

Pick n Pay tests plastic-free fruit and veg section

Pick n Pay is trialling a 'nude' fruit and vegetable produce wall - a dedicated plastic and packaging-free zone - in 13 stores across the country to measure customers' readiness to switch from pre-packaged food to loose products.



The nude wall will include 12 new seasonal loose PnP fruit and vegetables: brown steak mushrooms, portabellini mushrooms, red & green chillies, cocktail tomatoes, sweet Palermo peppers, baby brinjals, green beans, broccoli, zucchini, sweet corn and baby cabbage. These join the other 35 loose fruit and vegetables (number varying between seasons) that were already available to customers.

Paper bags will be available to customers at the 'nude' produce wall to complete their plastic-free greengrocer-inspired shop. For a further sustainable option, customers can purchase PnP's new reusable netted fruit and vegetable fresh produce bag (R7,50) or bring their own transparent and sealable reusable bag for loose selling produce.

Stores participating in the 'nude' fruit and vegetable produce wall trial are Claremont, Gardens, Faerie Glen Hyper, Bedfordview, Benmore, Waterfront, Kenilworth, Pinelands, Hyper Durban North, Longbeach Mall, Glen Garry, PnP on Nicol and Constantia.

Extending loose produce range

Paula Disberry, retail executive: commercial at Pick n Pay, says the company is really excited about this innovation, and hopes to extend the loose range even further. Currently, the sale of loose products accounts for only 10% of all fruit and vegetables sold in PnP stores.

“There is scope to grow our ‘nude’ wall offering, but it needs to be sustainable and without unintended consequences. Reducing plastic waste has obvious benefits, but we need to be careful not to increase food waste levels during the process.”



She explains, “Packaging plays an important role for fresh produce. It protects the item, but also prevents dehydration and extends both the shelf and home life for the customer, which prevents unnecessary food waste.”

Pre-packed produce can also be safely donated to food bank organisations, while not all loose products are suitable for donation.

“Previously our loose produce range wasn’t as popular as our pre-packed products. We believe this is shifting as consumers become increasingly more conscious about the environment. The impact of plastic is now front of mind for customers. We will closely monitor shopping behaviour and if this trial is successful, we can expand the initiative to more stores.”



Woolworths to open more 'plastic bag free' stores

24 Apr 2019



Waste reduction initiatives

Part of Pick n Pay’s plastic [waste reduction initiatives](#) announced last year included steps to reduce plastic packaging. Disberry updates on the progress to date.

“The thickness of our value-added vegetable bags has been maintained at 30 microns, making it the lightest bag in the market. Our decision to not increase the bags to 40 microns means we have prevented the use of approximately 12 tonnes of plastic last year.”



5 ways Pick n Pay plans to reduce its plastic waste

8 Jun 2018



Stickers have been removed from some of Pick n Pay's existing loose range – sweet potatoes, gem squash and butternut – and replaced with laser printing. "Even if a small label is used on a single product, the label backing is still plastic. The laser removes the top layer of skin on hardy vegetables and etches the PnP logo, supplier code and sell-by date directly onto the individual product. This means zero plastic is used on these products."

Disberry adds that they hope to roll out laser printing to more products soon.

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