



News Release

For Immediate Release

September 22, 2016

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FLEXIBLE PACKAGING RECYCLING PROJECT ANNOUNCES RESEARCH RESULTS, NEW MEMBERS

WASHINGTON (September 22, 2016) — An industry collaborative today announced the findings of a research program which showed that automated sorting technologies in use today can be optimized to capture flexible plastic packaging—potentially creating a new stream of recovered materials while improving the quality of other recycling streams.

The research, documented in the [Resource Recycling Systems](#) (RRS) report, “Flexible Packaging Sortation at Materials Recovery Facilities,” demonstrates that with adequate screening and optical sorting capacity, flexible plastic packaging can be efficiently captured in a single-stream materials recovery facility (MRF).

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“Flexible packaging has many positive attributes—highly efficient, great product protection, and low environmental impact. However, recovery has been one of its weak points,” said Brad Rodgers, foods packaging research and development director for discovery and sustainability at PepsiCo. “This study is shedding light on pathways that can be deployed to improve flexible packaging end-of-life options. PepsiCo is proud to be actively engaged in this industry collaboration.”

“Lifecycle assessment provides compelling data regarding the potential benefits films can offer,” shares Stephen Sikra, P&G technology manager for materials science. “This research provides a valuable foundation for helping advance new solutions for flexible film recovery, and we are proud to be part of it.” Common forms of flexible plastic packaging include re-sealable food bags, pouches for laundry detergent pods, pet food bags, and snack bags.

“We now know how flexibles flow through a material recovery facility and that the technology already exists for separating flexibles out of the materials streams,” said Larry Baner, senior packaging research scientist, global packaging and design for Nestlé Purina Petcare. “Although there is still a lot of work to be done to define the best way to separate flexibles from single-stream recyclables, this research moves us closer to solutions.”

This first phase of the research program sponsored by the [Materials Recovery for the Future](#) (MRFF) collaborative included baseline testing, equipment testing, and a series of recovery facility

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trials to test existing sortation technologies commonly used in MRFs, such as screens and optical scanners. RRS developed the test methodology and conducted the research trials. Subsequent research will focus on further refinements to sorting technology, economic feasibility, assessing end-use markets for the material, and developing a recovery facility demonstration project.

In addition to announcing its initial research findings, MRFF is pleased to welcome three new members of the collaborative: Target, LyondellBasell, and Plum Organics. The MRFF project brings together brand owners, manufacturers, and packaging industry organizations that are committed to enhancing recovery solutions for flexible plastic packaging.

MRFF members include [Amcor](#), [The Dow Chemical Company](#), [LyondellBasell](#), [Nestlé Purina PetCare](#) and [Nestlé USA](#), [PepsiCo](#), [Plum Organics](#), [The Procter & Gamble Company](#), [SC Johnson](#), [Sealed Air](#), and [Target](#) as well as the [Association for Postconsumer Plastic Recyclers](#) (APR), the [Flexible Packaging Association](#) (FPA), [SPI: The Plastics Industry Trade Association](#) (SPI), and the [American Chemistry Council](#) .

To learn how your company can join MRFF, please visit www.materialsrecoveryforthefuture.com or contact [Emily Tipaldo](#) (202) 249-6127.

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Materials Recovery for the Future is an initiative of the Foundation for Chemistry Research and Initiatives, a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization established by the [American Chemistry Council](#).

