



# Get Your Packaging Right

- ▶ How to conduct a packaging audit
- ▶ Case studies from All Real Nutrition and Finnegan's Farm
- ▶ Understand emerging packaging trends



Packaging Report 2022  
[www.ifac.ie/PackagingReport](http://www.ifac.ie/PackagingReport)

**ifac**

# Contents

Welcome .....	3
Current context.....	4
Packaging audits .....	5
Emerging sustainable packaging materials ...	8
Your silent salesperson .....	10
A retailer's point of view.....	11
Case studies.....	12
Packaging funding options .....	16
Key considerations.....	18
Packaging resources .....	19
About <i>ifac</i> .....	22

## Contributors:

David Leydon / Lorcan Bannon / Andrew Brolly / Patrick Black / Oisín Gryson / Doireann Breathnach / Laura Kane

Disclaimer: *ifac* shall have no liability for any loss or damage howsoever arising, be it by negligence or otherwise, as a result of or reliance upon the information in this report. Persons seeking to place reliance on any information contained in this report for commercial purposes do so at their own risk.

**First published: April 2022**

© *ifac* 2022

# 1 Welcome

Product packaging is a significant element in the cost base for any food business, yet it remains one of the more challenging elements for Irish food businesses to get right.

For a long time, packaging for food was primarily a functional necessity. Product packaging was needed to preserve the quality of food from the elements, to make transport from factory to the consumer more manageable, to extend the life of the food or to communicate relevant brand information about the food item to consumers.

Now more than ever, packaging has the potential to be a sustainable differentiator for Irish food businesses, helping them to stand out on the digital and retail shelves while reducing their impact on the environment. Juggling this opportunity with the ongoing effects of Covid-19, cost inflation and Brexit is not easy for Irish food businesses.

Through this report, our aim is help food business leaders to better understand the role that packaging plays within their businesses. We encourage businesses to analyse the costs associated with their packaging through the use of the **ifac Packaging Cost Calculator** and our packaging audit template. These tools are practical ways to ensure that packaging is helping your business to grow instead of holding it back.

Through case studies from some of Ireland's most innovative food brands and the identification of key emerging packaging materials, we will highlight the potential that sustainable packaging solutions can bring to Irish food businesses.

We hope that you find it beneficial to your business and feel free to connect with the *ifac* Food and AgriBusiness team if you think we can help on your business growth journey.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of stylized letters 'L' and 'B' followed by a horizontal line.

**Lorcan Bannon**

**Associate Director Food and AgriBusiness, *ifac***

## 2 Current context

### Environmental impact

According to the latest figures from the Environmental Protection Agency, Ireland has generated more than 1 million tonnes of packaging waste for at least three years in a row. 1,124,917 tonnes of waste was generated in 2019, up from just over 1,000,000 tonnes in 2018.

At 62% of waste packaging being recycled in Ireland, we are ahead of the current EU target of 55% but we are down 2% on our recycling rate from the previous year. Paper and cardboard were the most common packaging type to be recycled followed by plastic. The reintroduction of soft plastics to the approved



recycling list in Ireland and the new deposit return scheme for plastic drinks bottles are expected to have a positive impact on the collection and recycling of plastic packaging going forward.

In this context Ireland needs to implement measures to reduce the rise of packaging waste. Food business owners in Ireland have a significant role to play. The impact of packaging waste has to be considered across every stage, from food production to transport, from on-shelf displays to the consumption moments.

### Brexit, Covid-19 and rising costs

In 2021, the representative group Love Irish Food **published research** highlighting how Irish food companies are being hit with input cost rises of almost 30%.

Increased transport costs, complexities arising from Brexit, the war in Ukraine, and Covid-19 as well as rising packaging costs of up to 20% or more, are having sustained impacts on how food businesses operate.

While macro factors are harder to control, food businesses have the opportunity to look at other ways, including sourcing local suppliers where possible, to best manage their ability to stay on top of these rising costs.

To really understand how this works for food businesses, it is important to start with the basics. Using a packaging audit can help business operators to get to grips with their packaging costs. Once the fundamentals are understood, you can then look at how emerging food packaging trends have the potential to deliver more sustainable packaging solutions.

# 3 Packaging Audits

*“A packaging audit is an opportunity for a food business to look at all aspects associated with packaging and identify ways to do things better within the business. It looks at processes, suppliers, materials, internal and external teams, branding and the cost associated with packaging. As a regular exercise, a packaging audit can add significant value to any food business.”*



**Andrew Brolly,**  
Accountant, *ifac*



**51%**  
of food businesses surveyed by  
**Love Irish Food** said their packaging costs  
have risen by 20% or more

## Why conduct a packaging audit?

1. To identify inefficiencies
2. To identify alternative packaging solutions
3. To identify your packaging strengths and identify ways to save money
4. To identify ways of becoming more sustainable

## What does a packaging audit include?

1. Reviewing your current packaging processes
2. Reviewing your product/packaging wastage in the prior 12 months
3. Reviewing your machinery service/downtime records in the prior 12 months
4. Reviewing your packaging staff requirements in the prior 12 months
5. Reviewing issues that have arisen in the previous 12 months
6. Reviewing your packaging choices and designs
7. Looking forward to the coming 12 months – are there significant changes on the horizon? A new or changed product offering? Change in regulations?

# What are the practical steps of a packaging audit?

## 1. Processes

- ▶ Map out your current packaging processes.
- ▶ Capture the main issues that you experienced in the previous 12 months e.g. significant wastage, packaging shortages, machine breakdowns etc.
- ▶ Review your expansion plans for the coming 12-24 months. List your packaging process needs to reflect this growth.

## 2. Materials

- ▶ How sustainable are your current packaging solutions?
- ▶ Are there new, more sustainable options available?
- ▶ Are these solutions reliable for your product? e.g. can they keep your product protected and fresh?
- ▶ Consider what your competitors are doing differently e.g. shelf ready packaging or sustainable packaging.

## 3. Costs

- ▶ Consider the cost of packaging per product/carton/pallet/container. Is the cost per unit excessive in relation to the total cost of your product?
- ▶ Audit how much stock you hold in storage. Is this the optimal amount? Can your cashflows continue to absorb these levels? Alternatively, do you need to increase stock holdings as supply chains get more volatile?
- ▶ Use the *ifac* Packaging Cost Calculator to understand your packaging unit costs.

