

A large pile of plastic waste, including bottles, containers, and other debris, is shown under a sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the scene. The plastic waste is piled high, and the sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds.

# #TooCoolForPlastic

Iceland's Plastic Packaging Footprint  
2021

*Doing it Right*  
Iceland

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# A word from Richard Walker

The impacts of Covid-19 both in the UK and around the world continued right through 2021: we have seen continued lockdowns, easings of restrictions, labour shortages, material availability issues and lingering supply chain problems. The focus, investment and momentum across the industry developing plastic alternatives not unsurprisingly stalled. By the end of 2023, we won't be out of plastic, but we will have done everything we can to reduce plastic despite the unforeseen crises we are still working through. The destination is to be plastic free and that won't change, but it will take us longer than I thought to get there.

Against this backdrop we have been able to re-start working more closely again with our suppliers, reassessing what is possible in the current context and starting to make progress again in removing, reducing and moving away from plastic.

We have made significant progress through 2021 getting back to the level of plastic reduction we had seen pre-pandemic, whilst continuing to test and pilot numerous new packaging formats and delivering our best ever Reduced Plastic Christmas which included

our first ever Plastic Free Christmas pudding. Not every trial is successful and more than ever with the supply chain challenges and material issues I've outlined, scaling up from a pilot to rolling out nationally across our business is becoming a separate challenge in its own right, but every packaging project moves us forward on the plastic free journey.

On carrier bags whilst we launched a new reusable woven paper cotton bag as an alternative to the heavy plastic bags typically in use across the UK and rolled out front of store plastic bag and film recycling units across over 150 Food Warehouse stores we know there is more to do. Changing materials and offering recycling is not the answer: at a national level a new business model is required - as quite simply we don't need more carrier bags.

Last year at COP26 I also announced that we would be the first supermarket to become plastic neutral, and that we would do this during 2022. We reckoned we could meet this challenge despite being in the middle of a pandemic, but at that stage we didn't know that there was a major cost of living crisis just around the corner, or that Russia was going to invade Ukraine. Both of these

emergencies put huge pressure on the cost of food and this ultimately impacts our customers.

I made a promise at the beginning of our plastic journey not to pass additional costs onto customers. We need to democratise sustainability, and that means making it understandable, accessible and affordable by everyone. If we became plastic neutral now, we would have to pass some of that extra cost onto customers – and I'm simply not prepared to do it.

In January 2018, when I announced our audacious goal to become plastic free across our own label packaging, I always knew that the journey would be filled with setbacks, time and time again. This is because the road is long ... and we are basically trying to achieve the impossible. The important thing is how you deal with those setbacks – we shouldn't and won't stop trying, I am confident that we are making progress and will move further ahead on our journey as we continue to work towards our plastic-free goal.

Richard Walker

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Walker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a period at the end.

Managing Director Iceland Foods



# Our #TooCoolForPlastic Manifesto...

- 1 Remove plastic packaging from Iceland own label products**
- 2 Collaborate with and support our suppliers**, and work with competitors and the packaging industry to find solutions.
- 3 Focus on materials that our customers can recycle easily at home** and provide clear on-pack recycling information.
- 4 Minimise or remove packaging without creating more food waste** or compromising food safety.
- 5 Go back to basics and use traditional materials** like paper, board, glass, metal and wood.
- 6 Work quickly to remove PVC (polyvinyl chloride), polystyrene and black plastic**, which are all very difficult to recycle.
- 7 Use only widely recyclable plastic** such as HDPE, PE, PP and PET\*, by end of 2023.
- 8 Use composite materials that are mainly made of paper and board** but include small amounts of plastic – while we look for ways to replace it.
- 9 Lobby the Government to put in place national food waste collections** for industrial composting alongside the consistent collection of a core group of packaging materials for recovery and recycling.
- 10 Report on our progress** and what we have learned at the end of each year.

# One Plastic Footprint

**In 2020, Iceland became the first UK supermarket to publish its total plastic packaging footprint, and we have committed to doing so annually.**

For several years, businesses have used incomplete and inconsistent information to represent the scale of their plastic packaging, their commitments to change, and the progress being made. This lack of transparency has made it impossible for anyone to judge whether business actions are delivering real progress, or simply generating headlines.

