



NATIONAL FORUM – EASTERN CANADA

Decision-Making for Less Food Loss and Waste, Less Packaging Waste

SUMMARY REPORT | NOVEMBER 2020



The National Zero Waste Council, an initiative of Metro Vancouver, is a leadership initiative bringing together governments, business, and non-profit organizations to advance waste prevention in Canada through the design, production and use of goods.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Agriculture and
Agri-Food Canada

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Agroalimentaire Canada

INTRODUCTION

A national forum to capture input from Eastern Canada stakeholders (for participants in Ontario, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia) was held on October 7, 2020. This document provides a summary of the event.

FORUM OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

This Eastern Canada National Forum was designed to bring together decision-makers in the public and private sectors to consider how best to implement recommendations from the research report *Less Food Loss and Waste, Less Packaging Waste*. Implementation considerations were discussed in the context of emerging Canadian policy initiatives around plastics, agriculture and climate; increased attention within the Canadian marketplace to meeting business performance targets; and COVID-19 business adaptations. The session was intended to help guide the direction for how businesses and governments can work together through policy and practice to address FLW and packaging issues.

Less Food Loss and Waste, Less Packaging Waste
REPORT SUMMARY

National Forum – Eastern Canada
Decision-making for
Less Food Loss and Waste, Less Packaging Waste

The intersection of food loss and waste (FLW) and packaging is one of the most challenging areas confronting circular economy efforts in the food industry, even more so now with COVID-19 causing an unsustainable rise in single-use plastics.

You are invited to join a virtual workshop on October 7th to guide the direction for how policy and industry practice can address this challenge.

In 2020, the National Zero Waste Council (NZWC) and collaborators commissioned a report, *Less Food Loss and Waste, Less Packaging Waste* to explore the issue of FLW and packaging waste, and provide recommendations. To help facilitate the adoption of these recommendations, NZWC is hosting a series of National Forums.

The virtual workshop on **October 7**, will guide the direction for how businesses and governments can work together to address FLW and packaging issues.

It will look specifically at problematic and unnecessary packaging in the context of an emerging Canadian, circular economy for plastics, increased attention to meeting business performance targets, and COVID-19 business adaptations.

Your voice is critical, to ensure that the Priorities and Actions that emerge from the session fully represent all stakeholders. Please block your calendar now and register below.

Hear from quiet speakers including lead researcher Martin Goodch, VCM, Ron Lemake, CPMA with their latest industry guidance; and Manuel Görrn, Brand Engagement Manager, Nature's Path.

REGISTER HERE

October 7, 2020
1:00 pm - 3:30 pm EST
Zoom Platform (details provided upon registration)

zerowASTE
NATIONAL ZERO WASTE COUNCIL

Funding generously provided by:
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Agriculture of Agricultural in Canada

REGISTERED ORGANIZATIONS

The following organizations were represented at the forum in various stakeholder groups across the food and beverage and packaging industries. Approximately 82 people registered for the event, 54 of them attended, and they represent 34 organizations. The organizations who registered are listed below.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT(2)	PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS (5)	MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS (7)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment & Climate Change Canada • Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government of Alberta • Government of Manitoba • Government of Nova Scotia • Government of New Brunswick • Government of Ontario 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Guelph • City of Toronto • City of Halifax • York Region • City of Halifax • Metro Vancouver • City of Brampton
FOOD & BEVERAGE INDUSTRY – RETAIL (6)	FOOD & BEVERAGE INDUSTRY – MANUFACTURING (11)	FOOD & BEVERAGE INDUSTRY - FOOD SERVICE (3)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longo's • Costco • Loblaws • Walmart • Fresh City Farms • The Beer Store 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McCain Foods • Ippolito • Nature's Path Foods • Club Coffee • Saputo • Kraft-Heinz • FGF Brands • EarthFresh • Maple Leaf Foods • VG Meats • Eden Valley Poultry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compass Group • Sodexo • Carbon Café
PACKAGING INDUSTRY (2)	INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS (5)	OTHER STAKEHOLDERS (12)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Friendlier Company • Loop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycle BC • Canadian Produce Marketing Association • Multi-Materials Stewardship Board (Newfoundland & Labrador) • Divert Nova Scotia • Recycling Council of Ontario 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conestoga College • Seneca College • Value Chain Management International • Commission for Economic Cooperation (CEC) • Perennia • Reimagine • BASF • Informa Research • Canadian Centre for Food Integrity (CCFI) • CSA Group • Food Venture Group • Ikea

