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### World food supply crisis to bring packaging to the fore, Total told

Josh Brooks, [packagingnews.co.uk](#), 27 May 2010

Packaging is to become even more crucial to feeding the world's growing population in the coming decades as the world faces "dramatic challenges" to its food supply, visitors to Total heard yesterday.

Exploding populations and the effects of climate change are set to put more pressure on the food industry than ever before, speakers at the show's Packaging Innovations theatre.

MPMA director Nick Mullen, Packaging Federation chief executive Dick Searle and The Packaging Society's vice-chairman Kevin Vyse spoke at the event, which explored how packaging is likely to change and develop in years to come.

One particular challenge is the expected explosion of the world's population - which is forecast to grow from 6bn now to 9bn by 2050 - coupled with the expected drop by a quarter of agricultural land due to climate change.

Searle said: "Even if the world's population doesn't change, that means we have to increase food production by a third just to stand still. There is only one way that will happen - packaging."

He went on to say that the packaging industry had a "bright and necessary" future as a result of the increased need to avoid wasted food in developing nations.

At present, an estimated 40%-50% of produce grown in developing nations is wasted due to it not being processed and packed - compared to just 3%-4% in the UK.

Mullen, meanwhile, addressed the issue of growing environmental and legislative pressures on the industry, saying that government intervention and regulation would increase in the coming years.

He also called for a broader view of environmental impacts of food supply in the future, pointing out that just 10% of the energy in the food supply chain was consumed by the packaging industry. "More critical interventions need to be addressed," he said.

The Packaging Society's Vyse said that current consumer confusion over packaging had been led by "sound bites, not sound facts" and that it was important in future for packaging to be increasingly associated with products, rather than seen as a separate issue.

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