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SYMPHONY ENVIRONMENTAL COMMENTS ON TESCO BAGS

Symphony Environmental Technologies Plc, the degradable plastic specialists, said today that they could not understand why Tesco had moved away from degradable plastic carrier-bags because the bags were weak. Symphony's spokesman said "These bags were made with additive supplied by one of our competitors, and they were weak because they were not suitably made. This has nothing to do with degradability. We are supplying bags made with our d2w degradable technology to supermarkets all over the world and we do not get complaints that they are unfit for purpose. We offered to make the bags for Tesco but there was no response.

Similarly, we cannot see that recyclability has anything to do with it. Our d2w bags can be made with recyclate, and can themselves be recycled together with normal plastics during their useful life which, in the case of a shopping bag is normally 18 months. See <http://www.biodeg.org/position-papers/recycling/?domain=biodeg.org> By contrast bio-based plastics cannot be recycled.

Nor do we see that the Loughborough Report can be relevant. This report was published 18 months ago, and contained some very positive findings about our type of degradable plastic.

See [http://www.biodeg.org/files/uploaded/biodeg/Sym_response_to_Loughborough_Rept\(16\)\[1\].pdf](http://www.biodeg.org/files/uploaded/biodeg/Sym_response_to_Loughborough_Rept(16)[1].pdf)

The Minister at the time drew unjustifiable conclusions from the report, which are currently under review by DEFRA on the basis of detailed scientific evidence submitted by the British Plastics Federation, proving the biodegradability, recyclability, and non toxicity of the plastic.

A Life Cycle Assessment published this year by the Environment Agency has shown that plastic carrier-bags are the most environmentally sustainable option for carrying goods and protecting them from contamination.

Campaigns to reduce the use of plastic bags, and to make them from recyclate, are all very well, but what is to happen to the bags and other plastic products which escape collection? They will lie or float around for decades in the environment if they are not degradable.

We think that the real reason why Tesco have taken this action is to save money. This is a pity, because the on-cost is very small, and Tesco had set an example to supermarkets around the world by supplying their customers with degradable carrier-bags. Tesco is an environmentally responsible company but we think they have taken a retrograde step, and should think again. We will be happy to talk with them.

We are not surprised by the comments from the "National Non-food Crops Centre" which is a promoter of a competing biodegradable technology based on vegetable-derived material. This technology is now widely understood to be of very limited use and far too expensive. The NNFC is another Quango which should be scrapped."

ENDS

NOTE TO EDITORS:

Symphony is the only public company specialising in Controlled-life plastics. It has a diverse and growing customer-base and has established itself as a global business, serving more than 90 countries through 67 Distributors. It is investing heavily in R&D and is continuing to develop innovative technology.

Symphony is a member of the Oxo-biodegradable Plastics Association (www.biodeg.org), and the Society for the Chemical Industry (UK). Symphony is also a member of the British Plastics Federation, the European Organisation for Packaging & the Environment (EUROPEN), and the British Brands Group. Symphony actively participates in the Committee work of the British Standards Institute (BSI), the European Standards Organisation (CEN), the International Standards Organisation (ISO), and the American Standards organisation (ASTM).

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