

## **Supermarket choices. 3/15/21**

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In this era of covid-19 one of the few things we all did was shop at the supermarket. I would like to focus on supermarkets and the choices we make that can affect our carbon emissions. There are 3 guiding policies:

### **1. Choose cardboard containers over plastic containers**

#### **Cardboard is environmentally better to produce than plastics.**

**Cardboard** is typically made primarily from certified forestry programs where old growth forests are preserved.

In addition, most logging companies plant more trees than those cut down.

**Plastic** is made primarily from oil or natural gas (which is primarily methane). The problem is that the methane leaks from the fracking wells as well as the pipelines that carry the gas. Unfortunately methane is 25 times as heat producing as carbon emissions over its 25 year lifetime in the atmosphere before it is destroyed.

#### **Cardboard is environmentally easier to recycle than plastics.**

It is true that it takes more energy to recycle cardboard than plastic, but the disadvantages of plastic is significant when you consider that less than 33% of plastic is recycled and some of the other 66% may end up in the oceans where marine life is drastically harmed. The rest of recycled plastic is deposited in landfills or incinerated which produces even more carbon emissions.

### **2. Chose cardboard containers over glass**

**Glass production and glass recycling** each requires melting at 2600-2800°F which requires a huge amount of natural gas producing a lot of carbon emissions. Cardboard recycling does not require a lot of heat, but just soaking to make pulp, de-inking and filtering, and then drying.

### **3. Choose plant-based foods (milk and meat) over bovine cow and steer products**

Bovine animals, either cows, steer, or lamb all produce methane primarily from burping. Efforts to reduce methane emissions by altering feedstock or breeding animals have not been effective. Over 1,200 gallons of water are needed to produce one pound of meat. Many areas have diminishing water supplies and eating less meat can lessen the water crisis.

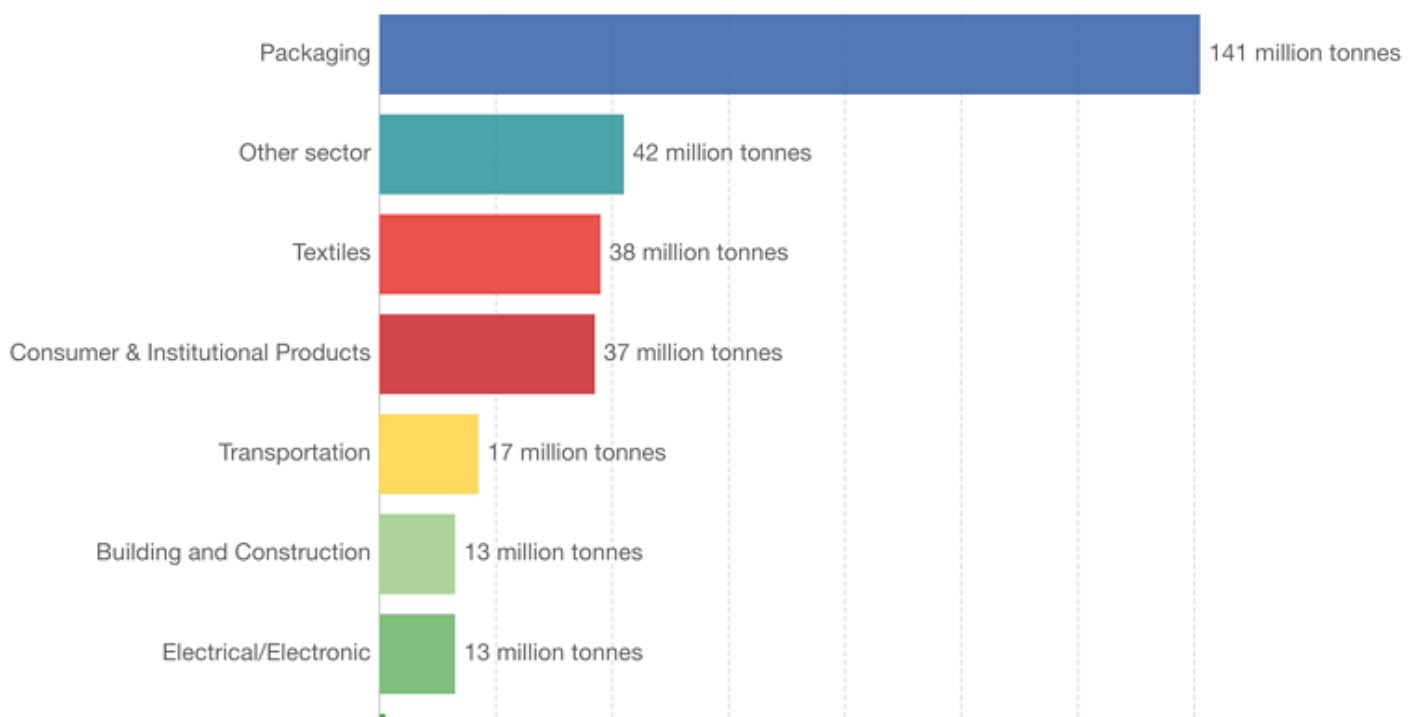
### Supermarkets and increasing amounts of plastics.

