

26 February 2019

## **ICELAND LAUNCHES IN-STORE PLASTIC-FREE GREENGROCER AS FIGHT AGAINST PLASTIC CONTINUES**

- **Trial will see 35 produce lines sold loose, and 27 lines packed in plastic-free packaging**
- **Loose fruit and vegetables to be offered at cheaper price than pre-packed equivalent to encourage uptake**
- **Plastic-free packaging solutions will include plant-based films, compostable nets, and paper bags**

Iceland has launched a loose fresh produce trial, the latest milestone in the retailer's commitment to remove plastic packaging from all own label products by the end of 2023.

The trial will launch in one of Iceland's larger concept stores, The Food Warehouse in North Liverpool, and offer customers the choice of buying loose produce instead of plastic-packaged products.

Understanding that perceptions of price can be a key barrier to purchasing loose produce, the retailer has confirmed that the prices of loose produce will be lower than those of packed equivalents in order to encourage take-up.

The trial will involve a range of plastic-free solutions, including paper bags with a tracing paper window, cotton and cellulose nets, and compostable punnets. Specific examples include:

- Moulded pulp fruit punnets with a plant-based film and recyclable paper label
- Reusable rubber (plant-based) bands (used for products such as celery and spring onions)
- Cellulose and cotton nets (used for products such as satsumas and onions)

Iceland has already removed plastic from certain fresh produce lines across its 900+ stores. This includes the introduction of a recyclable band for bananas in October 2018, which is replacing 10 million plastic bags per year. At the end of the year, lemons were switched from plastic packaging to cellulose net bags with a paper label.

# Iceland

The trial has been supported by the introduction of new in-store operations including weighing and ticketing facilities, staff training and bespoke point of sale materials designed to inform customers about the initiative.

A customer survey has been launched to gather feedback on the trial itself, the barriers to purchasing loose produce, and levels of awareness on plastic recycling. Insights from the trial will be shared with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to support the Government's ongoing research and consultation around waste. Last week DEFRA announced a series of consultations to overhaul the waste system and cut plastic pollution.

Iceland will also be seeking customers' opinions on compostable packaging. Although this does not currently feature in all household waste collections, Iceland supports the introduction of UK-wide food waste collections including compostable packaging.

**Richard Walker, Managing Director at Iceland, commented:** "Over 12 million tonnes of plastic enters the world's oceans every year and the retail industry can no longer ignore the plastics tidal wave which is coming our way.

"We all have a part to play in tackling the issue and Iceland is constantly looking for ways to reduce its own plastic footprint, as we work towards our commitment. We are looking forward to seeing how our customers respond to the trial and taking forward learnings to inform the rest of our journey."

This is the latest in a series of industry leading trials which have seen the retailer launch the UK's first in-store reverse vending machines and offer alternatives to plastic carrier bags.

Since making its commitment in January 2018, Iceland has reduced or removed plastic packaging across 81 lines and removed over 1,500 tonnes of plastic in its packaging.

**Ends**

## **ABOUT ICELAND**

Iceland is recognised as the UK's leader in frozen food and operates over 900 stores across the country, together with a multi-award-winning online shopping service. It prides itself on being a convenient and friendly place to do the family's weekly shop, as well as meet

# Iceland

everyone's daily top-up shopping needs for fresh, chilled, frozen food and groceries. For more than 20 years Iceland has also offered a unique, free home delivery service for in-store purchases.

Iceland has won multiple awards for the quality of its food and service. Recent honours including being named Best Online Retailer and Best Frozen Food Retailer at the Retail Industry Awards 2018, best UK supermarket for customer service in the 2018 UK Customer Satisfaction Index, Community Retailer of the Year at the Retail Week Awards 2018, Online Retailer of the Year at the IGD Awards 2017, and Online Supermarket of the Year at the Grocer Gold Awards 2017. Iceland's online shopping service was also named the UK's best in the 2016, 2017 and 2018 Which? supermarket surveys. Iceland has ranked as one of the UK's Best Big Companies to Work For in each of the last 13 years, and was number one in both 2012 and 2014.

Since 1970, Iceland has been proudly demonstrating to shoppers just how the Power of Frozen can deliver an extensive choice of high quality, great-tasting food from fine sources around the world at great value prices, while naturally generating low levels of food waste. Always committed to doing the right thing for customers, communities and the environment, Iceland was a pioneer in removing artificial colours, flavours and non-essential preservatives from its own label food in the 1980s, and in banning genetically modified ingredients in the 1990s. In 2018 it committed to becoming the first major retailer, globally, to eliminate plastic packaging from all of its own label products by the end of 2023, and to remove palm oil as an ingredient from its own label range by the end of 2018.