## 4. Team

- ▶ Consider the staff requirement for your packaging processes. Are there automation efficiencies that can be made?
- ▶ Understand the downtime of machines between and during production runs – are there opportunities for your team to add value elsewhere in the business?
- ▶ Can packing times be improved? Even small differences, can have a big impact at scale.
- ▶ Actively review your packaging suppliers – are they reliable? Can you negotiate better terms?

## 5. Branding

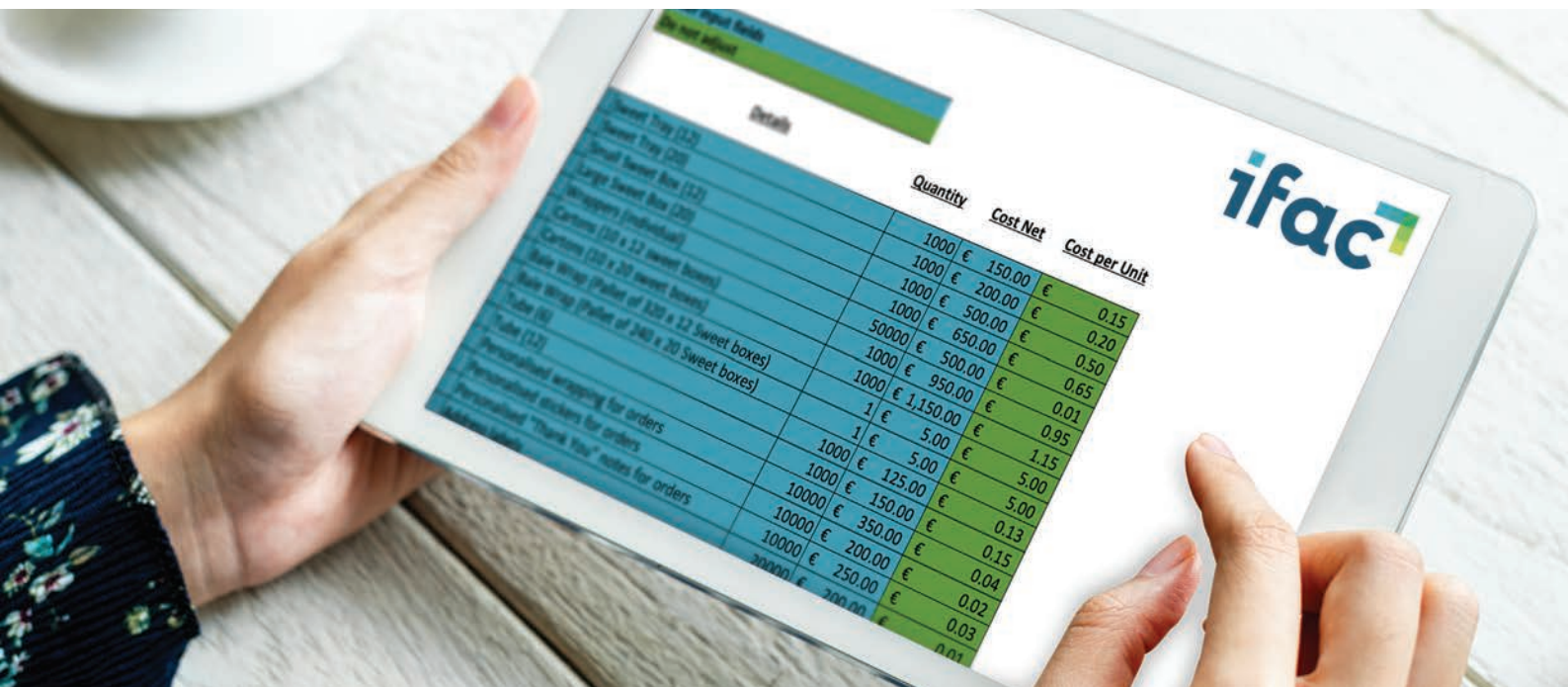
- ▶ Critically review your current packaging design. Consider its role as your silent salesperson. Does it have the ability to stand out on the digital and retail shelves?
- ▶ Consider what your competitors are doing differently. Are there learnings you can use?
- ▶ Identify ways that packaging can work harder for your business to communicate your brand values. In particular, consider the role packaging can play for home deliveries.

## The ifac Packaging Cost Calculator

A fundamental part of any packaging audit is the analysis of the costs associated with your product packaging. To help with this initial process, we have created the *ifac* Packaging Cost Calculator. This tool will help any food business owner to:

- Itemise individual packaging costs
- See how volume increases or decreases impact unit costs
- Get a sense of the actual combined cost of packaging for your products.

Through this analysis, food business managers will have a greater ability to see what their packaging costs are and make better business decisions on the types and sources of packaging that they use.



To download the **ifac Packaging Cost Calculator** today, visit [www.ifac.ie/PackagingReport](http://www.ifac.ie/PackagingReport) or Scan this code



## Work with *ifac* on your packaging audit

*“Food businesses that invest in a packaging audit can see a significant impact on their business, identifying in-house strengths, current weaknesses within their approach to packaging as well as the packaging opportunities and threats that exist for the business.*

*If you would like help to manage your packaging audit or need support to calculate your packaging costs, contact the ifac team today for more information.”*

**Patrick Black,**  
**Consultant, ifac**



# 4 Emerging Sustainable Packaging Materials

With material health in mind, food and beverage companies are becoming more innovative in how they pack their products. Some non-traditional packaging forms that have emerged include using discarded husk seed, sugarcane, crop pulp and seaweed, instead of more traditional forms that take far longer to decompose. In this section, we highlight some of the emerging sustainable materials that have caught our attention.

## A. Sugarcane Packaging

**Ecopak** is a Wicklow-based company that uses innovative, sustainable materials to produce packaging for a variety of products. They offer two types of packaging: sugarcane bagasse and palm bark. Sugarcane bagasse is the residual material after processing sugarcane. It is usually burnt, but Ecopak use the material to make disposable tableware, after which it can be composted. Palm bark from the areca palm tree is also used to make containers for a variety of food and drink products.

## B. Seaweed Packaging

**Skipping Rocks Lab** in the UK has used seaweed to create a material called Notpla, which is 100% edible, biodegradable and compostable.