Plastic food packaging serves a number of important purposes – it helps protect food from damage, it helps foods last longer and it makes food more visually appealing for consumers.

But... packaging in grocery stores now produces about 141 million tons of plastic a year. Only 1/3 of plastic gets recycled, the rest ends up in landfills and the oceans.

<https://learn.eartheasy.com/guides/plastic-free-grocery-shopping-made-easy/>

Greenpeace has a 2021 campaign called “Target, Trader Joe's and Publix: Ditch plastic!” <https://www.greenpeace.org.uk/news/uk-supermarkets-can-halve-throwaway-plastic-by-2025-by-reducing-plastic-across-54-grocery-categories/>



The good news is that the E.U. has started a few plastic-free supermarkets, and the U.S. has only a few similar small food stores.

<https://www.iberdrola.com/environment/plastic-free-supermarkets>

<https://theplaidzebra.com/zero-waste-grocery-store-no-packaging-plastic-big-name-brands/>



**Choose cardboard orange juice container over glass.**

**Choose cardboard egg container over plastic container.**





**Choose plant-based milk over cows' milk.** The goal is to reduce the number of cows on the planet since belching cows are a major source of methane, a powerful global-warming gas. Many milk choices are available. Try a few and choose the one you like. I prefer soy original. My physician son likes the unsweetened milk with zero sugar, also great for people with diabetes.

**Oat-** original, vanilla, unsweetened

**Soy-** plain or vanilla. Sweetened or unsweetened

**Almond-** plain or vanilla. Sweetened or unsweetened

Vanilla tastes like malted milk!



Supermarket space devoted to plant-based milk has grown dramatically recently in U.S. Check out your own supermarket for alternate choices.





## Chose plant-based foods over cattle slaughtered animals

There are a lot of choices due to growth of vegetarians, vegans, and now environmentalists.

**Hamburgers**-it takes about 1200 gallons of water to produce just 1 hamburger. How do you explain that? The grain for feeding a cow for 3 years until slaughtered needs lots of water just to grow alfalfa or other grains. Then the cow requires water each day to survive, and that occurs 365 days x 3 years or 1,095 days of watering.



Plant based hamburgers do taste good! There are 16 companies to chose from. The 2 most popular are “Beyond Burger” and “Impossible Burger”.



Many other plant-based meat products have been developed including plant-based chicken nuggets (not shown)

**Purchase small detergent-impregnated laundry paper strips instead of detergents in large polluting plastic containers.** There are many detergent products available on-line, although we had difficulty finding them in supermarkets. We sampled “TruEarth” and found our cloths came out as clean as using liquid detergents. TruEarth advertises that they have saved over 3,019,960 plastic jugs! <https://www.tru.earth>

We suspect that all brands are good but have not done comparison tests.

See who makes laundry detergent strips Ads

Product	Price	Source
Laundry Tablets - 40ct   Natural, Eco-... Blueland	\$14.00	
Tru Earth Ecofriendly Laundry Detergent ... eBav.com	\$12.99	eBav.com
Tru Earth Eco-Strips Laundry Detergent (... eBav.com	\$12.99	eBav.com
Beyond 100% Plastic Free Concentrated L... Maxedbu.com	\$8.83	Maxedbu.com
Breezeo Laundry Detergent Strips (la... eBav USA	\$11.69	eBav USA
Tru Earth Eco-Strips Laundry Detergent ... eBav.com	\$16.95	eBav.com

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I was so excited to have this information. It leads me to many more questions that need



There are many other choices too numerous to mention in this report. For example, select fruits not wrapped in plastic. Send me your favorite choice for the environment.



This **revised food truck** was spotted selling environmentally sound choices including refilling bottles instead of throwing bottles out and repurchasing new ones. “Green Road Refill” is a mobile earth-friendly shop dedicated to reducing Cape Cod’s plastic footprint. [greenroadrefill.com](http://greenroadrefill.com)







## Watch out for “Greenwashing”.

Windex advertises that their plastic container is “Ocean bound plastic”. It makes you think that the bottle is safe for the ocean. It isn't. It is made from 100% recycled plastic gotten from plastic within 30 miles of an ocean or waterway which is helpful environmentally. But it does not disintegrate in the ocean. In that sense the marketing may be misleading.

<https://www.waste360.com/plastics/windex-unveils-new-100-ocean-plastic-bottle>

