

Britain's favourite fresh produce magazine since 1895



By Fred Searle

Wednesday 4th July 2018, 11:48 GMT

Iceland trials paper carrier bags

Retailer explores whether customers are willing to switch to 10p paper bags as it steps up war on plastic



Managing director Richard Walker shows off the new paper bags

Iceland is trialling paper carrier bags in a bid to reduce the amount of plastic it uses and see if customers are willing to make the switch.

White paper bags, which Iceland says are widely recyclable and degradable, will be offered to shoppers at stores in Merseyside for 10p each.

After the eight-week trial the paper bags could be rolled out all of Iceland's 800 stores in the UK as the chain steps up its efforts to minimise plastic waste.

The scheme follows a pledge from the supermarket in January to eliminate plastic packaging from all of its own brand products by the end of 2023.

The retailer has subsequently started using a new plastic-free 'trust mark' aimed at helping consumers make informed choices on plastic packaging, as well as trialling 'reverse vending machines' that pay customers for recycling plastic bottles.

Iceland's managing director Richard Walker said he wanted to "empower" consumers to reduce their plastic use, adding that there was strong customer support for the company's efforts in this regard.

"We're already taking steps to deliver on our commitment to remove plastics, and of course single-use carriers are a significant part of the plastic we have in store, used by our customers every day," he said.

"The trial will provide us with an in-depth insight into how we can remove single-use carrier bags, while offering an alternative that is fit for purpose and works for our customers."

Since the government introduced a 5p levy on single-use plastic bags in 2015, Iceland said it had seen customer bag use drop by 80 per cent, however the retailer still gets through three million plastic bags a week.

While Iceland was the first retailer to

promise to reduce its plastic output, it is not the only major supermarket to make such a pledge in the UK.

Tesco, Asda and Waitrose have all pledge to reduce their plastic use, while Co-op is aiming to make 80 per cent of its product packaging recyclable by 2020.

Morrisons last week announced a ban on single-use plastic bags for loose fruit and vegetables, switching to paper bags instead.