

**THE FRENCH ASSOCIATION OF BIOBASED AND BIODEGRADABLE PLASTIC PRODUCERS WELCOMES  
THE FRENCH ENVIRONMENT AGENCY'S REPORT CONFIRMING THE BENEFITS OF BIOBASED AND  
COMPOSTABLE BAGS**

**The French sector of biobased and compostable solutions welcomes the report published by the French Agency for the Environment and Energy Management (ADEME) on November 14<sup>th</sup> on the environmental impact of fruit and vegetable bags.**

**Indeed, ADEME demonstrates the environmental performance of biobased compostable plastic bags in a lifecycle assessment. The Agency also recognises their ability to be home composted when good practices are observed.**

**The Agency also recommends the reuse of compostable bags coupled with a vented kitchen caddy for the separate collection of food waste.**

**However, in the current context, the professional sector questions the appropriateness of charging bags. As a result, French customers would pay hundreds of millions of euros for a punitive ecological measure that would penalise households and the development of the composting stream.**

ADEME's results builds on the life-cycle assessment entitled "**Comparative LCA of fruits and vegetables bags available in the retail, other than carrier bags**" and the study on "**Compostability of fruit and vegetable bags in home compost**". It confirms the benefits of biobased compostable bags, notably compared to paper bags.

**Compostable plastic bags: a proven environmental performance**

ADEME's LCA highlights that biobased single-use bags, either paper or home compostable plastic bags, have a very similar environmental performance for 3 out of 6 indicators (climate change, acidification and fossil fuel depletion). It also points out that biobased plastic bags have a better performance than paper bags for the 3 other indicators linked to air and water pollution (particle emissions, photochemical ozone formation, freshwater eutrophication).

Paper bags with plastic translucent components are however definitely more harmful than the other solutions.

Although consumption reduction and the use of reusable bags remain a priority and are recommended by the Agency, it also warns against the minimum number of times that a "reusable" bag has to be used to obtain a better environmental performance: 40 times for a cotton bag and 8 times for a thick fossil plastic bag. Is this number of uses realistic in practice for the large public?

As noted by the ADEME: "*A bag designed to be re-used but which is not re-used is more harmful to the environment because it is generally thicker in order to be more resistant.*"

The sector welcomes ADEME's recommendation to use compostable bags for the collection of biowaste, coupled with a vented kitchen caddy. The Agency highlights that this type of bag does not block the evaporation of humidity contained in biowaste and facilitates transport of biowaste to dedicated collection bins. ADEME's report recognises that biowaste collection is expected to develop due to regulatory obligations related to separate collection of biowaste and organic recovery

(31/12/2023). In this context, we must support the recommendation of re-using fruit and vegetable compostable bags as pre-collection bags for food waste.

When the bag is not re-used for food waste collection, consumers can place them in the regular bin or in the recycling bin (in case of extension of sorting instructions) without taking the risk of disrupting the recycling flow. As mentioned in the report, *“optic sorting technologies close to infrared can separate compostable films from LPDE film without significant loss of efficiency.”*

The Association understands ADEME’s preference to stop mentioning the “biodegradable” characteristic of the bags to avoid encouraging consumers to throw them in the environment and approves any disposition aimed at guiding consumers in their environmental sorting practices.

### **Bags perfectly adapted to home composting following good practices**

The ADEME confirms that the bags comply with every requirement for home composting when good composting practices are applied: a closed backyard composter, stirring and turning of the piles, humidity, temperature, etc. These conditions must be respected to ensure that small pieces not yet biodegraded do not remain: paper, bags, food waste...

The sector invites consumers wishing to make compost in their backyard composter to follow the recommendations detailed in the ADEME’s guide for home composting practices.

The President of the French Association of Biobased and Biodegradable Plastic Producers, Christophe Doukhi-de Boissoudy, indicates that: *“This report comforts us in the belief that our products really contribute to food waste collection and organic recycling. In the midst of the current debates on the draft legislation on Circular Economy, we call upon Members of the Parliament to provide our products and biowaste recycling the deserved treatment. This is essential to achieve the waste management objectives fixed for 2023.”*

### **Charging the bags: a punitive environmental measure**

The sector regrets ADEME’s recommendation that fruit and vegetable bags should be charged for (made of paper or plastic). This measure would penalise the much-needed development of the composting industry by depriving the consumer of a free tool for sorting and collecting food waste. As a reminder, the ADEME recognises the value of compostable bags in the context of the establishment of this sector.

In addition to making consumers pay several hundreds of millions of euros, this measure could discourage the consumption of fruits and vegetables sold in bulk. Yet, the transfer from bulk to over-packaged goods would have a perverse effect on the environment.

Links:

[ADEME’s report on the environmental impact of fruit and vegetable bags](#)

[ADEME’s recommendations regarding composting](#)

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