

Packaging - A tool for controlling food waste

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Securing global food supply chain is the biggest challenge, the world is facing today! As per the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), more than 30% of the food produced for human consumption is either wasted or gets lost. And that amounts to whopping 1.3 billion tons. As per its estimate it's interesting to note 'we can feed 870 million hungry people, even if we could save a quarter of food that gets wasted. Packaging is an under-utilized solution that can significantly reduce food waste. Packaging is never a source of waste, but it provides means of preventing food waste and public perception must change towards this. Improved collaboration between industry and government with regards to waste policies is the need of the hour. The main reactions that cause food to deteriorate are oxidation, moisture gain/loss, enzymatic browning, non-enzymatic browning, and microbial growth. There may be some more, but these are the key ones. Responsive and smart packaging are being put into use to address these areas. Packaging alone cannot fix the dire global issue of food waste. Packaging can, however, make a Very big difference to how much more food makes it to those in need, rather than being wasted along the supply chain. The ability to minimise food

waste has enormous implications from a financial, environmental and a social perspective that could lead to significant benefits. Packaging actually contributes to Sustainability. This is well documented in several position papers issued by the WPO (World Packaging Organisation). In fact if we notice during the decade or a little more, packaging industry is actually reinventing itself as a whole. There have been remarkable improvements in material, processes and in energy efficiency influencing the total environmental footprint. A lot of emphasis has been put on the packaging waste issue. In the developed countries a determined direction has been set to circular economy in which waste becomes new raw material. Littering issue remains a societal challenge in many areas in the world. Good packaging contributes in providing safe and hygienic food around the world. Safe packaging is new kid on the block. There is pressing need to avoid potential risk of chemical contamination to the products packed by virtue of the packaging material. Total product safety to be achieved by virtue of cooperative and collaborative efforts from all stake holders.