

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

**Date:** January 12, 2023

**Report Number:** NZ2023-0002

**Report Name:** New Zealand to Mandate Compostable Stickers for Imported Fruit Starting Mid-2025

**Country:** New Zealand

**Post:** Wellington

**Report Category:** Agriculture in the News, Fresh Fruit

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**Report Highlights:**

The Government of New Zealand has passed legislation that will restrict a wide range of plastic products to be sold in New Zealand, including non-compostable produce stickers. Produce stickers for domestically-produced fruit and vegetables in New Zealand are required to be compostable by 2023, while imported produce will need to have compostable stickers by mid-2025.

## **Executive Summary**

The Government of New Zealand has passed legislation that will restrict a wide range of plastic products to be sold in New Zealand, including non-compostable produce stickers. Produce stickers for domestically-produced fruit and vegetables in New Zealand are required to be compostable by 2023, while imported produce will need to have compostable stickers by mid-2025.

## **Background**

In mid-2022 the Government of New Zealand introduced [Waste Minimisation \(Plastic and Related Products\) Regulations](#) into Parliament, which were passed into law. The stated aim of the regulations is to protect animal and plant life, and protection of the environment as a whole, through banning a number of plastic products. The proposed date of entry into full force of all of these regulations is 2025.

## **Groups Affected by the Regulations**

The regulations will apply to any individual, business, or retailer who sells (including suppliers) or manufactures any of the targeted plastic item(s) in New Zealand.

This includes:

- Manufacturers
- Businesses selling the prohibited plastics (this includes providing them for free)
- Hospitality businesses providing these products

## **Three Tranches of Restrictions**

As part of the regulations, the Government of New Zealand has announced 3 tranches of restrictions, with some having begun on October 1, 2022, the second set to go into force in 2023, and the third set to be implemented in mid-2025.

### **Tranche One:**

The following products are no longer permitted to be sold or manufactured in New Zealand since October 1, 2022:

- 1) Plastic drink stirrers.
- 2) Plastic stemmed cotton buds.
- 3) Oxo- and photo- degradable plastic products.
- 4) Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pre-formed food trays and containers.
- 5) Polystyrene takeaway food and beverage packaging, for example some sushi trays and takeaway containers.
- 6) Expanded polystyrene takeaway food and beverage packaging, for example foamed cups, bowls, plates, and some grocery products.

**Figure 1: Plastic products banned from 1 October 2022**

**Plastic products banned from 1 October 2022**

To support Aotearoa New Zealand's move towards a low-waste, circular economy, we're banning a range of hard-to-recycle plastics and single-use items.

It is now illegal\* to provide, sell or manufacture the following plastic products in Aotearoa New Zealand:

- Pre-formed PVC food trays and containers used for produce, baked goods, or meat only
- Polystyrene takeaway food and drink packaging from a restaurant, café or food stall (eg, trays, containers, bowls, cups)
- Expanded polystyrene food and drink packaging for takeaway (eg, clamshells) and sold at retail (eg, instant noodle cups)
- Plastics with pro-degradant additives to accelerate fragmentation into smaller pieces such as oxo and photo-degradable (eg, some bin liners and dog poo bags)
- Plastic drink stirrers\*\*
- A cotton bud\*\* with a plastic stem or a synthetic fibre bud wrapped around any type of stem

**Alternatives**

- Recyclable plastic or paper trays and containers
- Encourage customers to bring their own container or sign up to a reusable system
- Recyclable plastic or paper packaging
- Non-degradable plastic or paper alternatives
- Wooden stirrers or spoon
- Cotton fibre buds with paper or bamboo stems

**What you need to do now**

- Stop providing these containers to your customers
- Stop ordering the banned products
- Order alternatives
- Speak to your suppliers and local recyclers about options for excess stock
- Educate your staff and customers about the changes

Visit: [Plastics phase-out guidance](https://www.mfe.govt.nz/plastics-phase-out-guidance) or email: [plastics@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:plastics@mfe.govt.nz)

Published 16 September 2022 by the Ministry for the Environment. Photo credit: iStockphoto.com/John L. Smith

He taiao tōmū mō ngā reanga katoa – a flourishing environment for every generation.

Source: [www.mfe.govt.nz/actsandregulations](https://www.mfe.govt.nz/actsandregulations)

### Tranche Two (July 2023):

There are several single-use products due to be phased out in 2023. [The Government documents](#) define and explain the products for removal, as well as present alternatives for these products, and this information is included below.

