

Attitudes towards Food Packaging - UK - 2023

Report Price: £2195 | \$2995 | €2600

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This report looks at the following areas:

- Regulatory and legislative changes which impact the food packaging industry.
- Key trends in recent launch activity and innovation relating to food packaging.
- Consumer concerns relating to food packaging, including food packaging waste ending up in the environment and factors deemed important for packaging, such as aspects of usability.
- Consumer perceptions of key aspects to make food packaging sustainable.
- Consumer behaviours and attitudes relating to food packaging, including interest in refills at supermarkets.

There is widespread uncertainty about the green credentials of packaging types, 64% of people deeming it difficult to know which type of food packaging is the most sustainable. This reflects the reality of this being a complex and multifaceted issue, with no one universal answer, the right packaging type and materials depending on the needs of the product. However, 56% of people find information about the overall environmental impact of packaging appealing, suggesting scope for companies to talk about their packaging choices.

The current income squeeze is challenging the importance of sustainability among consumers' priorities for grocery shopping. Food packaging is no exception. Sustainability is a top three important factor for food packaging for 53% of consumers, however, this varies from 58% among those describing their finances as healthy to 44% of those 'struggling/in trouble'.

Consumers show strong concerns around food packaging waste ending up in the environment; 72% of people state worries about it ending up either in the sea, in landfill or in the local environment. Recyclability can help quell such concerns and help companies avoid their packaging being a turn-off for



"Sustainability remains one of the biggest topics for food packaging, with many consumers worried about food packaging waste ending up in the environment. Highlighting recyclability and recycled content stands to keep consumers engaged."

- Angharad Goode, Research Analyst, March 2023

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consumers, as 42% of people say packaging being recyclable in their area makes it sustainable.

There is scope for packaging to shine a light on protecting food and avoiding food waste, as 50% of people list food waste as a top three food-related concern. This links to the role of packaging in extending the shelf life of food products, 63% of people agreeing that it plays an important role in doing this. This suggests that messages highlighting the genuine positive lifecycle environmental impact of appropriate packaging should fall on fertile ground.

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- UK Plastics Pact launched in 2018
 - 2021 progress report shows significant reductions, polystyrene remains an issue
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