

Press release

Landbell Group closes the loop for plastic food packaging

In an innovative recycling project, Landbell Group, together with its partners SABIC and Mars, has closed the loop for plastic food packaging

Mainz, 19 October 2022 - In a groundbreaking joint initiative involving leading companies from various industries, Landbell Group has achieved a breakthrough in the high-quality recycling of plastic food packaging. At the end of 2020, the Mainz-based environmental compliance specialist joined forces with SABIC, an innovative chemical company, and Mars, a global manufacturer of confectionery, food and pet food, in a pioneering recycling project. The goal: to turn hard-to-recycle plastic packaging from households - which can only be incinerated or recycled into low quality material by mechanical recycling - into food packaging through chemical recycling, thus closing this challenging loop in a high-quality way. After more than 20 months of intensive collaborative work, the partners have announced that the project is complete: in the coming weeks, Mars will use recycled packaging material collected by Landbell Group and processed by SABIC into certified polypropylene (PP) in the packaging of its snack bar brand, KIND®.

The certified food-grade recyclate is obtained by recycling low-grade, used mixed plastics from packaging waste. A pyrolysis process allows the used mixed plastic to be recycled at molecular level. In this technology, the plastic is heated to very high temperatures in an oxygen-free environment and broken down, producing pyrolysis oil. SABIC uses this pyrolysis oil like a fossil raw material, which makes it possible to create new packaging and products that meet the strictest quality requirements, such as certain hygiene standards for food packaging.

“Mixed used plastic from flexible consumer packaging is difficult to sort and recycle mechanically,” adds Uwe Ehteler, Chief Operating Officer for Landbell Group. “However, as demonstrated in this closed-loop project, we can facilitate effective advanced recycling solutions that allow plastics and packaging manufacturers, as well as OEMs and brand owners, to reclaim and benefit from the value of mixed used plastics while at the same time reducing fossil depletion and enhancing their carbon footprint.”

“We are very excited about this pioneering closed-loop recycling project that demonstrates the feasibility and speed of implementing circular plastic innovations when leading actors from across the entire value chain are closely collaborating,” says Lada Kurelec, General Manager PP, PET, PS, PVC, PU & Elastomers Businesses for Petrochemicals at SABIC. “Used flexible packaging has a high feedstock value for new materials, and our TRUCIRCLE polymers and services form an instrumental element in tapping this vast potential.”

The new mono-material packaging solution continues the partners' efforts to support a circular economy by incorporating advanced recycled content in healthy snack bar packaging.

“At Mars, we want to contribute to a circular economy where packaging material never becomes waste, but is recycled, reused or composted. For this to happen, we need new solutions and infrastructure to change the recycling landscape and to compliment mechanical recycling,” adds Barry Parkin, Chief Procurement & Sustainability Officer at Mars. “Today marks another important step in accelerating our sustainable packaging journey and in our collaboration with partners like SABIC that are enabling new opportunities to provide consumers with packaging designed for circularity.”

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About Landbell Group

Landbell Group is a leading provider of environmental and chemical compliance solutions with local expertise and global presence. Established as a packaging compliance scheme in Germany in 1995, LANDBELL GROUP has since evolved into a platform for extended producer responsibility (EPR) worldwide.

Landbell Group's comprehensive core services – compliance, consulting and software – help companies to meet all their EPR obligations worldwide: its producer responsibility organisations for compliance have collected more than 10 million tonnes of waste batteries, electronics and packaging; its consulting companies provide global consultancy for EPR and takeback; and its software business develops digital tools for environmental and chemical compliance.

In 2014, Landbell Group also launched the Green Alley Award, which is presented every year to innovative startups in the environmental sector.

For more information, please visit: www.landbell-group.com