This has been used to make Oohos, a plastic-free bubble that can contain up to 200ml of liquid and can even be eaten afterwards.

Lucozade Sport have trialled their product in Ooho seaweed pods filled with Lucozade Sport Orange at the London Marathon in 2018 and these can now be found in various gyms throughout London. This form of packaging has huge potential in the transition.

## C. Lab-grown Packaging

**MakeGrowLab** is a Polish company who have made it their mission to grow a new era of materials to replace fossil-fuels in packaging. They have engineered a high performing solution which is durable, 100% free of plastic, home compostable and 40 times stronger than paper.

The material serves as a barrier to oxygen and bacteria. It is insoluble in water and impermeable to water which makes it a great alternative to plastic-coated paper and plastic foils. From bags to sachets, the material can be used for all kinds of packaging and wrapping that is normally done with plastic.

## D. Wax Packaging

Wax packaging can be used to keep food fresher for longer. It is particularly effective for fruit, vegetables, bread and other bakery products. Working with the Bord Bia Origin Green project, **Brennan's Bread** has introduced wax packaging for its bread products. This packaging can be both recycled and composted - going into consumers' green or brown bins.

**Irish Beeswax Wraps** are a small local business based in a Gaeltacht area in Cork. Reducing plastic waste is core to their business and they are focused on providing the largest collection of beeswax wraps in Ireland.

## E. Edible Packaging

A start-up company in Waterford called **Signal Box Coffee** has taken on the sustainability challenge by being the first food service company in their area to offer a sustainable coffee cup alternative. They sell their coffee in cups made out of material similar to a cornetto cone - 100% vegan with no preservatives. This can be eaten once the coffee has been consumed. Over 600 billion coffee cups are distributed globally each year. Using more sustainable materials ensures that the number ending up in a landfill decreases.

## F. Cornstarch, Chalk, Wood Pulp Packaging

**Down2Earth** is a Cork-based company using a variety of non-traditional, sustainable packaging including cornstarch, chalk, sugarcane bagasse and wood pulp to form a whole catalogue of foodservice packaging. While the products are made of mixed materials, they are all completely compostable, meaning they all share the same recycling stream.

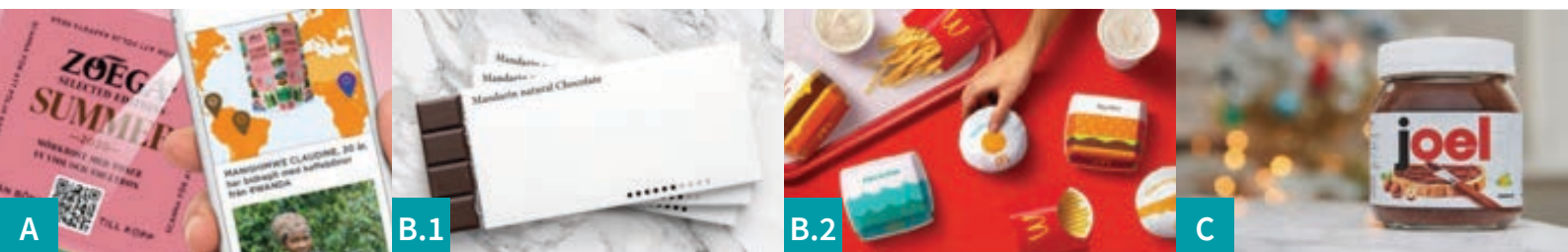
## G. 100% Recyclable Meat Tray

Thanks to innovative research from the **University of Swansea**, a new form of plastic packaging for raw meat is becoming more accessible. This technology avoids the need for non-recyclable pads inside the trays, meaning the entire packaging tray can now be recycled. While this solution doesn't fully address the role of plastic packaging, it has the potential to reduce that amount of plastics that goes to landfill or is incinerated.



## 5 Your silent salesperson

In a hugely competitive marketplace, food packaging needs to work harder than ever before for Irish food businesses, on both the digital and physical shelves. It needs to operate as your silent salesperson. Always clear and consistent, communicating your brand values and product credentials. Underestimating the marketing potential of your products' packaging could be a seriously missed opportunity for your business to increase stock rotation of shelves. Below we highlight some innovative ways to help your packaging work more effectively for your brand.



### A. Blockchain Packaging

Integrating blockchain technology into packaging can be useful to inform consumers about the product's origin and authenticity. In response to an increased demand from consumers for transparency in food supply chains, Nestlé has responded by introducing on-pack QR codes to its Swedish coffee brand Zoégas. When scanned, supply-chain data about the coffee is revealed via blockchain technology. Consumers can explore valid information on the coffee's origin, the coffee farmers, the time of harvest, roasting period and shipping certifications using IBM Food Trust's blockchain technology platform. Food transparency in action. You can find out more [here](#).

### B. Minimalist Packaging Design

While many companies choose to design their packaging with loud colours and bold typography to stand out on the shelves, there is a growing trend of the opposite approach. Old ways of standing out are starting to over-saturate the minds of consumers. Several companies have begun to adopt a minimalist approach to packaging across industries.

For example, McDonald's have revamped their packaging in a striking transition from a previous typography-based theme to a graphic system based on illustrations. Each food item packet is now connected to the food inside through the use of simple graphic design launched through the new wrapping.

### C. Personalisation

To help drive greater levels of engagement with consumers, an increasing number of brands are looking at ways to personalise their packaging. Nutella for example allow consumers to purchase and personalise products online or at select retail outlets. Consumers feel a greater connection to these brands and this approach can also open up a greater gifting opportunity socially around birthdays and seasonal occasions. Digital printing makes this approach viable although it can be expensive for short print runs. For smaller brands, hand finishing products can make this trend more accessible.

## 6 A retailer's point of view

Retailers are playing an increasingly important role in what packaging food brands can use. Retailers are listening to what their customers are looking for and are mandating their suppliers to meet these emerging expectations. One example of this is the increasing importance of front of pack labelling: in particular the emergence of Eco-Scores. As consumers, we have an established understanding about a products Nutri-score or a label that explains the nutritional value of food product. What is less established is the role of Eco-Scores or a label that explains the ecological impact of a product, including their packaging. This approach is new with various standards vying for prominence. One example is championed by **Foundation Earth**.



