degradable” plastics in the 2019 SUP Directive by circumventing Arts 68-73 of the REACH Regulation; without any environmental impact assessment or socio-economic analysis; on the basis of a consultants’ report which did not recommend a ban; and without any justification from their own Rapporteurs, or a report from their own experts, the European Chemicals

Agency - who were unable to agree with them that this type of plastic created microplastics. See <https://www.biodeg.org/eu-news/>