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Searle blasts Friends of the Earth over packaging claims

Simeon Goldstein, [packagingnews.co.uk](#), 16 March 2009

The Packaging Federation has hit back at Friends of the Earth (FoE) Scotland over an excess packaging campaign held by the environmental organisation.

FoE Scotland campaigners returned "excess" packaging materials to stores in Dunblane, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Perth at the weekend to try to encourage retailers to source more products locally and reduce packaging on food, particularly fruit and vegetables.

But Packaging Federation chief executive Dick Searle criticised FoE for failing to understand the role packaging played in the distribution network and to reduce product wastage.

"Do they look behind stores and consider the wastage rates for products with no packaging?" he asked.

Searle added the only way to achieve "significant change" in the amount of packaging used would be to "say to customers to stop buying certain products".

A FoE Scotland spokeswoman defended the campaign and said local sourcing would mean goods would require less packaging as they wouldn't need to be transported long distances.

"I just think the packaging [on fruit and vegetables] is completely unnecessary," she told *Packaging News*.

But Searle countered: "Removing packaging on fruit and vegetables it will impact the environment in terms of increased product wastage."

The FoE spokeswoman said another campaign would take place "in the summer".

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