Independent of what score template is used, it is clear that retailers are increasingly looking at ways to encourage their suppliers to be more aligned with their green credentials. Tesco is one example. In 2021, the retailer announced that it was putting in place a commitment of net zero emissions across its value chain by 2050, including those generated by the products it sells. This will have an obvious and direct impact on food producers and the type of packaging solutions that they use.

### Michael Donohoe

#### Senior Buying Manager, Tesco

*In line with customer sentiment, we are working hard to ensure we never use more packaging than is needed. Where we need packaging, because it serves a clear purpose like reducing food waste or to protect a product in transit, we do our best to ensure that what we do use is from sustainable sources and where possible, goes on to be reused or recycled.*

*We have set challenging targets that will deliver a step change in how much packaging waste we generate: by reducing all unnecessary packaging, ending the use of hard to recycle materials (for example PVC and Polystyrene) from our own brand packaging by the end of 2019, working to ensure that all our packaging will be fully recyclable by 2025 and all our paper and board will be 100% sustainable also by 2025. Removing hard to recycle materials such as PVC and Polystyrene simplifies the recycling process, including reducing contamination of materials that can be recycled into new packaging. We continue to work hard to meet the challenges of reducing plastic where we can.*

## 7 Case Studies



### Finnegan's Farm

We spoke with **John Smith** from Finnegan's Farm to learn more about the business and the role that packaging plays in their story.

### Finnegan's background

Finnegan's farm is run by two brothers. They are predominantly farmers with 2,000 acres of land consisting of tillage, grass, potatoes and vegetables. From that, they supply Dunnes Stores with 50% of their fresh produce potatoes, and 250 tonnes of fresh sprouts every year.

### Importance of packaging

*"We have an awful lot of packaging on both sides of our business."* On the fresh side of the business the type of packaging they use is important because there is no way to get the product from the farm to the store unless it's in a consumer pack. You cannot transfer a huge box of potatoes to a store because the customers cannot handle them, and the product could get damaged or contaminated.

An important part of the packaging on their value-added side is the fact that it is MAP (Modified Atmosphere Packaging) which is a way of extending the shelf life of food products. If they did not have their packaging like that, the product would not have a long enough shelf life from production to warehouse to store to the consumer's home. *"Overall, we looked at consumer convenience, shelf life and accurate labelling to get all our ingredient declarations across in choosing our packaging."*

### Management of packaging

A lot goes into the overall management of packaging for Finnegan's Farm. The supplier has to be approved, prices need to fall between the suitable price points, and packaging needs to be forecasted and purchased in advance. *"A lot of it is driven by our BRC standards and Origin Green standards. We always look for suppliers that are FRC registered and are abiding by sustainable standards. We make sure that if we're going to a supplier to buy a cardboard box, we are sure that it has been produced sustainably."*

In terms of sourcing suppliers, John flags that *"a lot of it comes from word of mouth, door-to-door sales, suppliers often knock on our door and offer their services to us."* With their potato bags, they have a supplier from Italy who has been supplying them for the past 4-5 years. The delivery time is 12 weeks, but they buy 60 pallets at a time from him. It works well as they are able to plan ahead for certain products. The reason they did not find a supplier in Ireland was because the demand couldn't be kept up with their Irish supplier. *"It was a case of, we either stick with the Irish supplier packaging half the product with the other half coming from Belgium, but that could have led to two different qualities of packaging."*

In terms of the card sleeve on Finnegan's trays, as a direct consequence of BREXIT they moved supplier from the UK to an Irish supplier in Drogheda. *"Brexit did push us to find an Irish supplier, and in a couple of cases it worked out very well for us because number one; it's closer to home. Number two; you're supporting local business and number three; if you have an emergency it's much easier to source what you need when the supplier is so close to you"*

## Packaging design

For their own brand packaging, Finnegan's Farm, the design and branding were done in-house. While the team are delighted with the final products, the process to get to an agreed design takes time, patience and perseverance. *"It went back and forth between 20-40 times, between changing colours, fonts, positioning of writing, we all had an input."* Taking the process in-house also enabled them to gather and integrate market insights more efficiently into their designs. *"We realised then that the consumer wanted to see the product, so we put a see-through film in the middle as a window. Our sales really benefited from that."*

The design process for food packaging is never really finished and it is important for food business owners to stay on top and ensure that their packaging is up-to-date with a special focus on label regulations.

*"Label regulations are changing all the time. We have employed someone full-time just to look over the technical details on labelling - there's that much to it."*

## Advice for food businesses

In terms of sourcing suppliers, John believes that this should be done in-house. *"For example, there are a number of varieties of trays and unless you're looking at it yourself, you won't see the difference. We used to stock a tray that was quite weak on the shelf, and we were getting negative consumer feedback, so we added an extra ridge. While it cost a bit extra, it's something that suppliers might not have cared about."*

Something Finnegan's Farm have realised over the last few months is that *"bulk is key."* Especially with Brexit, where lead times have increased. A business will need to be able to provide sufficient storage for bulk packaging, for at least 3 weeks of production, or it could be in trouble if any unexpected delays arise.

*"Sustainability on how the packaging is produced is going to become more and more prominent in standards that we have to meet."* John highlights how consumers are becoming more aware of where the food they're buying comes from. When the increased regulations for sustainable packaging materialise, Finnegan's Farm knows that they are already supplying it. Repak are also working with businesses in terms of where the packaging is coming from, how much surplus packaging you have and how the business is disposing of waste. *"Everything is going to be measured going forward in the next few years I would say. It's all about trying to stay ahead of that."*





## All Real Nutrition

### All Real Background

All Real is a performance nutrition brand for everyday athletes. The core values behind the brand are real food, real people, real impact. We spoke with the co-founder of All Real, **Niall Harty**, to learn more about the business and the role that packaging plays in their story.

### Real Food

All Real ensures that the ingredients on the back of the protein bar can be understood by everyone. *"You don't need to know about science to understand them."* Most of the ingredients that All Real use can be found in the cupboard at home.

### Real People

All Real are trying to get the idea of integrity across in their marketing by using real people. Rather than focusing on having an aspirational body, All Real promotes having an aspirational lifestyle. They are about ability, not appearance, performance, not posing.

