



NATIONAL FORUM – QUEBEC EDITION

Less Food Loss and Waste, Less Packaging Waste

SUMMARY REPORT | DECEMBER 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

This report was prepared by RECYC-QUÉBEC and Éco Entreprises Québec.

The Quebec Edition of the National Forum was organized by the National Zero Waste Council in cooperation with RECYC-QUÉBEC and Éco Entreprises Québec.

INTRODUCTION

The National Zero Waste Council (NZWC), in partnership with RECYC-QUÉBEC, Éco Entreprises Québec and PAC Packaging Consortium, commissioned a research report entitled *Less Food Loss and Waste, Less Packaging Waste*. The report was prepared by the Value Chain Management International (VCMI) consulting firm. In the fall of 2020, three forums were held in Western Canada, Eastern Canada and Quebec to bring together food and packaging industry stakeholders in order to get their input regarding key recommendations stemming from the report. The NZWC, in cooperation with RECYC-QUÉBEC and Éco Entreprises Québec (ÉEQ), organized a virtual meeting on October 21, 2020, in order to gather feedback from Quebec participants.

This document provides a summary of meeting details, presentations and topics as well as a list of participating organizations and participants' ideas expressed during breakout group discussions. Their suggestions will help define the steps to be undertaken to prevent food loss and waste (FLW) and packaging across the value chain.

EVENT OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVE

The objective of the Quebec Forum was to bring together various private and public sector stakeholders in the province to discuss the best ways to implement the recommendations resulting from the research report.

The discussions were held in the context of emerging initiatives by industry and various levels of government to reduce the use of single-use plastics. While consumers have expectations regarding packaging reduction, consideration must also be given to the adjustments food services are required to make as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.



PARTICIPANTS

Forum participants included representatives from two levels of government, municipal organizations as well as the food and packaging industries. A list of participating organizations is provided in the following table.

<p>FEDERAL GOVERNMENT</p>	<p>PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT</p>	<p>MUNICIPAL ORGANIZATIONS</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture and Agri Food Canada (AAFC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministère de l’Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l’Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ) • Ministère de l’Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques (MELCC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communauté métropolitaine de Québec (CMQ) • City of Montreal
<p>BUSINESSES IN THE AGRI-FOOD SECTOR</p>	<p>RETAILERS AND FOOD SERVICES</p>	<p>BUSINESSES IN THE WASTE MANAGEMENT SECTOR</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agropur • Québec Produce Marketing Association (QPMA) • Bonduelle Americas Long Life • La Transformerie • PRANA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quebec Retail Council (CQCD) • Épicerie LOCO • Metro • Supermarchés Avril 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastrec
<p>ORGANIZATIONS IN THE PACKAGING OR ECODSIGN SECTOR</p>	<p>NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS</p>	<p>OTHER STAKEHOLDERS</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • École de design de l’Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) • Institut de technologie des emballages et du génie alimentaire (ITEGA) • World Design Organization (WDO) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Québec food banks • Earth Day • La Tablee des chefs • Les AmiEs de la Terre de Québec • RÉGAL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AGÉCO • BASF Canada

PROGRAM

The Quebec Edition of the National Forum was held as a virtual Zoom platform meeting, with simultaneous English and French translation. The event was held on Wednesday, October 21, 2020, from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. The meeting agenda was as follows.

TIME	TOPICS
1:00 p.m.	Introduction Sophie Langlois-Blouin, Vice-President, Operational Performance, RECYC-QUÉBEC, member of the board of the National Zero Waste Council and Forum host
1:10 p.m.	Recommendations of the Less Food Loss and Waste, Less Packaging Waste report Martin Gooch, CEO, Value Chain Management International
1:25 p.m.	Case Study: Les emballages de PRANA (PRANA Packaging) Émilie Jobin Poirier, Sustainable Development Manager, PRANA
1:35 p.m.	Case Study: Le zéro déchet en épicerie (Zero Waste at the Grocery Store) Andréanne Laurin, Chief Executive and co-founder of Épiceries LOCO
1:50 p.m.	Virtual survey Selection of three recommendations
2:00 p.m.	Breakout rooms Discussions on the three selected recommendations
2:35 p.m.	Plenary session
2:55 p.m.	Conclusion

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

VCMI CEO Martin Gooch, head researcher, first presented the ten recommendations resulting from the *Less Food Loss and Waste, Less Packaging Waste* research report:

1. **Food Loss and Waste (FLW)/Packaging Prevention** – Loose/bulk food sales and reusable/refillable containers (at the consumer level)
2. **FLW/Packaging Prevention** – Support for life cycle analyses
3. **FLW/Packaging Prevention** – Goal setting (for waste reduction) with monitoring and measurement
4. **Packaging Prevention** – Accelerate buy-in and implementation of reusables (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 for efficient collection and processing of recyclable and compostable packaging
8. **National** – Legislative initiatives such as extended producer responsibility, packaging certification, post-consumer 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)

CASE STUDY

Two speakers gave presentations on the challenges their companies face with regard to food loss and waste prevention and the use of environmentally responsible packaging that meets consumer expectations.

