

A photograph of three people standing on a rocky cliff edge, silhouetted against a vibrant sunset over a body of water. The person on the left wears a red and blue plaid shirt and khaki shorts. The person in the middle wears a dark long-sleeved shirt and blue leggings. The person on the right wears a dark jacket and dark pants. All three have their arms raised in a celebratory gesture. The background shows a calm sea, distant hills, and a small town on the coast.

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Webinar Wednesdays

Top Takeaways from the Less Food Loss & Waste, Less Packaging Waste Webinar

Featuring Martin Gooch from Value Chain Management International

Webinar took place June 24, 2020

1 There is a dual waste crisis globally for food loss and packaging waste. This intersection offers big opportunities for packaging materials innovation, legislation that incentivizes investment in use of PCR, improved recycling and composting infrastructure, consistent and standardized approach to Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).

2 On the other hand, the report identified the following barriers to the creation of a Circular Packaging Economy:

- o Lack of appropriate infrastructure
- o Lack of public awareness and/or knowledge
- o Inconsistent provincial or municipal recycling programs
- o Unwillingness of consumers to modify their behaviour
- o Inconsistent provincial or municipal regulations
- o Cost and required capital investment

3 Food loss and waste has a significantly larger GHG footprint compared to packaging. Of the 12 food categories analysed the packaging used for these foods on average represented only 5% of the total GHG footprint. So, there needs to be a focus on reducing food loss AND packaging waste.

4 Several scenarios were analysed to identify impacts and boundaries for GHG impacts. For example, if all packaging was eliminated it is estimated that food loss and waste would increase by 30% and even with a significant increase in composting of this food waste, GHG emissions for the 12 foods studied would only be reduced by 4%.

5

In order to meet Canadian and global targets on climate change and GHG emissions reductions, food loss and waste would need to be reduced by 50% and ALL food waste and packaging waste would need to be composted or recycled. This scenario delivers a net GHG emissions reduction of 48%.

6

In a world of Covid-19 there are system wide impacts happening right now that emphasize the need for an industrialized circular economy for packaging e.g. we're seeing diminished purchasing of loose/bulk foods and use of reusable packaging/containers: increased usage of "single use" shopping bags, packaging and rapid growth in online purchasing, including meal kits; Interruptions to recycling streams.

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The VCMI report can be found [here](#) and the summary, [here](#).