

CASE STUDY



Landing on a Leaner Bacon Board

THE RESULTS



100%
fully recyclable product
post-consumer



14%
reduction in
material waste
per unit



zero
trim to be sent
to the landfill



THE CHALLENGE

SugarCreek—an innovative, diversified and flexible food manufacturer is an expert in protein products for domestic and international customers. In the world of bacon production, the packaging insert that keeps the bacon flat and provides a window into the product is known as an L-Board or Bacon Board. L-Boards are comprised of paper coated in plastic to provide a barrier for protection, display and convenience. In the die-cutting production of the L-Board, waste is created in the trim that is cut away. This trim, along with board itself, are destined for a landfill, as the vast majority of laminated materials can't be recycled with typical collection and processing. While performing the needed functions in packaging, the L-Board contributes to solid waste metrics.

THE PROCESS

There was a decades-long drive to find a solution to the waste of materials during L-Board production. Efforts to find a solution came by way of relationships forged around material engineering, plastic film production and trial and error testing to switch from paperboard to a 100% HDPE plastic version of the L-Board. This consortium of companies would become the Sustainable Food and Packaging Initiative, centered in Ohio, with partner Plastilene bringing production capabilities to North America.

THE SOLUTION

The HDPE solution can be described as a thick film (or a thin sheet) with folding properties similar to paper. The consumer should not detect the difference, as the product appears the same with the needed functionality. For branding, digital printing properties for flexibility and personalization remain intact and comparable to paperboard, as demonstrated by SFPI partner Wingate Packaging.



A collaboration of packaging professionals offered up experience, expertise and technologies to bring the standard design in bacon packaging to a recyclable, mono-material configuration that shifted 14% of material waste to material circularity.