We joined forces with four of the UK's most influential campaigners on plastic pollution – Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, A Plastic Planet and Surfers Against Sewage – to call on other retailers and the wider business sector to commit to enhanced transparency in their reporting of plastic packaging.

Together, we also urged the Government to amend the Environment Bill to incorporate mandatory reporting on plastic packaging, and targets to reduce UK plastic pollution.

We believe that we can only solve the plastic crisis by businesses and policymakers working together to develop a more accurate and transparent picture on the issue, and through regulated, government-enforced reduction targets.

**We have now updated our plastic footprint data, improving its accuracy and transparency for 2021. We've also included our complete packaging footprint as we look to shine a light on the challenge we face to reduce the amount of packaging we use.** Our full plastic and packaging footprint is set out on page 14.

We continue to call on all major businesses to do the same and on the Government to introduce mandatory reporting, along with mandatory plastic reduction targets for businesses.



# Pilots and Learnings

With the support of our suppliers in 2021 we have successfully delivered 29 in-store pilots across our fresh and frozen categories.

**Symbol Key**  
 % product plastic reduction  
 kg potential plastic reduction

87% 1,000kg 	81% 667kg 	80% 12,000kg 	87% 6,026kg 	87% 4,803kg 	88% 11,050kg 	84% 10,010kg 
90% 7,524kg 	87% 5,450kg 	89% 4,418kg 	87% 17,816kg 	83% 5,288kg 	100% 12,600kg 	90% 5,526kg 
59% 12,750kg 	73% 12,300kg 	95% 2,200kg 	72% 16,199kg 	84% 1,400kg 	84% 3,066kg 	100% 83kg 
84% 1,353kg 	84% 1,563kg 	81% 5,250kg 	88% 91,750kg 	100% 44,160kg 	100% 1,380kg 	81% 2,700kg 

# #TooCoolForPlastic at Christmas

“Our mince pies are not just helping us win awards, but now they’re helping us to reach our target of eliminating plastic from our own-label range. Making them a true Christmas gift.”

Richard Walker



Following the success of our award-winning Reduced Plastic Christmas initiative in 2019 and 2020, we further extended the 2021 Christmas range to give our customers an even greater choice of seasonal products with plastic-free or significantly reduced plastic packaging.

We increased the number of entirely plastic-free festive products to 46, including the **first plastic-free Luxury mince pies, Christmas pudding and Christmas cake** from a multiple retailer in the UK.





# Reducing plastic in our stores

## Plastic reduction

During 2021 Iceland introduced an initiative to drive plastic reduction and removal from Iceland products. Through this initiative plastic reduction and removal opportunities have been identified on over 250 products and over **77 tonnes of plastic reduction has landed instore.**



**77 tonnes of plastic removed**



## Self-ready packaging

While primary packaging remains the key focus of our pledge, we continue to remove and reduce secondary and tertiary plastics.

**In 2021 we removed 44.5 tonnes and since 2018 we have removed 348 tonnes from our chilled and dairy lines.**



## Carrier bags

**We do not sell heavy duty plastic woven bags**

Our full carrier bag footprint can be seen on page 14.

## Paper-cotton bag

In 2021 we launched a paper-cotton woven bag pilot. The pilot ran successfully in 52 Iceland stores and in 2022 the paper-cotton bag will be roll out across all Iceland stores.

Alongside the paper-cotton bag we also piloted a Paptic® paper bag.



## In-store marketing

Since 2018 we have worked closely with HH Global to reduce the volume of plastic used within instore marketing, switching to paper alternatives or reducing the thickness of plastic used.

**In 2021 we removed more than 15 tonnes of plastic from our instore marketing**, bringing the total of in store marketing plastic reduction to 49 tonnes of plastic.

## Point of sale (POS) hanging signs

In May 2021 we switched from using plastic inserts to a **100% plastic free paper** alternative, saving 1.7kg of plastic per sign, equating to over **1.5 tonnes of plastic removed from stores**.