### Real Impact

The impact of sustainability is a core business value for All Real. All the packaging All Real use is **fully sustainable, all accredited and plastic free**. On the protein bar, the packaging is 100% plastic free and certified *home compostable* by the TÜV Austria standard and also by CRÉ - the composting association of Ireland - who advise Irish users what products are compostable and are accepted in the food waste bin.

## Management of the Packaging Process

### Step one: Identify sustainable packaging for their product

All Real began their sustainable packaging journey with desktop research and talked to several different companies to source recommendations. Once they found a suitable supplier, they had to ensure that the packaging could be printed with the right inks to meet the compostable requirements, and still be visually appealing for the consumer. *"When you're using sustainable compostable packaging, you can't use colours that have a typical oil or plastic base to them."*

## Step Two: Getting the pricing right

All Real ensured the minimum order quantity was suitable and that it, alongside the packaging costs, could fit in with their overall financial model.

## Step Three: Managing the challenges of different packaging materials

All Real admit that dealing with compostable packaging is a lot more difficult than plastic packaging. For example, storing biodegradable packaging is more difficult than regular packaging. If the storage facilities aren't suitable, the packaging starts to break down. All Real note that risk management is important here, *"For example, if we've just bought tens of thousands of euros of packaging, what happens if we don't sell enough and the packaging goes out of date? Can we afford to throw that out and get more packaging?"* All Real also spent a lot of time working with engineers to get the machine, rollers and heat level right to deal with compostable packaging.

## Step Four: Plan logistics and allow for delays

The delivery time for All Real varies a lot as there are not that many suppliers and demand is growing. Typically, a company would wait 4 weeks for plastic packaging. But with the compostable packaging, All Real have to wait anywhere from 8-12 weeks. Their packaging in particular has a couple of layers that have to be stuck together. *"The sustainability suppliers' demand is getting longer and longer because more people are turning to sustainability."*

## Step Five: Secure the necessary accreditations

All Real wanted to ensure that their packaging was delivering to the highest sustainability standards, so to deliver on their "Real Impact" values, their product packaging is certified *home compostable* by both the TÜV Austria standard and by CRÉ.

## Step Six: Leverage all the hard work

Identifying suitable packaging solutions and adapting your business to integrate them successfully is not easy. Having invested the resources to identify a solution that works for them, the All Real marketing team works continuously to figure out how to get that message across and reassure their consumers that their packaging is going to support a better planet.

## Recommendations

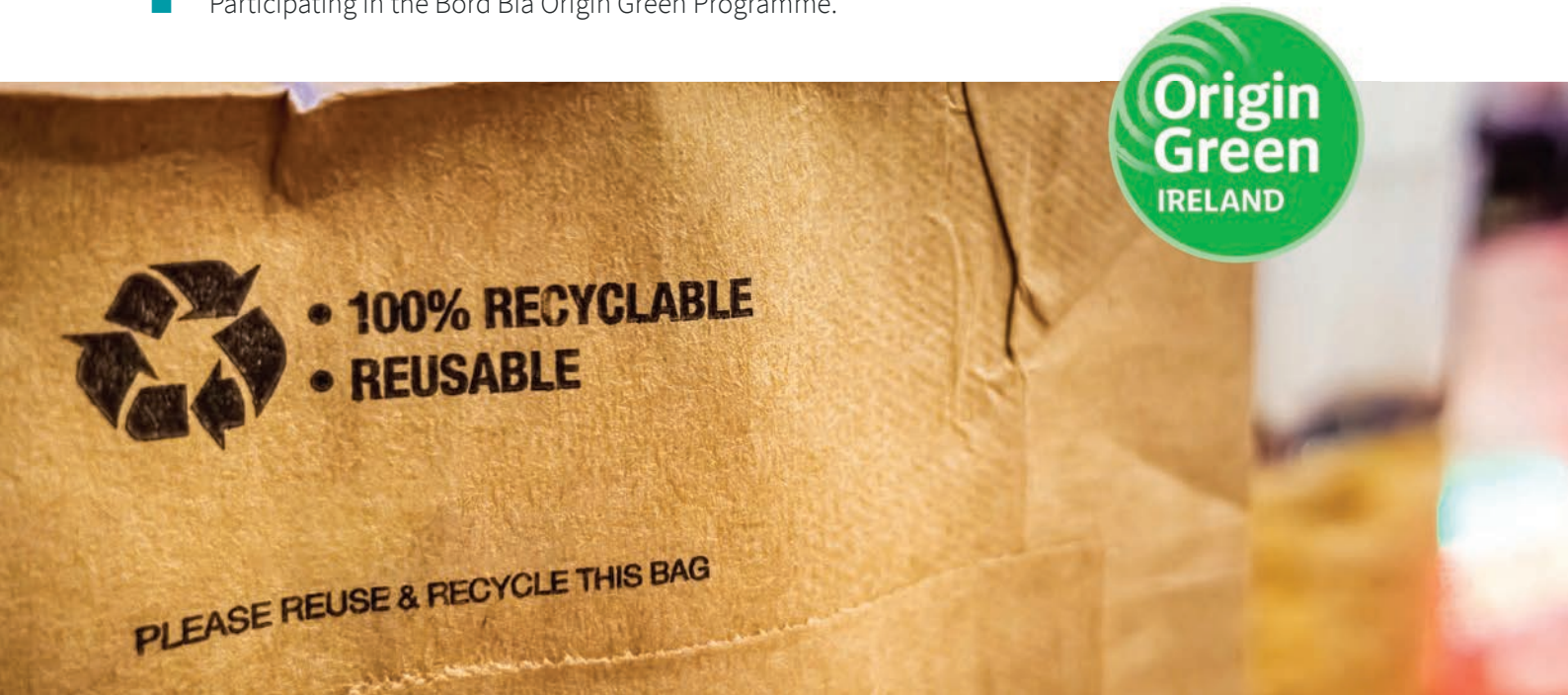
All Real sees a positive future for sustainable packaging. *"Would I recommend to another company to choose compostable packaging? Absolutely, if you can tick all the boxes."* Niall predicts a positive future for sustainable packaging. These solutions for sustainable packaging are going to become a lot easier and more practical. Making things sustainable is quite new, it's only been in the market a couple of years, whether it is flexible films, PLA plastic, compostable pots etc. They are becoming more available, minimum quantity orders are coming down. *"But for now, when companies say on instagram, 'oh look this is plastic free!' there's a whole lot of work that has gone into that and to make this actually viable."*

## 8 Packaging funding options

### Bord Bia Marketing Assistance Grant

Food, drink and horticulture (edible and amenity) can avail of the marketing grants scheme provided they are:

- Clients of Bord Bia
- Have a turnover greater than €100,000 and less than €3.5 million in 2019.
- Participating in the Bord Bia Origin Green Programme.



