

North Carolina

BUSINESS LEADERS

Use Recycled Content



Waynesville, N.C. — Haywood County
Wilson, N.C. — Wilson County



PRODUCTS

Recycled resin-based consumer packaging



MARKET

Major food manufacturers and the fruit and vegetable industry



DIVERSION

Diverts more than 45,000 tons of plastic per year

BUSINESS STORY

Sonoco Products Company is one of the largest diversified suppliers of consumer and industrial packaging and packaging supply chain services, including a Recycling division that offers municipal and commercial services.

In North Carolina, specifically, Sonoco operates several locations that heavily use recycled fiber and resin materials during the production process. Sonoco operates facilities that manufacture resin-based consumer packaging in Waynesville and Wilson. The Waynesville facility is a 200,000-square-foot facility with more than 120 employees that supplies Polypropylene and thermoformed CPET containers to major food manufacturers. The Wilson facility is also a 200,000-square-

foot operation with more than 160 employees that supplies thermoformed PET containers to the fruit and vegetable industry.

In addition, Sonoco Recycling runs 12 Recycling plants across the state, including three Material Recovery Facilities in Raleigh, Wilmington and Onslow County. These plants gather and process recyclable fiber and plastics from throughout their respective communities — both directly from consumers as well as industrial and retail locations. The N.C. Recycling Business Assistance Center has supported the expansion of these processing facilities with a series of Recycling Business Assistance Grants.

“As a company that recycles or causes to be recycled over 80% of the products that leave our facilities, Sonoco is aware of the immense impact a circular economy can have — and we can design and manufacture for the full lifecycle.”

“Our thermoformed products contain up to 100% of recycled content, depending on size specifications and performance requirements. In all our plastics operations (thermoforming, injection molding, extrusion) combined, our goal is to utilize 25% post-consumer plastic by 2025.”

RECYCLED MATERIAL SOURCING

Sonoco's international scale offers advantages when sourcing recycled materials for its manufacturing facilities across the globe. The resin recycling market has been challenged by the low price of virgin material, which puts recycled material at an economic disadvantage. Recent sustainability commitments by almost all major food companies to use a certain percentage of recycled content in their packaging will ensure that there is a continued focus on repurposing used plastic packaging. Across all of Sonoco's plastic operations, the company sourced over more than 45,000 tons of recycled resin material.

Recycled plastic tends to be more expensive than virgin plastic, as the recycled material must be collected, processed and sanitized for safe use. As mentioned, there is an increased commitment by many brands to use recycled plastic, regardless of the higher costs.

Consumer education is key to secure a continued supply stream of recycled resin-based packaging in the future. Without an increase in the consumer recycling rates of PET and other plastic grades, it might prove difficult to meet the aggressive goals for recycled content that were put forth by many consumer goods companies and their respective brands.



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