



## NE-DBIC Packaging Innovation Grant Results & Next Steps



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# OBJECTIVES

Cabot Creamery was awarded grant funding through the NE-DBIC to research the viability of cheese packaging options that are more sustainable.

Three film types have been tested for 8oz dairy bars against our current 100% virgin, single-use, plastic film:

1. 30% Post-Consumer Recycled (PCR)
2. Recycle Ready (RR)
3. Compostable (COMP)



Key Questions:

- Can we run it?
- Does it keep products safe?
- Do consumers want it?



# LINE TRIALS & ROAD TESTING

## PLAN

- 100K Pounds of Cheddar & Pepperjack
- 8oz Dairy Bars
- Standard Line Testing, Shaker Table Analysis, Gelbo Flex Testing
- 200-mile Road Testing

## RESULTS

- 50k Pounds Packaged
- PCR “drop in” with no machine changes
- Significant leakers in RR packages
- 30% decreased run rate for RR
- Flex cracking with COMP packages



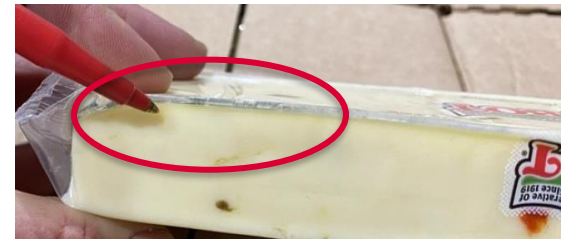
# SENSORY & SHELF LIFE

## PLAN

- Internal testing (mold, texture, flavor, color) every 30 days through end of shelf-life.
- External testing for consumer acceptance with UW Center Dairy Research.

## RESULTS

- No discernable differences on texture / flavor / color that correlates to the package type.
- Significant mold development in RR packages.
  - correlated to seal integrity, rather than film barrier.



# CONSUMER MARKET RESEARCH

## PLAN

- Study #1: Recycling & Composting Habits
- Study #2: Sustainable Cheese Packaging
- Study #3: At-home Test & Video Discussions
- Study #4: Final Verdict, Consumer Education, & Price Focused

## RESULTS

- 57% believe single-use plastic is an issue
- 49% look for sustainable packaging while shopping
- 62% more likely to purchase sustainable dairy bar
- 68% likely to switch brands

Excited to see cheese packaging that is sustainable. I've never seen it before.

This study was very eye opening. I found that the sustainable wrapper did not affect the quality of the cheese in a negative way. This will encourage me to seek out food products wrapped this way.

I enjoyed this test and am excited to have more products packaged in this manner. We ALL need to make a better effort with our planet, and this could be the way.



# NEXT STEPS

- 4 months until completion.
- Testing RR and COMP alternatives.
- Machine enhancements for next trials.
- Final consumer research is direction on education, messaging, and pricing.
- Commercialization planning for PCR and beyond.
- Sharing results so that not just Cabot will benefit from this work, but the dairy trade at large, with hopes to reduce industry reliance on single use plastic.

