ISRI Position on the Use of Degradable Additives in Plastic Packaging[1]

Overview

Degradable additives are chemical compounds that are often incorporated in conventional plastics such polyethylene (PE), polypropylene (PP), polystyrene (PS), polyethylene terephthalate (PET) and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) during the converting process from polymer pellets to final products. The purpose of these additives is to make non-degradable plastics "bio-degradable", "oxo-degradable" or "photo degradable".

There may be confusion within the marketplace on the use of these terms in relation to their use in plastic products. Such terms as used in relation to its use with a plastic item may not be supported by tests conducted by third parties using standards and protocols as those published by ASTM, ISO and other standard making bodies.

Further, plastics that contain degradable additives can harm plastic recycling as these additives may be mixed unknowingly with non-degradable plastic and cause the resulting feedstock to be significantly compromised.

It is the position of the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, Inc. (ISRI) that:

- Suggests any claims as to the use of terms "bio-degradable", "oxo-degradable", "photo- degradable" and other terms that indicate the plastic is easily degraded be supported by independent third party research and testing using accepted standard methods and specifications published by ASTM, ISO or other standard making bodies;
- The introduction of products that contain degradable additives must not harm or compromise currently acceptable recycling practices, recycled material product expectations, and the affiliated recycling infrastructure; and
- Suggests that such additives do not encourage or excuse poor consumer behavior such as littering.

[1] As adopted by the ISRI Board of Directors on April 24, 2017.