



Running Scared, The Daily Telegraph and Market Report

Michael Stephen, an international expert on bioplastics, shares his thoughts and opinion on important issues impacting the bioplastics industry. Today, Michael writes about Running Scared, The Daily Telegraph and Market Report



RUNNING SCARED?

On 25th June the editor of Bioplastics News wrote: “I have written that “I didn’t believe PBAT mulch films were compostable” I was approached by the Vice-President of a German company who told me ... “Nobody from the industry (*) will work with you anymore.” (*referring to members of European Bioplastics)”

“This is intimidation and a threat” the editor said “It is also cowardice because he wouldn’t have threatened a New York Times journalist. Since that day I haven’t worked with almost any members of European Bioplastics!”

“A few members of European Bioplastics have also asked me not to allow OXO-bio spokespersons to publish content on BioplasticsNews.com My answer was clear: It’s against our “right of opinion” and “freedom of expression” policy not to allow someone to express himself or herself publicly because he or she is a representative from a particular industry, sector or technology.”

It seems that the editor is right, and that there is indeed a conspiracy to prevent commercial end-users and the general public hearing the truth about oxo-biodegradable plastics. My PA has just received the following e-mail from the Conference Director of the “Plastic Free World Conference & Expo” in Berlin.

Thu, 9 Jul 2020 10:31:56 +0000 “I am contacting you today to inform you we are no longer able to include Michael in our conference programme. We work closely with our advisory board and several members have insisted that he be removed from the programme and even mentioned that they would not be taking part if we did not.”

Actually I would not have been able to attend the conference on the postponed date but would have sent an expert colleague in my place.

What is it that they have to fear? The fact is that they know that their use of ordinary plastic is no longer tenable, and that “compostable” plastic does not convert into compost, so they are desperate to conceal from the world that oxo-biodegradable plastic is a real and viable alternative and that their “sustainability” policies are fundamentally wrong. They have even put pressure on the EU to protect them from competition by banning competing technologies.

Their Corporate Social Responsibility policies are obviously a sham when it is clear that they resort to such disgraceful tactics. Their shareholders should tell their management that such behaviour is no longer acceptable. It damages their companies, and it damages their products if such tactics are thought necessary to secure market-share.

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

I am reminded that on 23rd June 2019 the Daily Telegraph carried an article by James Rothwell headed “Britain’s lead in biodegradable plastics stymied by Brussels.”

“To help settle the contentious debate, scientists at the EU’s chemicals agency (ECHA) were told to

investigate oxo-biodegradable plastics and planned to report back later this year. ECHA’s scientists appeared to be on the verge of endorsing claims that oxo-biodegradable plastics were not harmful, but the European Commission closed down the study before its contents were made public. In an email seen by The Daily Telegraph, a senior scientist at the European Chemical Agency (ECHA) wrote that his team had not found any evidence that oxo-biodegradable plastics produced harmful microplastics.”

MARKET REPORT

According to a report just out from Dublin-based Research & Markets.com

- The global packaging market size during the COVID-19 pandemic is projected to grow from USD 909.2 billion in 2019 to USD 1,012.6 billion by 2021.
- Based on material type, plastic is projected to lead the packaging market during the forecast period. Plastic is described to be very necessary, and several measures are being taken to either temporarily roll back single-use plastic bag bans or stop the implementation of state-wide ban laws.”

It is now becoming obvious that single-use plastic is humanity’s friend, not its enemy, and the EU should scrap its ill-advised Directive before it comes into force in July next year. This will be hard to do because there are so many influential people with an emotional hatred of plastic without any rational justification.

The time has now come to deal urgently with the only problem with plastic – its propensity to lie or float around for decades if it gets into the open environment. This problem can be solved with oxo-biodegradable technology see www.d2w.net and it is time to stop prevaricating on the basis of the usual objections – eg:

“it won't degrade in landfill” – why should it? If it is in landfill it is not a problem. Anyway, biodegradation in landfill generates methane – a greenhouse gas more powerful than CO₂.

“it needs continuous access to sunlight” – it doesn't, but plastic litter blowing around in the environment or floating on the sea gets plenty of sunlight.

“it creates microplastics” The European Union's own technical experts – ECHA are not convinced that it does. The main source of microplastics is actually the erosion/abrasion of ordinary plastic, and this is the very problem that oxo-bio technology was designed to address.

“it's not compostable” – it is not intended for composting, which is not in any event a useful purpose for plastics. See <https://www.biodeg.org/composting/>

“It cannot be safely recycled” yes it can. See <https://www.biodeg.org/recycling-and-waste/> But recycling is not the panacea it is claimed to be.

“We don't know how long it will take to degrade” – we do know that it will degrade at least ten times faster than ordinary plastic under the same conditions in the open environment. No special conditions are necessary because oxygen and bacteria are everywhere.

“Once it has started to biodegrade we don't know whether it will fully biodegrade” Nobody has given any reason why it should not.

Michael Stephen

Michael Stephen is a lawyer and was a member of the United Kingdom Parliament, where he served on the Environment Select Committee. When he left Parliament Symphony Environmental Technologies Plc. attracted his attention because of his interest in the environment. He is now Deputy Chairman of Symphony, which is listed on the AIM market of the London Stock Exchange, and is the founder and Chairman of the Oxo-biodegradable Plastics Association.

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