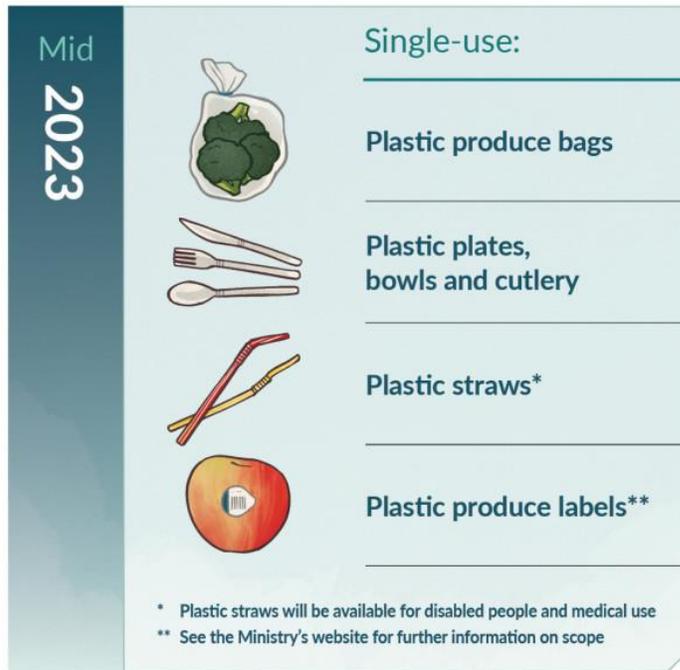
- 1) Plastic produce bags:** A single use produce bag is something consumers see most commonly in the fruit and vegetable sections of the supermarket. They can contain any amount of plastic (including recyclable, degradable or compostable plastics) and are used for the purpose of carrying fruit or vegetables. Alternatives include reusable or paper bags. Pre-packaged produce bags that are sealed before placing on sale are not in scope for this phase out.
- 2) Plastic tableware:** Single-use plastic tableware is designed for use once or a limited number of times before being thrown away. Plastic tableware includes plates, bowls, platters, trays, and cutlery made primarily of any type of plastic (including recyclable, degradable and compostable plastics) and sold for the purpose of eating food. Cutlery includes any utensil that can be used to eat food – spoons, forks, knives, sporks, splayds and chopsticks. Alternatives include reusable tableware, paper, cardboard, or bamboo alternatives. Plastic food containers and plastic-lined paper alternatives are not included in this phase out.
- 3) Plastic straws:** Plastic drinking straws that contain any plastic (including recyclable, degradable, or compostable plastics) will be banned. Alternatives include going without a straw, reusable

metal, bamboo or silicon straws, edible straws, or paper straws.

- 4) **Non-home compostable plastic produce labels:** Non-home compostable produce labels are made from plastic and are found attached to fruits or vegetables sold in New Zealand. This label is made partly or primarily of plastic which is not home compostable. Alternatives include home compostable labels, or signage at point of sale. Produce labels on imported produce are exempt until mid-2025. This phase out does not include labels on produce for export from New Zealand.

Note: Home compostable means meeting one of the following standards: AS 5810-2010 Biodegradable plastics—Biodegradable plastics suitable for home composting. NF T51-800 Plastics—specifications for plastics suitable for home composting.

**Figure 2: New Zealand Single Use Plastic Phase Out 2023**



Source: Ministry for the Environment

### Tranche Three (mid-2025)

A number of additional items will be restricted as of mid-2025. The Government documents explains these products and their alternatives, and excerpts are presented below:

- 1) **All PVC food and beverage packaging:** PVC food and beverage packaging is a tray, container (either with a lid or without a lid), packet, bowl, cup, film or wrap sold as packaging that contains food and beverage products or with the purpose of containing food and beverage products or with the purpose of containing food and beverage products for sale and made from polyvinyl chloride (PVC). Common examples include some biscuit trays and containers.

Potential alternatives include reusable packaging, recyclable plastic.

- 2) **All polystyrene food and beverage packaging:** Polystyrene food and beverage packaging is a tray, container (either with a lid or without a lid), packet, bowl or cup sold as packaging that contains food and beverage products or with the purpose of containing food and beverage products and is made from rigid polystyrene including high-impact polystyrene. Examples include yoghurt and some dairy bottles. Potential alternatives include reusable packaging, recyclable plastic (type 1, 2 and 5) or paper packaging.

**Figure 3: Mid-2025 phase out plan**



**Source:** Ministry for the Environment

### **Produce Stickers**

The Government of New Zealand plans to place restrictions on non-compostable produce stickers (including fresh fruit) based on a two phased roll out. This will start with a mandate for domestically produced fruits and vegetables in 2023, and then in mid-2025 will include a requirement for imported produce. The aim of this later requirement for imported produce is to allow suppliers time to prepare their systems to change to a compostable sticker by 2025. Compostable stickers on produce exported from New Zealand are not included in the regulations.

For the mandate on domestic produce in 2023, the government is providing a transitional period until mid-2025 to help producers meet the deadlines by requiring:

- 1) Functional purpose labels only (country of origin, PLU, database, brand authentication, variety identification).
- 2) Minimum of industrial compostable certification.
- 3) Permit hybrid home compostable technologies where the entire construction may not be home compostable, but a majority is.
- 4) Permit the use of fully home compostable products that are still in the process of achieving final certification.

**Attachments:**

No Attachments.