# Helping customers recycle more

## On pack information

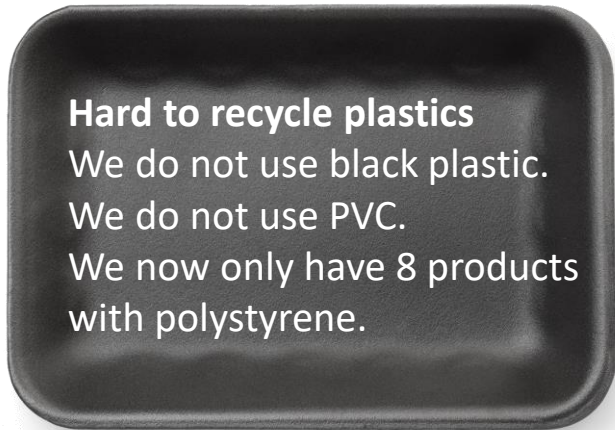
Iceland is a proud member of OPRL, supporting its aim to deliver a simple, consistent and UK-wide recycling message on packaging to help consumers reuse and recycle more material correctly, more often. OPRL labels are recognised by more than 3 in 4 customers.

<https://www.oprl.org.uk>



## Carrier bag collections

In October 2021 we launched our plastic carrier bag collection as part of our online and home delivery service to the Food Warehouse customers. Whereby customers can recycle plastic carrier bags by handing them to the delivery driver.



## Front of store plastic recycling

In July 2021 we launched front of store plastic recycling bins in our Food Warehouse stores to help customers recycle plastic film they are unable to recycle at home. Following a successful 13 store trial, the plastic recycling bins were rolled out to all 150+ Food Warehouse stores in March 2022.

These bins allow customers to recycle flexible plastic film items including carrier bags, bread bags, produce bags and magazine wraps. Currently, flexible plastics are not commonly collected or recycled and typically end in general household waste. Only 17% of councils currently collect flexible film materials for recycling.



In 2021 we collected and recycled **2,073 tonnes** of plastic packaging and **36,576 tonnes** of cardboard and paper.

# Supporting community activism

## Surfers against Sewage

In 2021, Iceland Foods Charitable Foundation (IFCF) continued its partnership with environmental charity Surfers against Sewage (SAS) to support its **Million Mile Beach Clean**, which saw **142,428** volunteers across the UK collect **398,798kg** of plastic.

IFCF again partnered with SAS to host the annual Plastic Free Awards in October 2021. The event recognised and celebrated individuals, businesses, innovators and pioneers who are leading the way in the fight against plastic pollution.



Registered charity no 282943



## Reducing plastic pollution

Iceland are proud to be a member of Global Ghost Gear Initiative and help tackle the problem of global ghost fishing gear.

GGGI was founded by non-profit World Animal Protection in 2015 in a bid to help remove some of the millions of abandoned fishing nets, pots and lines that get left in the sea each year. Since 2019, the GGGI has been hosted under Ocean Conservancy's Trash Free Seas® programme. For further information visit

<https://www.ghostgear.org/>



# Plastic Footprint



## How we measure our plastic packaging footprint

This report measures Iceland's plastic packaging footprint in its UK stores and depots for the full calendar year 2021 (1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021). More details on our methodology can be found on page 14.

### Iceland UK



BRANDED	OWN LABEL	CARRIER BAG
21,676 tonnes	9,225 tonnes	4,665 tonnes
1,106,207,745 items	789,397,768 items	184,980,639 items

### Iceland Non-UK



BRANDED	OWN LABEL
565 tonnes	115 tonnes
31,452,966 items	11,663,766 items



**Primary Plastic**  
(Food and Non-Food Packaging)



**Secondary Plastic**  
(Shrink-wrap, Shelf Ready Packaging)



**Tertiary Plastic**  
(Pallet wrap)



**Individual plastic water bottles**  
(Still, Sparkling, Flavoured)




**Sachets**

1,258 tonnes	309 tonnes	-
73,886,213 items	35,023,639 items	-
375 tonnes	198 tonnes	-
1,288,038 items	697,963 items	-
195,601,861 items	0 Items	-
Data not available	7,975,133	-

34 tonnes	6 tonnes
2,124,584 items	632,512 items
10 tonnes	3 tonnes
32,845 items	11,728 items
5,458,446 items	0 Items
Data not available	4,090

# Our Additional Packaging Footprint in 2021

As well as reporting transparently on plastic, we have committed to sharing details of Iceland's complete packaging footprint and plastic carrier bag use.