AGENDA

The event took place on Wednesday, October 7, 2020 from 1:00-3:30 pm EST, and the workshop covered the following topics and activities:

TABLE 1. AGENDA – NATIONAL FORUM EASTERN CANADA, OCTOBER 7, 2020

TIMING	TOPIC
1-1:10 pm	Introduction
1:10-1:24	<i>VCMI (Martin Gooch, CEO) - Overview of Recommendations from NZWC Report <i>Less Food Loss and Waste, Less Packaging Waste</i></i>
1:24-1:31	<i>Canadian Produce Marketing Association (Ron Lemaire, President) - Preferred Packaging Recommendations for Fruit & Vegetable Industry</i>
1:31-1:38	<i>Compass Group (Jana Vodicka, CSR Manager) - Challenges and Innovations of Packaging in Food Service</i>
1:38-1:45	<i>Nature's Path Foods (Manuel Gorin, Brand Engagement Manager) - Packaging Innovations in Manufacturing</i>
1:45-1:50	<i>Loop (Anthony Rossi, VP of Business Development) - Alternative Business Models - Reusable Packaging Innovations</i>
1:50-2:00	Transition to Breakout Rooms
2:00-2:45	Breakout Rooms Discuss the following questions and come to a group consensus: 1. Considering Canada's current policy and practice landscape, and based on your organization's experience and expertise, which two of the recommendations presented today would move the needle most on tackling packaging waste and food loss + waste? 2. What are the barriers to achieving this and what role can your organization play?
2:45-3:00	Gallery Walk/Report Back Breakout room facilitators identify trends and share consensus responses to the breakout room questions
3:00-3:25	Plenary Period for questions from the audience about the presentations and questions discussed during the workshop
3:25-3:30 pm	Wrap-Up

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

The following ten recommendations were presented by Martin Gooch from VCMI in the first speaker presentation and laid the foundation for the forum.

1. FLW/Packaging Prevention - Loose/Bulk Food Sales and Reusable/Refillable Containers at the Consumer Level
2. FLW/Packaging Prevention and Type - LCA Analysis and Follow up Implementation
3. FLW/Packaging Prevention - Goal Setting with Monitoring and Measurement
4. Packaging Prevention - Reusable and Refillable packaging – Across the Supply Chain
5. Packaging Types - Establish Standing Operating Procedures for Packaging
6. Packaging Types - Accelerate development of new/improved packaging materials
7. End of Life Management - Support Efficient Collection and Processing for Recyclable and Compostable Packaging
8. National - Various - Legislative Initiatives such as extended producer responsibility, packaging certification, postconsumer recycled content
9. National - End of Life Management - National Recycling and Composting Strategy
10. National - End of Life Management - National Recycling and Organics Processing Infrastructure (e.g., investment and innovation targets, funding)

The recommendations were discussed and prioritized during the breakout room sessions¹, and informed the next steps of this report.

¹ More details on each of the recommendations can be found in the NZWC report [here](#)



FORUM FINDINGS

SPEAKER PROCEEDS

Following VCMi Martin Gooch's presentation, four speakers presented perspectives on the nexus between packaging and food waste from various parts of the food and beverage sector – produce sector, food service, manufacturing, and closed-loop packaging handler and distributor. Key themes from each of the presentations are highlighted below.

Canadian Produce Marketing Association shared that 5.1% of plastic in the food industry comes from the fresh produce sector. Consumers are complex in demands; the data shows that consumers want packaging that does not impact convenience, price, or taste. There is a need for both company-by-company action (both incremental improvements like light-weighting and bulk packaging and transformative improvements like bioplastics and genomics) as well as system-wide action that addresses public trust.

