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Searle slates waste guide's 'childish' pack reduction claims

Gordon Carson, [packagingnews.co.uk](#), 13 May 2008

Packaging Federation chief Dick Searle has slammed a new guide to tackling food waste as "incredibly childish" after it focused heavily on packaging reduction.

In its guide to reducing household waste, the Institution of Chemical Engineers (IChemE) urges consumers to "make the polluter pay" by "removing unnecessary packaging and leaving it at the checkout".

"Suppliers will soon get the message," adds the guide, which was published last week after the Waste & Resources Action Programme (Wrap) revealed the UK throws away £10bn of consumable food every year.

Searle said that by using IChemE's logic, "the oil company would be the polluter, not the person who drives the car".

"The polluter is the person who buys the food," said Searle, who also slammed the guide for calling on consumers to "try to shop as locally as possible and look for products with minimal packaging".

"How do they think the goods get to the shop - by magic?" he asked.

IChemE suggested consumers should shrink plastic bottles or containers using leftover boiling water from the kettle.

But Searle questioned if it had taken into account the carbon footprint of doing this, as well as safety implications.

He also urged IChemE to focus on matters closer to home "as they clearly don't understand this issue".

Andy Furlong, director of policy and communication at IChemE, said the top 10 tips were "intended to provoke debate on dematerialisation and it looks as if we are succeeding".

He said society's objective should be to "dematerialise our way of life by reducing the quantity of raw materials, water and energy we consume and the waste we produce".

This would be achieved by "designing products to eliminate or reduce built-in obsolescence, recycling products at the end of their life, and recovering and reusing as much of the material they contain as possible".

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Searle: questioned IChemE's logic

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