



Tipa, Plastics Today and The American Genius

Michael Stephen, an international expert on bioplastics, shares his thoughts and opinion on important issues impacting the bioplastics industry. Today, Michael writes about Tipa, Plastics Today and the American Genius.



TIPA

“Eli Lancry says in an article published by TIPA on 9th June “Oxo-degradable products are made from conventional plastics and supplemented with specific additives in order to break down plastics into little pieces, but that’s where it stops. It will never fully biodegrade because microorganisms do not recognize the synthetic monomers, and therefore do not digest them.”

Mr. Lancry may have a Ph.D. in Physical Chemistry from Bar-Ilan University, but he does not seem to know the difference between oxo-degradable and oxo-biodegradable plastics. If he is talking about oxo-biodegradable plastics he misses the fundamental point that the process of oxidation does not convert the plastic into smaller pieces of plastic, it converts it into oligomers which are digestible by microbes. The European Chemicals Agency found no evidence of microplastics, and even the Ellen MacArthur Foundation accepted in their 2019 Report that it does become biodegradable.”

Mr. Lancry is promoting “compostable” plastic in the article, but he does not tell his readers that it does not convert into compost. This is because EN13432 and ASTM D6400 require it to convert into CO₂. If you can collect a piece of plastic there are better things to do with it than turn it into CO₂.

PLASTICS TODAY <https://www.plasticstoday.com/sustainable-practices/cancel-culture-targets-oxo-biodegradable-plastics>

Clare Goldsberry, chief reporter of this US-based magazine for the plastics industry noticed the “Running Scared” item in my column in last week’s Bioplastics News. In an article on 15th July she said:

“Those seeking to shut down Stephen’s and the OPA’s participation in an important program are less concerned about the environment than they are about losing market share and, thus, profits. In my opinion, that is what they fear the most.”

“Let the market decide”

“If degradable plastic is a much better product, then the market will move in that direction. However, if oxo-biodegradable plastic provides a better, faster, and more optimal route to biodegradation in the environment, then the market will move toward that. In other words, we need to let the market sort it out.”

“I have helped processors and mould makers create marketing plans for decades, and I would always tell them that if their only marketing strategy is to denigrate and bad-mouth their competition, then they will fail. Trying to get rid of the competition by refusing to acknowledge their product or service as viable is not a marketing strategy! Competition is healthy for the industry. I’ve often heard people call their competition “good competitors.” Many have respect for each other. That doesn’t appear to be the case when it comes to the degradable and compostable plastics crowd and their outright denigration of oxo-biodegradable plastics manufacturers.”

“There are numerous schemes out there for ridding the Earth of plastic waste – some better than others – but in a market-based economic system, those with the best solutions will win the day. Put all solutions on the table and let the market determine the best one or two or even three.”

“Shutting down a competitor from speaking at a conference designed to explore options and engage in discussions about alternatives for creating a “plastic-free world” would seem to be a really bad idea. What do they have to fear – perhaps a competitor with a better mousetrap?”

Clare Goldsberry has been reporting on the plastics industry for more than 30 years.

THE AMERICAN GENIUS – Business News July 10 2020

“Single use plastic bags are rising like a phoenix from the ashes of illegality all over the country, from California to New York. Reusable bags are falling out of favor in an effort to curtail the spread of COVID-19. It’s a logical step: the less something is handled, generally, the safer it is going to be. And porous paper bags are thought to have a higher potential to spread the virus through contact.”

“It’s worth mentioning that single use plastic bags are considerably more environmentally efficient to manufacture compared to paper, cloth, and reusable plastic bags. Per unit, they require very little material to make and are easily mass produced. It also goes without saying that they have a very short lifespan, after which they end up sitting in landfills, littering streets, or drifting through oceans.”

“In the grand scheme of things, it’s hard to deny that single use plastics have the potential to be as dangerous to humans as COVID-19. Coronavirus is a very immediate existential threat to us in the United States, but the scale of the global crises that stem from the irresponsible consumption of cheap disposable

goods, also cannot be overstated. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch isn't going anywhere. (And did you know that it's just one of many huge garbage patches around the world?)”

“So... what exactly are we going to do about the comeback of plastic bags? Because to be honest, I used to work in grocery retail, and it is difficult and often unrewarding. So, I wouldn't exactly love handling potentially contaminated tote bags all day in the midst of a pandemic if I were still a supermarket employee. You couldn't pay me enough to feel comfortable with that – forget the minimum wage!”

“Even if we concede that disposable plastics are a necessary evil in the fight against COVID-19, the fact remains that they stick around long after you're done with them.”

Somebody needs to tell the author of this article that there is a solution – if you make the bags with oxo-biodegradable technology (www.biodeg.org) they will not “stick around long after you're done with them.”

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.

Earlier Postings in this Column

- 1/ 1/ 20 – [Plastiphobia, Microplastics and A Throw-Away Society](#)
- 7/ 1/ 20 – [Recycling, Lab Testing, Bangladesh and the Right Bioplastic](#)
- 14/1/20 – [Plastiphobia and Bioplastics Definitions](#)
- 21/1/20 – [Composting, the European Union and Unemployment](#)
- 30/1/20 – [Plastiphobia, Malaysia and a Case Against Compostables and Paper](#)
- 7/02/20 – [Coronavirus, MPs Letter, Montreal, Australia and the Dominican Republic](#)
- 14/02/20 – [Oman, MacArthur Foundation, Stifling Innovation, South Africa and Compostable Plastics](#)
- 24/02/20 – [Serbia, India, Pakistan and European Bioplastics](#)
- 03/03/20 – [Plastic To Protect Health and Common Sense on Plastic](#)
- 10/03/20 – [Plastiphobia, Singapore, Compostable Plastics, Doorknobs and Carbios](#)
- 17/03/20 – [Greening our Way to Infection, Defra Warns Against Bioplastics and Montreal](#)
- 24/03/20 – [Ditch the Plastic Bag Ban and Inn-Probio](#)
- 01/04/20 – [The Come Back of Plastic Bags, Compostable Plastic Not Wanted and EASAC](#)
- 16/04/20 – [Coronavirus and Agricultural Plastics](#)
- 11/05/20 – [Coronavirus, Peru, Barbados and Recycling](#)
- 18/05/20 – [Say No to Plastiphobia, False Descriptions and the Recycling Myth](#)
- 02/06/20 – [Definitions and More Setbacks for Plastiphobia](#)
- 11/06/20 – [BBIA, Food Waste and Testing of OXO-Biodegradable Plastic](#)

- 19/06/20 – [Oxo Biodegradation, Independent Reports and Precautionary Principle](#)
- 29/06/20 – [Banana Republic, Why Turn Plastic into CO2 and Plastic Waste from Ships](#)
- 13/07/20 – [Running Scared, The Daily Telegraph and Market Report](#)

Interview with Michael Stephen

- [Questions and Answers on OXO-Biodegradability](#)

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed here by Michael Stephen and other columnists are their own, not those of Bioplasticsnews.com.