Compass Canada is working with operators and suppliers to tackle single-use plastics (projects including rationalizing skus, eliminating certain single-use plastics, understanding problematic front- and back-of-house packaging). They have piloted concepts such as “the spot” - a campus café that serves repurposed food, minimal disposable packaging, and a “sample before you buy” program. Since they have locations across Canada, the varied regional and municipal waste management programs make decision making difficult and heighten internal challenges which include supply contracts, product cost and access, and lack of education across the organization.

Nature's Path Foods have set a goal for 100% of their packaging to be compostable, recyclable, or reusable by 2025. Their initiatives and packaging models to support this goal include packaging reduction, using recyclable plastic approved by How2Recycled, selling in bulk, and partnering with Loop. They believe that consumers are eager to support companies that innovate, test, and share learnings, but still face some barriers when trying to change packaging formats such as machinery upgrades, line efficiency impacts, and high premiums.

Loop believes that refillable, durable packaging can become the norm, and packaging can become an asset (the more durable the package, the lower the cost per fill). They explain that durability enables reusability, design, and new features and that by making sustainability “irresistible” with beautiful design, it will encourage adoption. From their learnings, distribution and take-back are the greatest challenges for reusable packaging but will improve as more companies come onboard and retailers get involved. Therefore, more widespread uptake is needed in Canada for this to be a viable solution.

These presentations provided context and unique perspectives on the opportunities and challenges for the breakout room discussions. They are available at nzwc.ca.

BREAKOUT SESSION FINDINGS

The participants were split into five breakout groups. The groups were tasked with responding to the following questions:

1. Considering Canada's current policy and practice landscape, and based on your organization's experience and expertise, which two of the recommendations presented today would move the needle most on tackling packaging waste and food loss + waste?
2. What are the barriers to achieving this and what role can your organization play?

The discussion notes were tracked using Miro software and each facilitator reported the results to the group in plenary. As is shown in Figure 2, one recommendation received the highest number of endorsements, and since the recommendations were presented in logical groupings (FLW/packaging prevention, packaging types, national, etc.), there was a grouping of recommendations that also stood out.

National Forum Eastern Canada Decision Making for Less Food Loss and Waste, Less Packaging

Question 1: Considering Canada's current policy and practice landscape, and based on your organization's experience and expertise, which **two of the recommendations presented today would move the needle most** on tackling packaging waste and food loss + waste?

Question 2: What are the barriers to achieving this **and what role can your organization play?**

Group 5

2 - LCA for secondary and tertiary (packaging that the consumer doesn't see is huge)	2 - LCA / data on packaging (to help with decision making)	Gov of Manitoba - barriers: red tape, buy-in from public, lack of infrastructure / investment	MMSB barriers - buy-in to make it a priority and then resources put towards it
8 - National legislation - EPR (accountability, everyone has to do it)	3 - goal setting	What gov of manitoba can do - better communication about recycling programs with public and other stakeholders	What MMSB can do - data gathering for LCA to help province with goal setting
5 - SOP for packaging types (gives confidence in decision making)	2/3 - holistic LCA, data gathering to know where the biggest 'bang for buck' is	What Compass can do - have internal conversations across all divisions/depts and create one goal, transparency / knowledge sharing outside of organization	Municipal barrier - compostable plastic contamination (innovation getting ahead of infrastructure)
9 - Visibility of region by region end-of-life (gives confidence in packaging decision making)	8 - scaled up systems interventions from both province and federal (stability for companies knowing about the even playing field)	Compass - barriers: large footprint across Canada and many players, competitive market	What can municipalities do - share knowledge through roundtables, OMAFRA, continuous discussion
2/3 - need good data	9 - national strategy (that allows it to be voluntary)	What AAFC can do - standardizing methodology for measurement framework, fostering engagement/collaboration for strategy	What can government do - play a convening role in making sure LCA info is available province by province

