

Subject: BG - Plastic shopping bags submission

Recipient: proposed-mandatory-phase-out-of-single-use-plastic-shopping-bags@submissions.mfe.govt.nz

Sender: wastefree@mfe.govt.nz

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From:

Sent: Sunday, 12 August 2018 10:41 AM

To: Wastefree <wastefree@mfe.govt.nz>

Subject: Plastic shopping bags submission

My family grows lettuces and sells them at a Growers' Market. We keep the handling of them to a bare minimum. They are packed directly from the growing medium into crates, loaded to a van, ferried to the market and put on a table. The roots are not removed and they are not packaged in any form of plastic. A picture is attached.

With the roots on and no packaging they are a damp product. Sometimes they are dripping. When customers buy them, some put them in their own bag, some request a plastic singlet bag, and some request a plastic singlet bag to put them in before putting the bagged lettuce in their own bag. At a guess I would say that a bit more than half the customers do not want a plastic bag and the amount that do want one has been trending downwards.

The advantages of the way we do it are

- leafy vegetables are delicate - the less they are handled, the longer they keep.

- Not spending labour hours with individual packaging or root removal enables us to spend it producing and harvesting. Our time is at a premium and spending it on any task that doesn't assist productivity is detrimental to profitability.

- customers are enabled to proactively choose not to have plastic packaging.

- we are able to sell the week's lettuces at a single Growers' Market in a four-hour time span and therefore use the week's time for growing rather than selling (as opposed to needing to hock them off at multiple markets over multiple days)

- from an environmental perspective, the lettuces are sold within a day of being harvested so resources are not used for storage and there's less spoilage, and the lettuces have not travelled for a great distance before being in the hands of the consumer.

Sometimes customers have offered to give us plastic bags back to re-use. Leafy vegetables are generally eaten raw and we cannot re-use their bags for hygiene reasons.

A ban on singlet bags means we will have to make the following considerations:

If we supply no bags it seems likely we may lose a significant portion of customers at that market. If we lose a significant portion, we will need to spend more labour hours selling at multiple markets and less labour hours growing and harvesting. It seems likely the profitability of the business will be called into question.

Another option may be to individually package each lettuce, which will result in using more plastic than we currently do. Again this will consume more labour hours that could have been spent growing and harvesting and we are likely to lose the customers who appreciate being able to choose not have plastic. Again it seems likely the profitability of the business will be called into question.

Given that the number of customers requiring plastic bags is trending downwards anyway, I think a better option than a ban on singlet bags may be running an educational consumer campaign on how to go about their daily activities without singlet bags - especially when they're buying wet produce that doesn't have its own package.

Regards

B H Gailey

Whangarei

