

Waitrose to halve packaging by 2016

Supermarket chain Waitrose has pledged to halve its packaging by 2016 against a 2005 baseline which will see three major changes to its products introduced to help it achieve this ambitious target.

The "Menu from Waitrose" range of prepared meals has been re-launched with a full redesign and packaging update for all of the 49 products. The width of the sleeves on the outside of the products has been decreased, resulting in a reduction of 33 tonnes of packaging per year - equivalent to a 20% overall weight saving. It is also the first time that a retailer has introduced aluminium trays, lacquered both internally and externally, which means customers can cook and serve the meals in the same tray and are still able to recycle it after use.

The Good to Go range of 190 snacks and sandwiches has also been re-launched, with packaging reductions totalling 25 tonnes per year. Changes include increasing the size of the clear window on sandwiches to allow better visibility of the product, cutting 11 tonnes of packaging per year. Pre-printed bags for fruit portions were also developed, saving 60% of the weight by taking off the label.

The packaging target is one of 12 CSR pledges launched in the Waitrose Way commitment which was published on May 2. The commitments include: reducing its carbon footprint; ensuring all fish is independently certified as sustainable by 2016; giving more than £10 million to charitable causes; and, improving the quality of care for animals.

Waitrose's head of sustainability and ethical sourcing, Quentin Clark, said: "As a nation we're getting busier, and lack of time means we need to be able to trust the retailer we are using. So when creating these pledges we made sure the emphasis was on how we're being part of the solution, now and in the future - we want it to be really easy for our customers to know we're doing the right thing."