FIGURE 1. DIGITAL WHITEBOARD BREAKOUT GROUP NOTES EXAMPLE

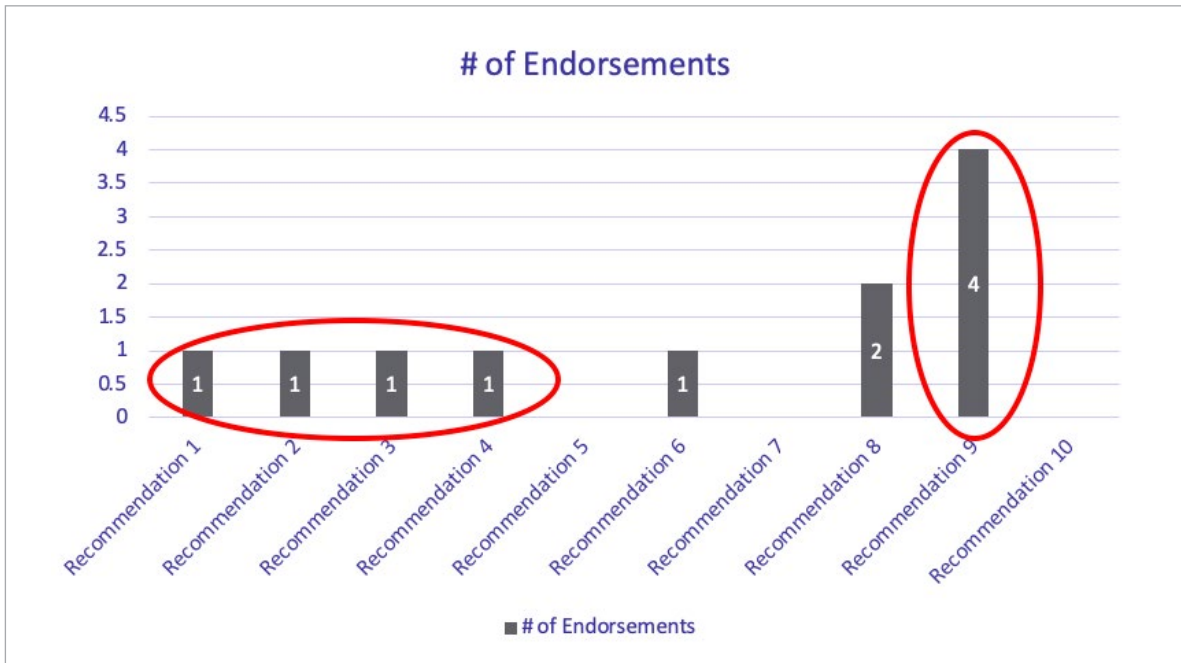


FIGURE 2: NUMBER OF BREAKOUT GROUP ENDORSEMENTS BY VCMi RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation #9² and #8³ received the highest number of endorsements, and recommendations #1-4 received an equal number of endorsements, which points to a trend in the data. These results have been analyzed and explained below as two major findings.

Finding #1 – Participants feel that a focused effort to drive a national strategy or legislation is needed.

The recommendation for a national recycling and composting strategy (#9), was the most popular recommendation, with four votes. Over one third of forum participants came from municipal, provincial, or federal governments, and the sentiment was shared across all types of stakeholders, including those in government. Participants expressed the need for harmonization across municipalities and regions as the fragmented end-of-life management system makes decision-making difficult for businesses and confuses consumers. As a precursor

to legislation, a national strategy would tackle these differences and help businesses introduce the right packaging solutions. This echoed numerous speakers’ findings, as they too are challenged with making the right internal decisions when operating in multiple provinces and regions across Canada.

The recommendation for legislative initiatives (#8) received the second highest number of votes and shared the sentiment that a national approach is needed. Many participants felt that a national strategy would not be enough to drive action – that stronger incentives need to be put in place. They believe Canada needs to

2 Recommendation #9 - National - End of Life Management - National Recycling and Composting Strategy

3 Recommendation #8 - National - Various - Legislative Initiatives such as extended producer responsibility, packaging certification, postconsumer recycled content

introduce legislative initiatives such as extended producer responsibility, packaging certification, or postconsumer recycled content minimums to “even the playing field” for businesses and spur innovation, aware of how this type of legislation has worked in other countries. Extended producer responsibility (EPR) was the more popularly noted legislation, identified in every group.

