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### Dick Searle: Future Courtaulds must focus on product

Dick Searle, [packagingnews.co.uk](#), 04 March 2010

**As Courtauld 2 is published, Packaging Federation chief executive Dick Searle argues that food waste, not packaging, must be the focus of future environmental efforts.**

The Packaging Federation welcomes [Wrap chief executive] Liz Goodwin's statement that one of the biggest challenges society faces is reducing the environmental impact of the things we buy.

Our industry has long argued that the focus on packaging alone was masking the fact that, on average, product impact is some ten times that of the packaging whose existence is solely to act as a delivery system for the product.

The packaging manufacturing industry has worked tirelessly with its customers to enable the substantial reduction in grocery packaging highlighted in WRAP's announcement today on Courtauld 2. The industry is proud of the fact that its products have, together with modern distribution systems, enabled the grocery supply chain in the UK to be one of the most sophisticated in the world.

It also recognises that the further carbon impact reduction for packaging that forms part of the Courtauld Commitment will rely heavily on significant improvements in recycling rates - progress that will require substantial improvements in the quality of materials collected for recycling. Achievement of this will require substantial co-operation between all stakeholders and our industry stands ready to participate in this.

Avoidable household food waste has an environmental impact that is more than ten times greater than that of packaging at end of life. While we acknowledge that a reduction of 4% forms part of the new targets, it is disappointing to see that packaging again is the first target to be highlighted. There are still far too many consumers who believe that packaging is one of the greatest environmental impacts and this will only be reinforced by the inevitable media focus on packaging as the first of the targets.

Alongside carbon reduction, resource efficiency is now at the top of the environmental agenda and our Federation looks forward to working with WRAP on its focus on this. In particular, we look forward to the strong resource efficiency credentials of packaging being recognised so that packaging is seen not as a problem but as a solution.

**Packaging News wants to hear your views on the latest version of the Courtauld Commitment. Leave your comments below or write to [packagingnews.editorial@haymarket.com](mailto:packagingnews.editorial@haymarket.com)**

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