The Marketing Assistance Programme will support 50% of eligible expenditure, up to a specified maximum amount. If you are already a member of the Bord Bia Origin Green Programme, you are entitled to 60% of eligible expenditure - including design and orientation of packaging, labels and brochures - and will be prioritised for higher grant levels. This also applies to businesses who are members of relevant Bord Bia Quality Assurance & Sustainability Schemes.

### Food Academy Programme

In a bid to help develop Ireland's artisan food industry, the Local Enterprise Offices, Bord Bia and SuperValu created the 'Food Academy' in 2013. This is a tailored programme designed for early to mid-stage food business owners. Clients are taught how to grow sales for their product ranges through better branding and packaging design.

On completion of this programme, participants get the opportunity to present their product to a SuperValu panel and may participate in a trial based in local shops which could progress to a national listing with SuperValu.

## Food Works Ireland

Food Works is an accelerator programme supported by the government to help develop the next generation of successful export driven Irish food and drinks businesses. The initiative is coordinated by Bord Bia, Enterprise Ireland and Teagasc.

The Food Works Programme costs participants €3,000 and with the combined expert advice, mentoring, branding, research and guidance, has a market value of over €50,000.

Participants are also eligible to apply for an Enterprise Ireland feasibility grant up to the value of €35,000. This includes €15,000 for salaries and up to €20,000 in grant funding for other eligible expenditure.

## Local Enterprise Office

### Priming Grants

A Priming Grant is a business start-up grant which is available to micro enterprises within the first 18 months of start-up. Priming grants may be available for sole traders, partnerships or limited companies that fulfil the qualifying criteria. The maximum Priming Grant payable is 50% of the investment or €150,000 whichever is the lesser.

### Business Expansion Grants

The Business Expansion Grant is designed to assist a business in its growth phase after the initial 18-month start-up period. Business Expansion grants may be awarded to sole traders, partnerships or limited companies that fulfil the qualifying criteria. Expenditure may be considered under similar headings to the Priming Grant.



If you would like help to secure funding support for your food business, contact the *ifac* Food and AgriBusiness team for more information.



# 9 Key considerations for Food Businesses

*“Consumer expectations are evolving which is leading food companies to examine their approach to packaging on a much more frequent basis. Having an open mind and a proactive strategy to managing your packaging approach is critical. Sustainability, your brands presence on a digital shelf and the incorporation of blockchain or associated technologies are all emerging as key considerations.*

*This report gives clear examples of how the sustainable packaging trend in particular is here to stay. As the packaging industry invests to meet their clients’ needs, food companies can expect to access sustainable packaging in a more cost effective manner. We urge our clients to actively engage with the commercial opportunities that a well thought through packaging strategy can deliver. “*



**David Leydon**  
**Head of Food and**  
**AgriBusiness, ifac**

## Key considerations:









- Ensure you are aware of the packaging regulations that you are required to follow for your specific food company.
- Understand the costs associated with your packaging – use the *ifac* Packaging Cost Calculator to identify your packaging unit cost.
- Assess whether your product has excess packaging that could be banned through emerging retailer policies: you may need to cut down on packaging if this is the case.
- There is increasingly more choice to switch your packaging to more sustainable forms - which can be good for the environment and good for your consumer communications.
- Educate yourself on the grants and supports that your business is entitled to. Apply for these where relevant.
- Conduct regular packaging audits to ensure that you are optimising the use of packaging within your business.


















































# 10 Packaging resources

## Looking for the right packaging partner?

Check out our sample list of sustainable packaging providers using the guide below:

 Paper	 Cardboard	 At least one sustainable packaging range	 Suitable for baked goods
 Plastic	 Glass		
 Bioplastic	 Food Service		

## Ireland

1. **Alliance Packaging:** Based in Cork. Cardboard packing boxes, coffee cups, paper bags, cake boxes, bubble wrap/ plastic wrap.      
2. **Alpack:** Based in Dublin. Cardboard and bagasse takeaway boxes, cardboard packing boxes, bioplastic food containers, glass jars, plastic boxes/buckets/tubs.       
3. **Catering Disposables:** Based in Dublin. Compostable cardboard and bagasse based takeaway boxes, cutlery and coffee cups.   
4. **Dollard Packaging:** Based in Dublin. Retail and food service trays, cartons, cardboard based boxes.     
5. **Down2Earth Materials:** Based in Cork. Providers of compostable cardboard food containers, PLA (cornstarch-based bioplastic) food containers, coffee cups and paper/ PLA bags. All products can be home composted.    
6. **Ecopack:** Based in Wicklow. Sugarcane bagasse and palm bark based food and drink containers and disposable cutlery.    
7. **JJO Toole:** Based in Limerick. Provider of compostable cellophane sheets, cardboard food containers and paper bags. Clear Compostable Cellophane.   
8. **Nisbets:** Based in Cork. Paper carrier bags, cardboard takeaway food containers, Vegware containers for hot food.     
9. **NPP:** Based in Dublin. Compostable food bags and films, paper bags and wraps.    
10. **Paramount Packaging:** Based in Wicklow. Broad range of recyclable and compostable paper and bioplastic bags, bagasse bowls and trays, paper wrapping for food, recyclable, compostable pizza boxes and food platters.      