	Iceland UK 		
	BRANDED	OWN LABEL	TOTAL
<b>Paper</b>	17,054 tonnes	12,019 tonnes	29,073 tonnes
<b>Glass</b>	17,356 tonnes	0.9 tonnes	17,356 tonnes
<b>Aluminium</b>	4,629 tonnes	410 tonnes	5,039 tonnes
<b>Steel</b>	5,776 tonnes	134 tonne	5,911 tonnes

## Carrier bag usage in 2021

	Number of bags	Tonnes
<b>Re-usable plastic bags (online)</b>	121,336,640	2,912
<b>Re-usable plastic bags (home delivery)</b>	13,327,831	319
<b>Re-usable plastic bags</b>	47,282,828	1,134
<b>Re-usable paper bags</b>	2,470,418	207
<b>Insulated re-usable bags</b>	388,043	67
<b>Jute bags</b>	167,976	26
<b>Paper-cotton bags</b>	6,903	0.52
<b>Total</b>	<b>184,980,639</b>	<b>4,665</b>

## Our progress



Remove 100% plastic from own label packaging by the end of 2023

**29%** reduction at the end of 2021



Reduce overall packaging by 10% by the end of 2023

**14%** decrease at the end of 2021

# Methodology

The data in this report is for the calendar year 2021 (1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021) and covers all Iceland and The Food Warehouse stores and depots in the UK.

In addition, the report measures the plastic packaging of products sold by Iceland outside the UK.

## Use of data

Iceland is principally a high street seller of frozen food. The data we publish is not designed to be and should not be used for comparison with other retailers operating different business models, It would be inconsistent, inaccurate and would not be a fair comparison of any retailer to do so.

Follow our #TooCoolForPlastic journey on [sustainability.lceland.co.uk](https://sustainability.lceland.co.uk)



## Iceland UK

refers to all Iceland and The Food Warehouse stores and depots in the UK



## Iceland Non-UK

refers to all products sold outside the UK by Iceland, including through our company-owned stores in the Republic of Ireland and by our Iceland International business supplying franchised Iceland stores and other export customers



## Primary Plastic

comprises all plastic packaging that product is directly packaged in, including trays, bags, film, bottles (including water bottles) and sachets. These include PET, REPT, CPET, OPP, PP, HDPE, LDPE, PS and multi-polymer laminates for Iceland own label products. This includes all food and non-food packaging. This data has been independently collated and verified by ERP UK Ltd. Primary plastic does not include plastic carrier bags, which has been measured and reported separately



## Secondary Plastic

includes shrink wrap and shelf ready packaging. These include RPET and LDPE for Iceland own label products. This data has been independently collated and verified by ERP UK Ltd



## Tertiary Plastic

includes pallet wrap used in depots for deliveries. This data has been independently collated and verified by ERP UK Ltd as part of our PRN verification



## Carrier Bags

includes all plastic carrier bags sold by Iceland and The Food Warehouse. These include single-use carrier bags, reusable 'bags for life' and small single-use bags for meat products. This data has been collated without third party verification



## Water Bottles

includes all individual plastic water bottles, including those sold in multipacks. This data covers all still, sparkling and flavoured water products only. It does not include bottles used for milk, fruit juice or soft drinks



## Sachets

includes all sauce or other ingredient sachets sold individually or as part of a product. Iceland does not have access to data on branded products

# Our Plastic Packaging Footprint 2021

[www.sustainability.Iceland.co.uk](http://www.sustainability.Iceland.co.uk)

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