The groups provided rationale as to why legislation is needed. As our economy now sits, moving towards sustainable packaging decisions is not economically viable for a business in the current low-cost, low-margin marketplace, so legislation is needed to make these transitions feasible. Local governments are developing EPR guidelines in isolation from one another, and this is creating further confusion around standards and guidelines between regions. A harmonized, national legislated effort, ideally EPR, is needed.

If national harmonization was to be introduced, participants noted implementation would need to be gradual as infrastructure varies greatly between jurisdictions and would need to be transitioned. In addition, to address the red tape of legislated effort, stakeholders from all industries and perspectives would need to come together and work towards a common national vision for packaging and food loss + waste prevention. The forum was a good indication that these stakeholders are ready for this conversation.

Finding #2 – Participants feel that individual companies need to take a variety of initiatives to prevent food loss and waste.

There was an even spread of endorsement across each of the food loss and waste and packaging prevention recommendations, with one endorsement each. The data suggests that there is not one single recommendation that most participants endorse, rather, prevention will require a variety of efforts. This is a stark difference to the overwhelming consensus on a national strategy or legislation needed.

Participants felt that companies needed to move to bulk food sales and reusable containers (recommendation #1), conduct life cycle analysis on food and packaging (recommendation #2), set goals and monitor and measure them (recommendation #3) and move to reusable packaging across the supply chain (recommendation #4). This spread shows that a wide variety of actions will need to be taken to prevent food loss + waste and packaging waste, and commentary on each recommendation is explained below.

To support bulk food sales and reusable containers, participants expressed the need for scalability and widespread adoption by large retailers, echoing the comments by Loop about what it will take to make reusable, durable packaging the norm in Canada.

Participants expressed the need for life cycle analysis and data on food waste and packaging to help companies and government make the right decisions. Participants suggested that the three levels of government work together and play a convening role to make sure life cycle data is available by province. They noted that measurement has focused primarily on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and governments need to see the overlap between emissions and waste and dedicate resources to tracking waste and waste prevention data.

This data in turn would support the next recommendation of goal setting and measuring and monitoring. Participants noted that only with good data can they set reduction goals and measure and monitor results.

CONCLUSIONS

The Eastern Canada National Forum – *Decision-Making for Less Food Loss and Waste, and Less Packaging Waste* took place October 7, 2020. It was one of three forums completed in fall 2020 to review and prioritize key recommendations stemming from the report *Less Food Loss and Waste, Less Packaging Waste*. It is intended that the aggregated feedback from these three forums will help inform next steps for addressing packaging options and reducing food loss and waste in Canada.

Many organizations representing business, government and community – from throughout the food and packaging supply chains – registered and attended the session. Participants heard from guest speakers who shared inspiring and context-

To promote reusable packaging across the supply chain, participants suggested working with early adopters to help inform others, especially during the pandemic. They suggested economic and policy levers such as bans on certain waste items, and funding for projects focused on greenhouse gas emissions reductions from waste reduction. Municipalities would need to work with local stakeholders to develop standards and policies that work.

Through the discussions, it became clear that a variety of efforts would be needed to be taken to support companies in their prevention of food loss and waste, and packaging, including primary and secondary bulk food sales and reusable containers, data collection and life cycle analysis, and company-specific goal setting, and that companies would need to work with government and other stakeholders to make it happen.

setting case studies; and identified for themselves which of ten recommendations made the most sense for them to support / or implement. Two key priorities resulted from the session:

1. Focused effort driving a national strategy or legislation
2. A variety of initiatives taken at an individual company-level including bulk food sales and reusable primary and secondary packaging, lifecycle analysis, and goal setting.

These findings, in conjunction with others from the Western and Quebec National Forums, can serve to guide the National Zero Waste Council's next steps around the issue of food loss and waste, and packaging.