The first speaker, Émilie Jobin Poirier, Sustainable Development Manager at PRANA, discussed packaging choices and consumers' perceptions about the company's environmental responsibility.

The second speaker, Andréanne Laurin, co-founder of Épicerie LOCO, explained the challenges she and her team are taking up with regard to bulk food sales and packaging reduction.

Both presentations can be viewed (in French) at [this link](#), starting at minute twenty-seven.

SURVEY TO SELECT RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the presentation of report recommendations and the two case studies, a virtual survey was conducted among participants in order to select the three recommendations to be discussed during virtual breakouts. The following recommendations were selected:

1. **Food Loss and Waste (FLW)/Packaging Prevention**
 - Loose/bulk food sales and reusable/refillable containers (at the consumer level)
4. **Packaging Prevention** - Accelerate buy-in and implementation of reusables (across the supply chain)
6. **Packaging Types** – Accelerate development of new/improved packaging materials



FORUM FINDINGS

GROUP DISCUSSION FEEDBACK

Participants were asked to answer the following two questions for each of the three selected recommendations:

Based on your organization's approach to FLW and packaging:

1. What are your suggestions for implementing this recommendation?
2. What role can your organization play in implementing this recommendation?

Discussion notes were simultaneously tracked using a Miro platform digital white board, and can be viewed [here](#).

Summary of Discussions on Recommendation 1

Although bulk food sales generally contribute to reducing packaging waste, certain foods cannot be sold that way. Therefore, to reduce FLW and packaging waste, technological innovations for preserving food, other than packaging, must be developed and highlighted. These innovations could serve as a technological base on which industries can build similar models. On a parallel basis, consumers should be surveyed to determine whether they would be receptive to new ways of selling food. A well-

presented innovation that is understood by consumers could be profitable. It is important to rethink packaging and product marketing from the perspective of how the product is used, whether packaged or not. What's more, consumers must understand how to properly store foods at home in order to prevent waste. National awareness campaigns must be part of any planned initiatives.

Summary of Discussions on Recommendation 4

Participants mentioned the difficulties of setting up reusable container networks due logistical challenges across the supply chain. A single network of reusable containers for several food products would resolve such challenges, but other problems will then crop up, including container cleaning and collection processes. Documented case studies on existing networks could draw other businesses to adopt this type of packaging. Financial incentives for using reusable containers should be favoured over regulatory restrictions on packaging design. Deposit systems for reusable containers should also be considered for secondary and tertiary packaging upstream from retail sales. Another approach is to encourage consumers to bring in their own reusable containers to package the products they buy, somewhat like what some grocery stores are now doing. That would relieve businesses from logistical problems and cleaning requirements.

Summary of Discussions on Recommendation 6

Participants mentioned the need to consider end-of-life management issues at the design stage. Waste often occurs when packaging is not designed to be processed by waste management systems, whether it is reusable or single-use. In some cases, packaging may not even be designed to prevent food loss and waste. Packaging ecodesign guidelines must therefore be developed. Ecodesign criteria need to be established in consideration of current waste management infrastructures, including minimum recycled content in packaging and packaging compostability and recyclability. Once there is a consensus, clear communications and information can be more easily conveyed to businesses, and value chain stakeholders would be in a better position to make wise packaging choices. Life cycle analyses of various packaging types would also enable manufacturers to make decisions based on established environmentally responsible criteria.

CONCLUSION

Participants in the Quebec National Forum held on October 21, 2020, examined the key recommendations stemming from the report entitled [Less Food Loss and Waste, Less Packaging Waste](#). Two speakers provided insight into how the recommendations can be implemented in food sector businesses and the

unique challenges of doing so. Discussions on three of the report's recommendations generated ideas on their implementation and the high-level decisions that can facilitate the process. Participants' comments will help inform the next steps for addressing packaging options and reducing food loss and waste in Canada.

