

Walmart Sets Goal to Reduce its Global Plastic Shopping Bag Waste by One-Third

On September 24, 2008, at the Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting, Walmart announced that it would work to reduce the weight of its global plastic shopping bag waste by an average of 33 percent per store by 2013 using a baseline established from January through December 2007. With millions of dollars spent each year purchasing plastic shopping bags and more than 176 million customers visiting our stores each week, reducing the number of plastic shopping bags we give away and increasing the availability and affordability of reusable bags demonstrates Walmart's unique position to drive change across an entire industry for the benefit of business, customers and the environment. Achieving this goal could reduce plastic bag waste equivalent to 9 billion bags per year from Walmart's existing stores alone.

Plastic Shopping Bag Waste Reduction: Environmental and Economic Benefits

Walmart's goal could have far-reaching environmental and economic benefits. It is estimated that roughly 60-80 percent of all marine debris is plastic. Reducing plastic shopping bag waste could also help reduce government expenditures. For example, the state of California spends approximately \$25 million per year to discard plastic bags in landfills. Further, reducing the plastic shopping bag waste produced by existing stores globally by one-third is roughly equivalent to:

- 290,000 metric tons of greenhouse gases expected to be reduced or avoided each year from existing stores; or
- Energy consumption equivalent to 678,000 barrels of oil not needed; or
- The amount of CO₂ sequestered annually by more than 65,000 acres of pine or fir forests; or
- The annual energy use of more than 25,000 homes in the United States; or
- The greenhouse gas emissions avoided by recycling more than 100,000 tons of waste instead of sending it to the landfill.

Plastic Bag Reduction: Roll-out

One of Walmart's company-wide sustainability goals is to generate zero-net waste. We can make progress toward this goal by reducing the number of plastic shopping bags we give away and the amount of waste that ends up in the homes of our customers, in local landfills and in the environment. By using a three-pronged strategy of reduce, reuse and recycle, we have developed a series of steps our **global business units** may take to help meet our goal, including but not limited to:

Reduce—reduce the number of plastic bags per transaction at our registers and optimize plastic bag design to reduce waste:

- Improve cashier training on bagging efficiency
- Incent associates to decrease bag use
- Reduce bag size, including thickness
- Create materials for stores to educate customers on minimizing bag usage

Reuse—increase reusable bag use by making them accessible and affordable to everyone, and motivate customers to reuse bags:

- Design multiple reusable bag offerings
- Remove barriers to purchase: low cost options, giveaways, lifetime replacement and the use of collapsible crates
- Improve store operations: fixtures for reusable bags, cashier training on the load capacity of reusable bags and encouraging customers to use reusable bags
- Engage customers: create materials for stores to educate customers on positive environmental impact of Walmart's reusable bags, install new signage in stores to promote reusable bag offerings and remind customers to reuse bags

Recycle—increase the number of plastic bags recycled and close the loop on recycled plastic:

- Improve store operations: design larger recycling bins and place in prominent location(s) in store; purchase balers; implement improved software to track volume of recycled plastics from each store
- Engage customers: educate customers on the positive environmental impact of recycling plastic shopping bags at Walmart; print recycling message on plastic bags to remind customers to return them; incent customers to return bags
- Close the loop: research options to sell recycled plastics directly to Walmart suppliers; avoid additives that contaminate the recycle stream
- Recycle reusable bags: accept worn-out reusable bags for recycling; combine the worn bags with the rest of the plastic generated by our stores into our super sandwich bales, where it will be sent to a certified recycler for processing

Plastic Shopping Bag Waste Reduction: Global Impact

Our commitment to reduce the weight of our plastic bag waste globally by 33 percent includes a 25 percent reduction from U.S. stores and a 50 percent reduction from our international operations. Our goal builds on efforts already underway across our global operations. Some examples include:

- In **Argentina**, Walmart has improved cashier training, ensuring customers leave the store with the right amount of shopping bags. Since this program was implemented two years ago, Walmart Argentina has seen a 20 percent reduction in plastic bag use.
- In **Brazil**, Walmart is making reusable bags affordable to everyone. In the last five years, through the “One More Item Per Bag” program, Walmart Brazil has seen a 20 percent reduction in plastic bag use among its customers.
- In **Canada**, Walmart has reduced plastic bag waste by 15 percent in the last year. It is doing this through improved recycling, offering affordable reusable bags and reducing the amount of plastic used in the manufacturing of its bags.
- In **Central America**, Walmart gives away approximately 13,000 reusable bags each year. In Costa Rica, it has worked with vendors to ensure the large bags of rice and sugar are made with recyclable materials and handles, so once the customers consumes the product, they have a free reusable bag.
- In **China**, Walmart stores offer 15 different types of reusable shopping bags. Walmart began working to reduce its plastic bag waste more than six months before the government ban on free plastic bags, by making reusable bags accessible and affordable.
- In **Japan**, In June 2007, as part of its Hummingbird Campaign, Seiyu began selling reusable bags that are replaced for free if they break. As of September 2008, on average, 46 percent of Seiyu customers use their own bags.
- In **Mexico**, Walmart is offering a new reusable bag in its Supercenters and Superamas stores that costs one-third less than its current reusable bag. The company has seen a nine percent drop in plastic bag use in Supercenters, Superamas and Bodega Aurreras in the last year.
- In **Puerto Rico**, Walmart offers plastic shopping bag recycling in all of its stores. It offers reusable bags and has a comprehensive plan to gradually replace all its plastic bags with bags made from 100 percent recyclable materials.
- In the **United Kingdom**, ASDA has removed single use carrier bags from all of its checkouts. Since June 2008, ASDA has reduced the amount of plastic carrier bags used by its stores by 30 percent.
- In the **United States**, Walmart estimates that since it first introduced reusable shopping bags last year, it has sold enough to eliminate the need for more than one billion plastic shopping bags. In October 2008, Walmart will introduce a new reusable bag that sells for 50 cents. Recycling bins are also available in all of its stores.