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Bioplastics successfully meet all EU safety standards

Berlin (ots) -

Products made from bio-based plastics must undergo the same testing procedures as conventional plastic products to access the market of the European Union (EU). Thereby a health risk for consumers is excluded. Plastics intended to be certified as biodegradable or compostable require additional tests. "Products made of bioplastics thus pass even more tests than conventional plastic products," explains Hasso von Pogrell, Managing Director of European Bioplastics (EUBP).

Plastic products with food contact must comply with strict EU regulations. These have to be met by bio-based and conventional plastics. The relevant Commission Regulation, (EU) No. 10/2011, contains requirements for migration tests. A migration limit indicates the maximum permitted quantity of an ingredient to transit into food. The limit ensures that food contact material poses no health risk to consumers. The composition of multi-component materials is also checked and only those substances and materials listed in an EU overview as safe may be used.

Biodegradable plastics certified for industrial composting according to EU standard EN 13432 have to meet a fixed limit for heavy metals and other toxic and hazardous substances. An ecotoxicity test is also mandatory in accordance with the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) rules [1]. This test examines possible effects of industrial compost on plant growth and its toxicological harmlessness to microorganisms. Agricultural mulch films certified as biodegradable in soil according to EU standard EN 17033 must comply with strict SVHC (substances of very high concern) guidelines. This ensures that the films do not contain harmful substances. Besides a further test for nitrification inhibition, EN 17033 certification also includes a procedure to exclude negative effects on soil organisms. An upcoming EU standard for the home composting of carrier bags (prEN 17427) will summarize all test procedures once again. "Products made of bioplastics thus undergo even more test procedures than conventional plastic products," summarizes von Pogrell.

"The claim that products made from bio-based plastics contain harmful chemicals is untenable because of the numerous tests that are required", criticizes von Pogrell, referring to a study recently published by the University of Frankfurt. The methodology of the study, in which bioplastics products were subjected to migration testing, seems highly questionable as it differs significantly from the methodology of EU testing procedures. "Besides, the test result of the study does not represent a specific characteristic of bioplastics. On the contrary, the different methodology leads to the same result when testing conventional plastic products," explains von Pogrell.

European Bioplastics:

European Bioplastics represents the interests of the European bioplastics industry. Its members include companies from the entire value chain. The members produce, process and distribute plastics that are made from renewable raw materials, are biodegradable or combine both properties. Further information can be found at: www.european-bioplastics.org.

[1] OECD test 208.

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