11. **Rocabapack:** Based in Dublin. Paper carrier bags, Kraft paper bags, brown wrapping paper. 📄🍷🌍
12. **Smurfit Kappa** is a global packaging provider that provide a wide range of solutions for industrial, e-commerce or retail packaging. 🌍
13. **Versatile Packaging:** Based in Monaghan. Supplying Evolve sustainable packaging solution. 2 offerings – food trays made from (i) 85% recycled material and (ii) 100% recycled PET. Suitable alternative to plastic punnets, plastic trays for fresh meat, ready meal trays etc. 🍷🍴🌍🌱
14. **Zeus Packaging:** Dublin, Cork and Antrim bases. Coffee cups, cardboard food boxes. 🍷🍴🌍📦

## UK & Northern Ireland

15. **Boxpak:** Based in Belfast. Recyclable cartons and aluminum foil containers. 🍷🍴🌍📦
16. **Brow Packaging:** Based in Belfast. Compostable/ recyclable food service takeaway containers. 🍷🍴🌍📦
17. **Camvert** – Based in Norfolk, UK. Providers of certified home compostable film packaging solutions for liquids, processed foods, fresh foods. 🌍🌱
18. **Catering 24** - Based in Ilkeston, UK. Providers of takeaway food containers, recyclable cardboard based boxes, and commercially compostable and biodegradable Bagasse (sugarcane pulp based) based containers. 🍴🌍📦
19. **Evolve Packaging:** Based in Shropshire, UK. Recyclable food trays, compostable plastic wrap, compostable straws/ cutlery, recycled cardboards boxes. 🍷🍴🌍🌱
20. **Lil Packaging:** Based in Cambridge, UK. This company specialises in e-commerce packaging solutions that are biodegradable, plastic free and 100% recyclable. 🌍📦
21. **NatureFlex:** Bases in UK, US & Japanese bases. Major providers of home compostable cellophane produced from wood fibres. A robust airtight packaging option for snacks, coffee, confectionary, fresh produce, bakery wares, bag-in-box packaging. 🍷🌍📦🌱
22. **noissue:** Bases in London, NZ, NYC, LA, Vancouver, Sydney, Philippines, HK. recycled customised tissue paper and food safe greaseproof paper, cardboard boxes, labels, tape, card. Eco packaging alliance – planting trees for every order made. 🍷🌍📦📄
23. **Notpla:** Based in London. Recyclable, home compostable takeaway boxes, sauce and condiment sachets and edible bubbles for drinks. Made from seaweed-based bioplastic and cardboard with seaweed coating. 🍷🍴🌍📦📄
24. **T&B Containers Ltd.:** Based in Lincolnshire, UK. Compostable bagasse punnets, recyclable cardboard trays and punnets suitable for fruit and vegetables. 🍷🌍📦

## EU

25. **AlgoPack:** Based in France. Seaweed based bioplastic. 🍷🍴🌱
26. **Avient:** Bases in Luxembourg, China, Brazil and US. Distributors of packaging for food and non-food products. Wide range of products made from various materials. 🍷🍴🌱🏠📱
27. **Make Grow Lab:** Based in Poland. 100% plastic free, home compostable seaweed based plastic coated paper alternative. Insoluble in water and impermeable to water.
28. **Miron Glass:** Based in Netherlands. Biophotonic glass containers preserve and extend the shelf life of contents by filtering the light that enters the jar. 🍷🌱
29. **Orbis:** Bases in Germany, Canada, US. Focuses on sustainable plastic, produces foldable large containers (FLC), pallets and totes from recycled and recyclable plastics using innovative processes. 🍷🍴🌱
30. **Enkev Natural Fibres:** Bases in Germany, Netherlands and Poland. Providers of “Cocoform”. Cocoform is a cardboard –like material made from coconut husk fibre, also known as coir. 🌱🏠🍷📱
31. **PulPac:** Based in Sweden. Suppliers of moulded fibre-based containers which make a water resistant, recyclable and compostable alternative to single-use plastic. 🌱🏠🍷

## Rest of World

32. **E6PR** – Based in Mexico. Eco Six Pack Ring, start- up producing biobased, compostable six pack rings. Currently being piloted by Corona. 🌱🏠
33. **Good Natured Products** – Based in Vancouver, Canada. Three different offerings: moulded fibre, PET, PLA. Options available which are compatible in different ways with various products from bakery wares to hot food to frozen food. 🍷🍴🌱🏠🌱
34. **Pure** – Based in Chicago, US. Provider of compostable cellophane bags. 🍷🌱🌱
35. **Stand Up pouches:** Based in Ohio, US. Made from metalized/Mylar, foil, laminated kraft paper, biodegradable and compostable paper and plastic. Microwave safe / high temperature films also available. 📱🌱🌱
36. **World Centric:** US bases. Large range of compostable (bagasse) and recyclable paper takeout containers in various shapes/sizes. 🍷🍴🌱🏠📱



If you are a packaging business producing sustainable packaging for food businesses and are not included on this list, contact the *ifac* team to be added.

# 11 About *ifac*

## Sound advice, independent solutions

We specialise in a number of key areas which provide you with expert advice and services to help your business grow.



