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Kwik Lok

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Speaking Sustainably: Reducing food waste to tackle greenhouse gas emissions

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Every year, approximately 931 million tons of food goes to waste, contributing to 8-10% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

The same report that identified those startling statistics —The United Nations Environment Program's Food Waste Index Report 2021 (https://www.unep.org/resources/report/unep-food-waste-index-report-2021) — found that 13% of that waste occurs at the retail level, while 61% occurs in the home, and 26% occurs in foodservice.

“If food loss and waste were a country, it would be the third biggest source of greenhouse gas emissions,” said Inger Anderson, the executive director of the UN Environment Program. “Food waste also burdens waste management systems, exacerbates food insecurity, making it a major contributor to the three planetary crises of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste.”

Consumers, retailers, suppliers, and producers alike have a responsibility to reduce food waste, and proper packaging plays a key role in ensuring that food products stay safe to eat from farm to factory, to retail shelves to the customer’s home.

As packaging’s main function is to protect its content and 30% of all food produced worldwide is lost or wasted along the supply chain, optimized packaging may be one of the solutions to reduce this staggering amount, noted an MDPI study (https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/11/1/264) released in 2019.

At the retail level, there are numerous factors that might go into food being wasted from products not selling before the best-buy date, to products being tampered with and thrown out due to food safety concerns.

Durban, South Africa-based Goldpack (https://goldpack.co.za/), for example, has seen its baked breads go to waste at the retail bakery level due to packaging being tampered with.

“In our market we were experiencing slices of bread being taken out of the loaves for consumption,” said Clyde Challenor, director of Goldpack. “[We needed a] tamper-evident stitch to put a stop to this and give the consumer and shop owner peace of mind.”

To tackle that issue, Goldpack set out to find a tamper-evident packaging solution that could protect products throughout the supply chain and keep them fresh in the consumer’s home. Challenor noted that the company tested a few types of closing systems and decided to go with Yakima, Wash.-based Kwik Lok’s closing system.

Created with food waste reduction and food safety in mind, Kwik Lok’s 909A Bag Closing machine uses a contactless laser to stitch the bag closed versus tried and failed heat sealers Goldpack initially tested.

"It was a no-brainer," Challenor said. "It's difficult to measure the impact but the 909 has definitely reduced the waste at the smaller stores that were experiencing pilferage as these loaves are no longer thrown away. The Kwik Lok closing system which has the ability to properly and easily reclose the bag, extending the shelf life of the bread before going stale — this is also a huge factor for food waste reduction."

Kwik Lok's 909A Bag Closing Machine, utilizes Laser Stitch Technology to provide a uniform 'laser stitch' that indicates whether a bag has been opened.

Once closed, the Kwik Lok closure is tamper-evident and allows customers to re-seal the bag after purchase for prolonged product freshness and safety to consume.

Ideal for bakery products, the bag closing machine offers several benefits:

- Works on high-speed lines – Up to 65 bags per minute
- Minimal modifications to existing line needed
- Only 10" of line space required
- Synchronizes with your conveyor
- Bypass mode which allows you to run the line without laser
- No compressed air required
- Easy to install and use

Kwik Lok is dedicated to helping customers find sustainable and innovative packaging solutions that help the industry reduce waste and protect the environment. Check out Kwik Lok's suite of sustainable resources (https://www.kwiklok.com/sustainability-strategies/) and watch this video to learn more about how the 909A Closing Bag Machine works.

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