



SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING

Best Practices for Farmers' Markets in Nova Scotia

SELL IN BULK

whenever possible



Encourage **re-useable** produce bags (washed at home) for items like mushrooms, carrots, apples, tomatoes, etc.



Use **washable** tableware and cutlery at markets



NATURAL CORKS COMPOSTABLE



COMPOSTABLE PACKAGING

with no plastic liner

eg. trays made from paper fibre, sugarcane, wheat grains, paper bags.



Glass bottles or aluminum cans or foil trays



READILY RECYCLABLE PLASTICS*



*#6 PS is recyclable in most areas of Nova Scotia but is not preferred due to limited overall recyclability around the world.



Compostable/biodegradable plastic packaging



Other plastics - multilayer with multiple materials and #7 plastics



Compostable fibre packaging with plastic/PLA liner



Synthetic corks are not recycled



At this time not handled in Nova Scotia composting facilities.

compost Reduce, re-use, ♻️ recycle!

We need to think in that order.

While Canadians are working to reduce the overall use of single-use plastics, readily recyclable plastics can be a good option in terms of the following benefits:

- Returns materials to a circular economy when recycled
- Diverts from waste stream
- Low energy inputs and lightweight for distribution



Recyclable plastics are recommended where they can enhance shelf life and prevent food waste. For example polyethylene (which are LDPE) bags – similar to a bread bag – may still be the best option as they retain shelf life, are very lightweight, have a low cost and are recyclable.

Glass is readily recyclable. However, the life cycle assessment (LCA) indicates more energy use and more carbon emissions than plastics. Aluminum also has a high energy input for production but high recycling rates bring down the overall footprint. Try asking your supplier for the lightest weight package available (while retaining functionality) to limit the impact.

Biodegradable or compostable plastic packaging is not recommended because:

- It does not break down in NS facilities
- contaminates recycling stream
- confuses the public who are trained to recycle plastics

Compostable trays/soup bowls/coffee cups with plastic liners are difficult for composting facilities to handle due to the thin plastic (PLA) layer. These are not accepted at this time at compost sites and will go to the landfill. However, they may be a better option than other plastic layers, which may take years to break down in the environment. Compostable fibre trays without a plastic liner are recommended.

Reuseable mesh produce bags are great for transporting vegetables and fruits home. Encourage your customers to get these and bring them to market, wash them at home. They will NOT retain shelf life as well as a poly bag. For example, greens will wilt after about one day.

Food safety is an important consideration. Follow all recommended food safety guidelines!

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