

Covid 19 and Five Myths About Plastic

Michael Stephen, an international expert on bioplastics, shares his thoughts and opinion on important issues impacting the bioplastics industry. Today, Michael writes about COVID-19 and Five Myths about Plastic.



Covid-19

I have written about this before.

Governments have known for at least 6 months that it is possible to manufacture plastic products so that they will destroy Coronavirus within one hour of coming into contact with them. So, instead of trying to ban “Single-use Plastics” why are governments not using their emergency powers to require them to be made anti-microbial, and why are all the commercial end-users not doing this anyway? They all know that it is essential to destroy the virus before it gets into the human body. Plastic is the only material in common use that can kill viruses.

Instead governments persist with the idea that the virus can be defeated by “locking-down” whole populations. The idea that “lockdowns” work has become an ideology – a belief system, despite compelling evidence to the contrary – not unlike the vendetta against “Single-use Plastics.”

I have some questions for our governments:

Why are we constantly told about the number of “cases?” A “case” is a person who has tested positive, but he may never develop severe symptoms – or any symptoms at all. Only a tiny proportion of “cases” ever require hospital treatment, and an even smaller proportion will actually die. Is the focus on the number of “cases” (because it is the largest number they can find) deliberately designed to frighten us into complying with government controls, no matter how ill-advised they might be?

Why are we being told that the number of “cases” is rising? Isn't it obvious that if you test more people you will find more “cases?” This does not mean that the number of infected persons is rising.

Why do they use childish and misleading phrases like “Circuit-breaker” borrowed from electrical engineering with no sensible application to COVID?

We have learned to cope with a bad dose of ‘flu from time to time, and some of us may die from it, but there is no need for governments to act unless the number of deaths from respiratory disease in each month is substantially higher than in the same month in previous years. We are rarely if ever given these comparisons. Even then, the action must be proportionate.

There is a big difference between people who die WITH COVID and those who die FROM COVID. How many of the former are being put into the latter category?

Whenever we are given the number of deaths FROM COVID, it should be mandatory to say at the same time how many are of people (a) aged over 80, and (b) with a serious illness. It should also be mandatory to publish an opinion-poll among these people. It is likely that if asked, they would say that they do not wish the government to ruin the livelihoods of their children and grandchildren so that they can live

When the UK Prime Minister announced his latest “lockdown” on 31st October we were shown impressive-looking charts purporting to demonstrate the potential spread of the virus, but they were essentially based on “cases,” and on guesswork based on controversial data. Moreover, they showed only one side of the equation.

Why were we shown no charts with the actual and potential figures of bankruptcies, insolvencies, and suicides which “lockdowns” are causing? Why were there no charts showing the staggering burden of debt that these policies are bequeathing to future generations? Why were there no charts showing deaths from other causes in the same period, so that we could see the whole picture in proportion? Yes, a death from COVID is tragic, but so is a death in a traffic accident. Why not ban traffic?

I have often thought that the media are addicted to fear, and I wonder whether the media are just reporting the news or are presenting it so as to instil as much fear into us as possible – but why? Are government policies driving the media frenzy or is it the other way round?

The politicians and the media seem to be wrapped up in it. Fear has got the better of them. If we have any sensible people in our parliaments it is time for them to fight back.

Five Myths About Plastic

An article in “Environmental Science & Technology” on 26th October explores five commonly held perceptions that do not correspond with current scientific knowledge surrounding the environmental impacts of single-use plastic.

These misperceptions include:

1. plastic packaging is the largest contributor to the environmental impact of a product;
2. plastic has the most environmental impact of all packaging materials;
3. reusable products are always better than single-use plastics;
4. recycling and composting should be the highest priority;
5. “zero waste” efforts that eliminate single-use plastics minimize the environmental impacts of an event.

This article highlights the need for environmental scientists and engineers to put the complex environmental challenges of plastic waste into better context, integrating a holistic, life cycle perspective into research efforts and discussions that shape public policy.

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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