

**PRESS RELEASE – STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 12:00 TUESDAY 10 MARCH**

## **ICELAND ANNOUNCES 29% REDUCTION IN PLASTIC USAGE FOLLOWING UK-FIRST PLEDGE TO REMOVE ENTIRELY FROM OWN LABEL PRODUCTS BY END OF 2023**

- Iceland has removed 29% of plastic from its annual packaging usage, two years after making industry leading pledge
- 3,794 tonnes removed to date, the equivalent weight of 36 blue whales
- Iceland remains the only retailer to have committed to removing plastic in its entirety from own label ranges



**10 March, 2020** – Iceland has today announced a reduction of 29% in its overall plastics packaging usage, two years on from the retailer's industry leading pledge to remove plastics from all own label product packaging by the end of 2023. The retailer was the first globally to make such a commitment and remains the only supermarket in the UK to have pledged to remove plastic in its entirety from its own label range.

The 29% reduction reflects a removal of 3,794 tonnes from the retailer's annual plastic usage, the equivalent weight of 36 blue whales. Iceland has committed to fulfil its commitment without passing a penny on to the customer, investing heavily in making plastic free, sustainable solutions accessible to its millions of customers.

The retailer has seen significant wins across high volume ranges, such as frozen ready meals, where 74 lines have been moved from non-recyclable black plastic and into paperboard-based trays. In addition to its work to remove black plastic, Iceland has also made significant progress in addressing other difficult to recycle plastics, including PVC and polystyrene.

Richard Walker, Managing Director at Iceland, commented: "We received overwhelming support from the public when we announced our commitment back in January 2018, and I'm enormously proud of the progress we've made over the past two years. To have removed 29% at this stage is a real milestone in our journey and we continue to innovate and develop, week by week and tonne by tonne.

"The scale of the challenge we have taken on is huge, partly because of the lack of alternative solutions in some instances, the infrastructure in the manufacturing industry which in many

cases is built around plastic usage, and of course the fact that we are the only retailer to have made a 'totality' commitment.

"Whilst we have seen a promising shift away from plastic usage across the industry and a significant increase in consumer awareness of the issue since the beginning of 2018, we remain the only retailer to have made this pledge. We're now looking ahead to the next phase of our journey, whilst continuing to engage our customers by finding scalable and user friendly solutions, truly democratising choice to make sustainable packaging options an affordable reality for everyone."

Collaboration with suppliers has been key to the progress made to date. Iceland has engaged almost 100 own label suppliers to establish working groups and set out frameworks for plastic removal, with a redevelopment plan set out for each and every line. As well as its work across supply chains, Iceland has collaborated closely with operations colleagues and conducted research with customers to ensure that solutions developed are fit for purpose. The retailer is also encouraging all of its branded suppliers to take a collaborative approach on plastic packaging reduction.

Iceland has also launched a series of industry leading trials to support the research and development needed to fulfil its commitment, and further encourage consumers to reduce their own plastic consumption. These include a large-scale trial which has reduced plastic across produce lines by 93%, the UK's first plastic bag free store, the offer of a reduced plastic Christmas range, and installation of reverse vending machines in stores. These were the first machines to be launched in UK supermarkets and have so far collected over 1.2 million plastic bottles, rewarding customers with over £120,000 in 10p vouchers.

Store operations have also been addressed to remove plastic where possible, ensuring that the retailer's plastic footprint is reduced as far as possible. This has included the development and large-scale trial of a super strong, reusable paper carrier bag.

For further information on Iceland's plastic removal commitment and progress to date, please visit [sustainability.iceland.co.uk](https://sustainability.iceland.co.uk)

**Ends**

## **ABOUT ICELAND**

Iceland is recognised as the UK's leader in frozen food and operates over 950 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 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 14 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.