

3rd International Conference on

Food & Beverage Packaging

July 16-18, 2018 | Rome, Italy

Environmental impact of food packaging in light of design-thinking

Eirin Marie Skjøndal Bar

Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway

In the start of 2017, a Cuvier's beaked whale died in a harbor in the western part of Norway. As sightings of this particular species of whale are rare, the event caught the interest of the nation. 30 plastic bags were found in its stomach, causing its death. The event led to a public awareness of the plastic pollution in the ocean, and shifted consumer opinion. Efforts to clean shores while taking new measures to prevent waste plastic to end up in the ocean came to the center of attention. Fees on plastic shopping bags became more widespread, and several large national grocery-stores chains started using different sized paper bags as both an alternative to a plastic carry-home bag as well as smaller paper bags to use when buying non-portion packed items. The argument from the national grocery store chains is to provide an alternative for their environmentally conscious customers. Plastic bag manufacturing companies in Norway such as Serviteur AS, were forced to lay off workers as plastic bag sales dropped, and are now considering investing in equipment for paper-bag manufacturing. However, the production of paper bags releases twice the amount of CO₂-eq. The Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment states that in contrast to EU, Norway has no pollution problem from plastic shopping bags. So why do not environmentally conscious consumers want them? This makes the challenge of designing environmentally sound food packaging a complex paradox. In light of design thinking, developing new frames through the investigation of themes related to environmental impact of food packaging in a design thinking narrative, might give new possibilities to bridge controversies.

Biography

Eirin Bar holds a PhD on sustainable and profitable aquaculture, her PhD thesis was titled "Advanced Food Processing Equipment Design for a Sustainable Salmonid Fish Industry in Norway" and she achieved the degree in September 2015 at Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). She is currently working as an Associate Professor at the Department of Biotechnology and Food Science, NTNU, where she focuses on teaching sustainable food production, hygienic design and packaging in combination with food processing equipment design and development.

eirin.bar@ntnu.no