



By Fred Searle

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Consumers 'will stop insisting on transparent packs'

Shoppers will soon be prepared to buy blind, a development that could help make packaging more sustainable, manufacturer predicts

A major European packaging company has predicted that in just a few years' time consumers will be prepared to buy fresh produce without seeing it first – a development that could help make packaging more sustainable.

At present one of the major hurdles to making fruit and vegetable packaging more environmentally friendly is the need to display the produce in a visible, eye-catching way.

But if certain products could be sold in cartonboard boxes, without the need for a transparent seal or lid, this could help make the packaging easier to recycle and cheaper to produce.

Currently Saica Pack is supplying cartonboard Fresh Pack Trays to Waitrose with large holes in them to make the fruit visible. And it hopes to roll out similar packaging for soft fruit, which is already available in Germany, in the UK next year.

"The three main drivers in packaging right now are sustainability, product visibility and shelf life extension," said Saica Pack's deputy regional director for Spain, Josep Lluís Ferràs. "I'm sure that in a few years, visibility won't be a driver anymore.

"It's a question of trust. When you buy a pair of shoes you don't look inside the box – it's a closed box and you trust the guy that's selling them to you. With fruits we've been dealing with transparent plastic packaging for a long time now but that's starting to change now.

"In our fresh pack trays for easy peelers at Waitrose you can see the fruit just a little bit and I'm sure that in just a few years these kinds of boxes will be completely closed. You will just trust that the mandarins inside the box are okay."

In products such as soft fruit a film seal can nevertheless be helpful to keep the

produce fresh for longer, and Saica is also working to develop heat-sealed cardboard punnets.

At present the company is using single-use plastic films but work is ongoing to develop recyclable and biodegradable alternatives.

Last year another packaging firm, Coveris, launched a fully recyclable polyethylene film for the Co-op that can be heat-sealed to packaging trays.



Josep Lluís Ferràs was showcasing Saica Pack's sustainable packaging at Fruit Attraction in Madrid

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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