

Raising the Bar on Food Contact Materials at Whole Foods Market

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Quality Standards

Upsetting the Apple Cart Since 1980



WFM Packaging Research Started with PFAS



2018 Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families study on PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) in food packaging

Affected packaging pulled from WFM stores

Lead to in-depth research on PFAS by WFM

In 2020, molded fiber bowls and plates with no intentionally added PFAS rolled out in US and Canadian Prepared Foods departments

WFM worked closely with our packaging suppliers to find and scale this new packaging



Strategy for Addressing PFAS



Food service items with intentionally added PFAS were discontinued or reformulated through supplier surveys and product testing

Currently exploring opportunities to improve confirmation of supplier compliance

Collaboration with other stakeholders—packaging suppliers, non-profits, academics—was critical to the process

Participation in PFAS technical and industry groups and conferences has been invaluable

Evolution of WFM Packaging Standards



Development of Restricted Substances List (RSL) for food service and private label packaging

Prohibits intentionally added PFAS, as well as ortho-phthalates, bisphenols, and more

Also bans non-recyclable materials, including PS and PVC

Currently in the process of collecting and assessing supplier surveys



Key Lessons Learned



Work closely with packaging suppliers

- ✓ Access to information about the supply chain
- ✓ Ask the right questions

Engage with packaging-focused researchers and organizations

- ✓ Passionate about eliminating chemicals of concern in packaging
- ✓ Generous with their time and knowledge

Set priorities

- ✓ Immense and complicated issues
- ✓ Good work takes time

Educate those in your sphere of influence

- ✓ Will help further awareness and eventually lead to change