

FOOD PACKAGING PRIZE

The Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research ([FFAR](#)) seeks to answer the key question: ***What is the next generation of sustainable packaging materials and/or technologies that reduces food waste and increases food availability, and how do we accelerate the integration of these materials into the food value chain?***

To address this question, FFAR is spearheading the Food Packaging Prize to identify and accelerate the most promising packaging solutions related to food waste. Expected outcomes from this initiative include:

- Innovative food packaging materials and/or technologies that replace currently used packaging (polystyrene foam trays, plastic clamshells, freezer wrap, etc.) and meet highest sustainability, food safety, and food quality criteria adopted and integrated into the food value chain.
- Increased collective knowledge around optimizing the intersection between food waste reduction and packaging material sustainability to reduce costs and environmental impacts across the food system.
- First-mover advantage and increased consumer loyalty for providing higher quality products that meet highest sustainability criteria.
- Reduction of food and packaging waste.

The Prize will also foster competition and build momentum to support scientific breakthroughs, from concept to prototype development, to provide practical solutions for the food industry and retailers.

Background

Up to [25% of residential food waste](#) is due to inadequate packaging size or design. This can come from food spoiling due to lack of sufficient packaging, condiments sticking to the sides and bottoms of containers or the inability to portion bulk fresh foods for timely consumption. Improved packaging stops food waste from occurring in the first place and provides the greatest economic value per ton along with the highest net environmental benefits.

The issues of food waste reduction and single-use packaging reduction are often viewed as at odds with one another. Packaging's core purpose is to protect and extend the life of food, making sure it arrives fresh and intact to store shelves and our homes. At the same time, packaging, particularly plastic packaging, is receiving increased attention from food businesses, nonprofits, policymakers and consumers due to end-of-life waste management concerns.

According to the [Ellen MacArthur Foundation's report](#), in 2013 industry produced 78 million metric tons of plastic packaging worldwide with a total value of USD 260 billion. Of that, 40% went to landfills and another 32% ended up polluting land and sea. Losses to the economy because of the current system run as high as USD 120 billion per year.

Over 290 companies have committed to the new plastic economy--recyclability, reusability and compostability of plastic packaging. At the same time, two-thirds of food businesses are committed to halving food waste by 2030. Given the complex interconnection between packaging and food waste, and the pressing need to reduce the environmental impacts of both, this Prize aims to address what are often two separate challenges through a single initiative.

Packaging Prize Highlights

Prize: A total of **\$4M+** will be awarded to the firm, group, or individual who successfully develops packaging materials and/or technology that meets the highest sustainability, food safety, and food quality criteria as determined by program partners throughout the program's two phases Phase I, *Seed Funding*, will award up to \$300K each in research awards to the 4-5 applicants with the most promising research proposal(s), and Phase

II, *Prize Money*, will award \$4M to the proposal that meets the criteria outlined by program partners. Any U.S. or international public or private institution, consortium, non-profit organization, for-profit company, tribal government entity or any combination of the above who has an existing, clear proof of concept is eligible to apply.

FFAR has already committed to the Packaging Prize **up to \$3M** and invites food producers and processors, distributors, retailers, food companies, foundations, and other capital providers to provide at least \$3M in matching funds to go towards seed funding, prize money, pilot implementation and program management. Funding commitments will be sought before officially launching the Prize publicly.

Program Partners: The success of this initiative requires coordinated efforts and collaboration among leading packaging experts, researchers, food producers, food processors, distributors, retailers, manufacturers, funders, NGOs and other key stakeholders. The following roles will be filled in the upcoming months:

- *Executive Committee*--Funding partners who determine the criteria to be met by new materials/ technologies, review technical evaluations, and recommend proposals for seed funding and, ultimately, for the prize.
- *Advisory Committee*--Advises the Executive Committee on the criteria to be met by new materials/technologies, provides technical evaluations and participates in proposal discussions. Consists of packaging experts representing food producers, food processors, food manufacturers, distributors, food retail businesses, academia, government, and professional organizations.
- *Pilot Partners*--Food businesses throughout the value chain willing to participate in pilots with Seed Funding recipients following the announcement of research awards. Consists of grocery retailers with private label line, manufacturers with branded lines, packaging suppliers, food processing facilities, etc. Scope of each pilot will be determined by each food business.

Timing: The goal is to publicly launch the Prize in 2020.

Next Step: Convene Stakeholders

FFAR will host a webinar for potential program partners to present the vision of the Packaging Prize, identify top opportunities and challenges, and review the program timeline. Commitments are not required to attend the meeting, but only those with serious interest should participate.

BENEFITS OF BECOMING A FUNDING PARTNER

- **Cost savings:** Doubling of all partner contributions by FFAR (up to a total of \$3M) and **de-risking** individual investments by dividing overall prize amount among several partners.
- **Direct input** on determining the scope of the prize (i.e., the food category(-ies) for which the innovative packaging should be developed), shaping evaluation criteria and determining prize winners.
- **Exclusive access** to research results from Seed Funding and Prize awardees.
- Recognition for **corporate social responsibility** benefiting brand image and credibility.
- **First-mover advantage** and increased consumer loyalty for providing higher quality products that meet highest sustainability criteria.
- Contributing to your business' **sustainability goals** ahead of emerging policy regulations and growing consumer awareness, and gaining wide **media attention** and coverage for free.
- Your contribution may be **tax deductible**.



FUNDING PARTNERS

The Kroger Co. Zero Hunger | Zero Waste Foundation is a founding member of the Executive Committee