

FACTSHEET No. 16

BREAD AND THE ENVIRONMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Members of The Federation of Bakers are committed to maintaining and promoting safe and environmentally responsible practices for the benefit of consumers, the communities in which they operate and their employees. In order to achieve this objective. The Federation recommends that companies implement strategies to ensure they and their employees:

- conform with all relevant legislation and codes of practice
- follow good manufacturing practice
- recognise the need to provide customers with safe, wholesome products
- take action to minimise emissions to air, land and water
- make efficient use of energy and take action to reduce consumption
- make efficient use of raw materials and packaging
- seek continuous improvement in environmental performance
- monitor progress towards agreed objectives.

In developing these strategies Members of the Federation of Bakers recognise the need to raise awareness of environmental issues within their companies and train employees in environmental best practice.

There are however some issues on which generically the bread industry is different to many other businesses.

1. Energy Efficiency

- Baking is very energy intensive by its very nature.
- Large plants operate 24/7 to make sure that bread is provided as efficiently as possible with negligible warming up and cooling down of our ovens.

2. Raw Materials

- Wheat, the major raw material used in bread is largely sourced from the UK and the remainder grown in Canada/America and Europe.
- Soya is used but is grown under strict non-GM rules.
- Palm Oil is an important and versatile raw material for the baking industry and small quantities are used in bread products. Whilst palm oil is cost-effective, it is also a key raw material because of its unique physical properties, in that it is one of the few vegetable oils to have a naturally solid fraction at room temperature. Our members do consider the sustainability implications of just using palm oil, with many being members of RSPO and buying sustainable palm or directly supporting sustainable palm oil production.

3. Packaging

The average loaf uses only ~10g of packaging for 800g of bread – this is a tiny proportion of packaging in comparison to most food products and all polythene bread bags can be recycled via retailer carrier bag recycling schemes. For more information as to where you can do this please visit: <https://www.recyclenow.com/local-recycling>

4. Plastic Bread Baskets

- Plastic bread baskets have been used for many years to transport bread from the bakery to the shop. They are reusable.
- Studies have shown that the environmental impact arising from the manufacture of an item of packaging becomes insignificant if it is used more than 15 to 20 times. Bread baskets meet this criterion.
- The introduction of the current legislation on packaging waste has highlighted the environmental advantages of reusable containers for the transport of all types of goods.
- The only environmental impact of the distribution of bread by plastic bread baskets is:
 - Transport costs – these are incurred whatever packaging is used
 - Basket washing – this is essential in the interests of hygiene and food safety.

5. Distribution

Bread is provided to order, from the smallest corner shop to the largest supermarket and delivered the next day. Most products are produced in batches and then sold when needed. Because of its shelf life most products are made daily and delivered direct to store.

We do lots to ensure we minimise the environmental impact of bakery distribution, from modern, low emission vehicles, to efficient routing of vehicles and driver training. Not only that, most of our deliveries take place in the early morning so don't clog the roads during the day.

The supply of bread can result in lots of food miles – something like 130m miles per annum, but it is only by delivering bread daily to every shop and store that we can get the freshest bread to you. It is also worth noting that 80% of UK consumers are within 30 miles of a bakery.