News Release

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Smart Plastic Packaging Can Reduce the Environmental and Economic Impacts of Food Waste

Plastics Make it Possible® and Leading Experts Look for Solutions to Help Extend Shelf Life and Reduce Food Waste

WASHINGTON, DC (August 16, 2011) – The month of August has 50 recognized holidays and national observances surrounding food, including National S'mores Day, National Lemonade Day and National Ice Cream Sandwich day. Despite all of the attention devoted to celebrating America's favorite foods, billions of pounds of food are wasted each year. *Plastics Make it Possible*, an initiative sponsored by the plastics industries of the American Chemistry Council, partnered with leading food packaging expert Dr. Paul Butler to investigate the issue further and propose ways consumers can help reduce food waste in their own lives.

Just how much food goes to waste each year in the U.S.? In 2009, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimated 33 million tons of food was thrown away. In 1996, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimated that if even 5 percent of the total food waste stream were recovered, that quantity would represent the equivalent of a day's food for 4 million people.

"There are a number of plastic packaging innovations making it possible to keep food fresher longer, so less is wasted and sent to landfills," said Steve Russell, vice president of plastics for the American Chemistry Council. "From resealable plastic bags and airtight plastic storage containers to portion-controlled plastic pouches for your favorite foods, the plastics industry offers many ways for American families to reduce the amount of food wasted in their homes, making it more affordable for them as well."

Food waste also has a significant impact on the environment. The EPA confirms that methane gas produced by discarded food waste in land fills is 21 times more harmful to the ozone than the carbon dioxide emitted from cars. In fact, landfills account for more than 20 percent of all harmful methane gas emitted in the US contributing to global warming.

"The issue of post-consumer food waste is a massive problem and arguably the most pressing issue regarding waste disposal," says food packaging consultant and author Dr. Paul Butler. "Focusing on packaging material weight reduction and recyclable food packaging materials is important; however, developing new innovations in packaging to help consumers manage their food inventory better and

contribute to a more sustainable supply chain can have an even more significant impact on our environment."

Consumers can help protect their wallets and the environment by using plastic innovations that help keep food fresher longer and looking for smart packaging innovations that ensure every last bit of the food is used before packaging is discarded. *Plastics Make it Possible* has compiled a few simple tips to help consumers reduce food waste:

- **Products That Leave Nothing to Waste**
  Purchase products with innovative packaging that leave little or no waste. Great examples include Hellmann's® Easy Out™ mayonnaise bottle – a non-stick, no waste plastic bottle designed to allow consumers to easily get all of the mayonnaise out of the packaging. The plastic Heinz® Easy Squeeze™ ketchup bottle is also a great example, as it stands on its cap, and its unique design reduces excess food waste and ultimately saves consumers money.

- **Reseal for Later**
  Check local grocery stores for foods that come packaged in resealable plastic bags and containers. Convenient resealable plastic packaging is available for shredded cheeses, tuna, sausage, dried fruit, pastas, cold cuts and more.

- **Love Your Leftovers!**
  There are so many ways to use leftovers – from ready-to-eat lunches to creating new meals from leftover ingredients to freezing them for later use. Storing leftovers in air-tight plastic containers can help keep them fresher longer. Transfer restaurant leftovers to sealed plastic containers as soon as you get home. If you won't be able to eat your leftovers within a few days, immediately transfer them to plastic containers or sealable bags that are made especially for the freezer.

- **Sell By or Use By? Know the difference**
  Food product dating labels can be particularly confusing and can be easily misread, resulting in the disposal of food before it has actually expired. The "Sell By" is only the recommended date by which stores sell the product. Typically, food is safe to consumer for a number of days after that date, whereas, the "Use By" date is the last day the food will be at peak quality. More information about food product labels can be found by visiting the USDA's Food Safety Information website: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Food_Product_Dating.pdf

For more information and tips on how plastic innovations can help reduce food waste, please visit www.plasticsmakeitpossible.com.

About *Plastics Make it Possible*
Plastics Make it Possible, highlights the many ways plastics inspire innovations that improve our lives, solve big problems and help us design a safer, more promising future. This initiative is sponsored by the plastics industries of the American Chemistry Council. For more information, visit www.plasticsmakeitpossible.com, check out our Facebook page and follow us @plasticpossible on twitter at www.twitter.com/plasticpossible.

http://www.americanchemistry.com

About Dr. Paul Butler

Paul is a materials science specialist with interests in nanotechnology, RFID, smart materials and smart consumer packaging. He spent the first half of his career in academia before entering industry with technical R&D director positions with Alcan Aluminium and Crown Cork & Seal. In 2004 he founded Packaging Materials & Technologies Ltd, an independent technical consultancy to promote innovation in the packaging industry, and became an academic visitor in the Department of Materials at the University of Oxford.

He has written two books on smart packaging – "Smart Packaging" and "Consumer Smart Packaging", and co-authored the book "Smart Packaging Technologies for Fast Moving Consumer Goods" published by John Wiley in 2008.

For the last three years he has been a principal consultant for the UK Government on post-consumer food waste and sustainability, focusing on the role of packaging in helping consumers manage their food inventory better.

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