



Working for clean oceans – Keep plastic in a closed loop

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The figures are nothing short of alarming. By 2050 plastic will outweigh fish in the world's oceans if every year another nine million tons of plastic trash find their way to the sea via unsecured landfills and rivers.

Given the relevance and urgency of resolving the marine litter problem, the demand is growing among providers of private label products for sustainable packaging with a high share of recyclates, i.e., recycled plastic.

With its cooperation partners, the ECC Ecological Cleaning and Care GmbH of the Werner & Mertz Group is presenting the Recyclate Initiative at the international trade show PLMA (Private Label Manufacturers Association) in Amsterdam. The Initiative promotes effective recycling. The shared goal is the development of sustainable material cycles in which materials from the Yellow Bag source are used. After all, the solution for clean oceans lies on land. Only when plastic packaging is upcycled after its use and directed into a closed-loop system, there's no chance that it can end up as waste in the ocean.

On 21 and 22 May, five companies will present their latest developments and innovations to about 15,000 visitors from 120 countries at the "World of Private Label" trade show.

PET and HDPE bottles made of 100 percent used plastic

At the shared booth the initiative shows the entire cycle of a PET and HDPE bottle made of recyclates, from the collection of plastic waste in the Yellow Bag and the processing of recycled plastic into new packaging to the product on the retail shelf.

"Systalen PRIMUS by Der Grüne Punkt (The Green Dot) is produced from raw materials from the Yellow Bag and the Yellow Bin. This allows us to bring packaging from the supermarket shelf back to the supermarket shelf and thus close the cycle. The cleaning agent bottles for Ecological Cleaning and Care GmbH from Systalen, PRIMUS HDPE natur, shown at this year's PLMA are the best proof," says Dr. Markus Helftewes, Managing Director of The Green Dot.

Georg Lässer, Head of Corporate Recycling Services, BU ISBM & Recycling at ALPLA, summed up the activities of the packaging manufacturer: "At ALPLA we concentrate not just on our core business, which is the development and manufacture of sustainable packaging solutions with a high share of recyclates. For many years, we also have been working to improve the recycling process itself and to increase recycling rates. To that end, we continuously expand our activities in the recovery of used packaging. One example is the recently announced investment of seven million euros in the PET Recycling Team Wolfen. In the future, we will process PET waste from the Yellow Bag and, among other things, supply our in-house factory at Werner & Mertz. In doing so, we not only keep the raw material in a closed loop, but we also contribute to stemming climate change. The manufacture of recyclates emits up to 90 percent less CO₂ than the production of new goods."



ECC owner Reinhard Schneider says, "Since 2012 we have been engaged in the Recyclate Initiative with the goal of making our packaging completely recyclable while also using as much recyclate material as possible. As the world record holder for packaging of 100 percent recyclates, we happily support the trade with conversion and encourage our competitors too to follow our example – for the sake of the environment."

Recyclable stand-up pouch and sustainable printing inks

Besides ECC, The Green Dot and ALPLA, the Mondi Group and Siegwirk are joining the Recyclate Initiative booth for the first time this year.

Mondi, a global leader in packaging and paper, is presenting a completely recyclable stand-up pouch made of a monomaterial (polyethylene) with removable wrap-around label, which it developed within the Recyclate Initiative and according to the Cradle-to-Cradle® principle.

"Intelligently designed packaging can help reduce the amount of waste that enters the environment," says Thomas Kahl, Project Manager EcoSolutions, Mondi Consumer Packaging. "We are proud that with this new concept we have taken a giant step forwards in the circular economy."

Siegwerk is introducing still another Cradle-to-Cradle® project. In cooperation with Recyclate Initiative partners, the ink manufacturer developed a sustainable UV printing ink system for labels, which was given GOLD status of Material Health Certification (MHC).

The next project within the scope of the Recyclate Initiative is already underway. In the near future the previously mentioned recyclable stand-up pouch from Mondi is to be printed with C2C ink developed by Siegwirk.

"Siegwerk cares a great deal about product safety and is working intently on further improving the ecological footprint of its inks while retaining their strong color performance. We are proud to support the Recyclate Initiative with the development of printing inks that have earned GOLD status from Material Health Certification (MHC). With this achievement, we close another gap in the overall development of sustainable labels and packaging in the Cradle-to-Cradle principle," says Dr. Thomas Boucoiran, Global Head Brand Owner Collaboration at Siegwirk.

Special guest environmental activist Hannes Jaenicke

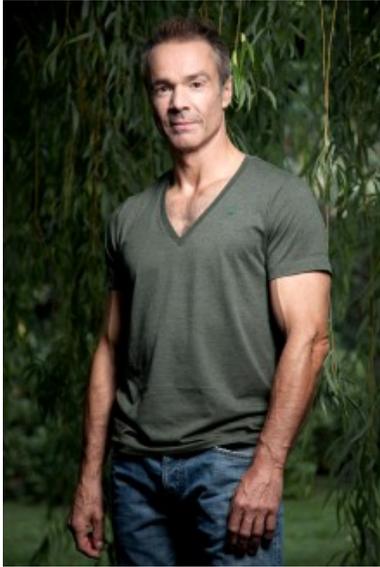


Photo Copyright: Hannes Jaenicke

On the first day of the show (21 May), visitors will have a chance to speak with environmental activist and actor Hannes Jaenicke. As a supporter of the Recyclate Initiative, he will be at the booth all day to answer questions and explain why he stands behind the initiative and publicizes its efforts in the media. A fresh and lively viral spot with Jaenicke as a plastic hunter will be shown for the first time at PLMA to a large audience of industry experts.

"Lots of consumers have the feeling that they cannot do anything effective to fight the plastic trashing of our oceans or can do something only with major restrictions in daily life," says Jaenicke. "The spot humorously shows that it is possible to contribute to environmental protection without having to make sacrifices. You can, for example buy packaging made of 100 percent recyclates."

Trade show for private labels

PLMA "World of Private Labels" is an international trade show. The Private Label Manufacturers Association (PLMA) with branch offices in Amsterdam and New York is responsible for the organization of the event. This year's show takes place in the RAI Exhibition Center in Amsterdam on 21 and 22 May. Some 2,600 exhibiting companies (retailers, wholesalers and manufacturers) will present their products in Food and Non-Food areas.

The founders and partners of the Recyclate Initiative will welcome visitors to the 54-square meter booth N-3423/N-3522/N-3524/N-3426 in Hall 8 (Non-Food area).

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