Strategic Management



Funding, State Supports  
and Corporate Finance



Digital Transformation



Financial Accounting  
and Tax Compliance



Tax Structuring,  
Succession and Advisory



Research and  
Development



Audit and Assurance



Financial Planning



Commercial Sales and  
Marketing Strategy

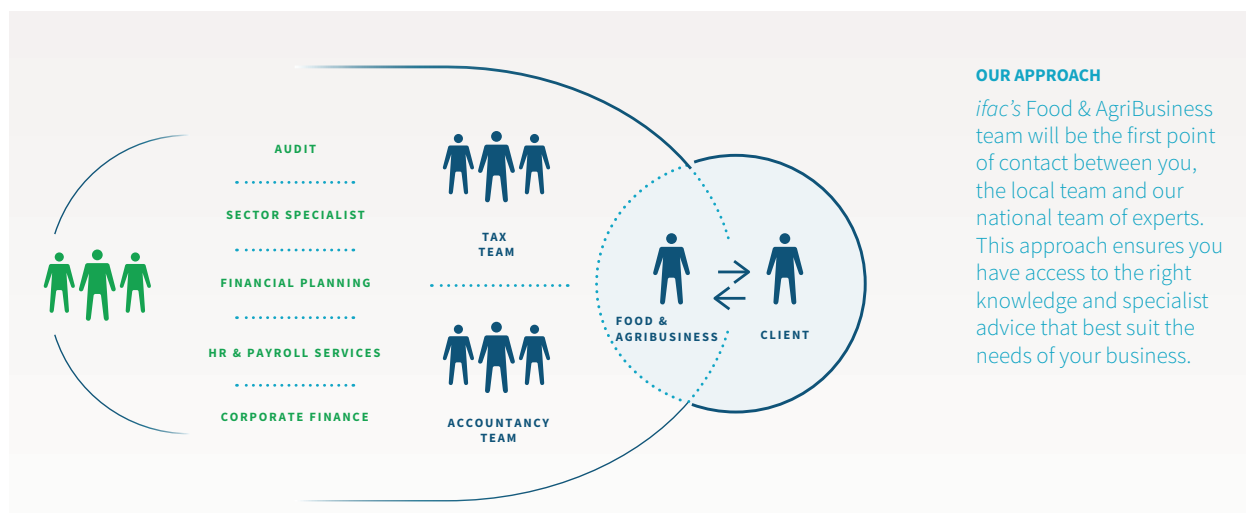


HR & Payroll Services  
Company Secretarial Services

### RECENT ADVISORY TEAM ASSIGNMENTS

In *ifac*, we have a wide range of expertise and skillsets. This allows us to deliver a range of services to clients using a holistic approach. Below are examples of some of the recent advisory projects we have undertaken.

- ✓ Assisted a number of food and agribusinesses in securing capital from the Enterprise Ireland Sustaining Enterprise Fund.
- ✓ Securing grant support and investment for clients including High Potential Start-Up (HPSU) and Competitive Start Fund (CSF) from Enterprise Ireland.
- ✓ Working with an innovative renewable energy company on a considerable international capital fundraise.
- ✓ Advised several businesses on their financial future through the Enterprise Ireland Business Financial Planning Grant.
- ✓ Creation and delivery of innovative marketing and digital strategies for high profile organisations in the sector.
- ✓ Facilitation of market research delivering deep insights for an emerging agtech business.
- ✓ Securing R&D Tax Credits for agtech businesses.
- ✓ Facilitating licencing agreement for an agtech innovation.
- ✓ Providing advisory VAT and customs solutions to companies who have been affected by changes post-Brexit.
- ✓ Development of detailed business plans and financial projections to help secure bank finance.



## Client View

"We are a growing business and *ifac* have been able to help us in a number of important areas as we diversify our business.



Initially we engaged *ifac* to conduct a Feasibility Study on a range of added-value products. Building on this, *ifac* have assisted us in securing funding, helping us along every step of the journey from application to drawdown.

They have also worked closely with us to develop our Taylor's of Lusk brand and we work with their accounting team on our financial and tax matters. This team approach ensures all our business needs are met by one trusted provider.

For any food business looking to grow, I would happily recommend *ifac* as a business advisory partner as they have invaluable expertise in key areas."

**Alan Taylor**, Taylor's of Lusk  
*Producers of award-winning Irish chillies & garlic*

"*Ifac* are a really reassuring presence in the face of our expansion plans, and one of the things that impresses us most about them is that we have access to a very wide range of financial, business and marketing specialists, and our primary contact within *ifac* can introduce us to these as needed.



We are working with *ifac* on a number of projects across the business from succession planning to financial advisory and marketing consultancy. We really like *ifac*'s service ethos and they're quick to respond to us when we need them.

Going forward, we believe we'll be in a very strong position to navigate the coming years with confidence and certainty, and we look forward to a relationship of mutual growth with *ifac*. We see *ifac* as a source of expert advice on the bigger challenges that face us as we grow."

**Lloyd Pearson**, MD,  
Pearson Milking Technology

### THE IFAC ADVISORY TEAM FOR FOOD AND AGRIBUSINESSES

**David Leydon**  
*Head of Food & AgriBusiness*  
E davidleydon@ifac.ie  
T (01) 4551036  
M (087) 9908227  
@ifac\_Ireland



**Lorcan Bannon**  
*Associate Director Food & AgriBusiness*  
E lorcanbannon@ifac.ie  
T (086) 7704304



**Patrick Black**  
*Food & AgriBusiness Consultant*  
E patrickblack@ifac.ie  
T (087) 6371428



**Oisín Gryson**  
*Food & AgriBusiness Executive*  
E oisingryson@ifac.ie  
T (083) 3695973



**Doireann Breathnach**  
*Food & AgriBusiness Graduate*  
E doireannbreathnach@ifac.ie



**Dermot Carey**  
*Head of Audit Services*



**Declan McEvoy**  
*Head of Tax*



**Noreen Lacey**  
*Head of Business Development/Banking*



**Conor Sweeney**  
*Director of Corporate Finance*



**Mary McDonagh**  
*Head of HR & Payroll Services*



**Martin Glennon**  
*Head of Financial Planning*



## A team of dedicated experts.

With over 30 offices across Ireland, our clients have access to a network of expertise across a broad range of sectors - from agribusiness and farming to renewable energy and food production. Our roots within each of our communities means we have deep local understanding and knowledge.

Speak with one of our Food and AgriBusiness team and see how we can help your business grow. Contact us on **1800 334422** or visit **[www.ifac.ie](http://www.ifac.ie)**



### OUR OFFICES

#### Leinster

Bluebell, Dublin 12  
Carlow, Co. Carlow  
Agri Practice, Danville, Co. Kilkenny  
SME, Danville, Co. Kilkenny  
Drogheda, Co. Louth  
Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford  
Mullingar, Co. Westmeath  
Portlaoise, Co. Laois  
Trim, Co. Meath  
Tullamore, Co. Offaly  
Wicklow, Co. Wicklow

#### Connacht

Athenry, Co. Galway  
Balla, Co. Mayo  
Collooney, Co. Sligo  
Roscommon, Co. Roscommon

#### Munster

Bandon, Co. Cork  
Blarney, Co. Cork  
Cahir, Co. Tipperary  
Dungarvan, Co. Waterford  
Ennis, Co. Clare  
Limerick City  
Mallow, Co. Cork  
Nenagh, Co. Tipperary  
Skibbereen, Co. Cork  
Templemore, Co. Tipperary  
Tralee, Co. Kerry

#### Ulster

Cavan, Co. Cavan  
Monaghan, Co. Monaghan  
Raphoe, Co. Donegal

#### Specialist Services

Audit  
Company Secretarial Services  
Corporate Finance  
Farm Support  
Financial Planning  
Food & AgriBusiness Advisory  
HR and Payroll Services  
Tax Advisory