



The power of industry partnership in delivering change

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After a summer of devastating heatwaves, the impacts of climate change on our food system have never been clearer. But the challenges facing the food industry extend far beyond heatwaves, drought and wildfires, and they're far too complex for any one business to solve alone. Creating meaningful change requires collaboration across the entire value chain, from farmers and suppliers to customers, academics, non-governmental organisations and industry groups.

Positioned in the middle of the food supply chain, Hilton Foods has an opportunity to bring different stakeholders together. Through partnerships, we can strengthen our understanding of sustainability challenges, accelerate innovation and help turn promising ideas into practical solutions. Industry partnerships can take many forms, each creating value in different ways. Some help us build the evidence base needed to make better decisions, while others enable us to test and implement solutions at scale.

For more than 4 years, we've worked with the **University of Lincoln** on research projects that give students real-world business challenges while providing valuable insights for our business. Most recently, students explored water mitigation strategies across our European operations, identifying ways to reduce risk in areas affected by drought and flooding. The findings have helped inform our Taskforce for Climate and Nature-related Financial Disclosures reporting and are supporting plans to ensure our business remains resilient in the years ahead. Research partnerships like this provide robust, science-based evidence to improve future decision-making, and this is just as true for our PhD research partnership with the University of Oxford detailed in our previous [blog](#).

While research helps us understand the challenges we face, strategic partnerships with suppliers help us turn ideas into action. Testing is a crucial part of this process, helping us trial new approaches that could reshape how industry tackles sector-wide challenges and transition towards more circular and sustainable solutions.



Above: polypropylene (PP) flow wrap, the lightweight, airtight “pillow” packaging used for mince products.

A great example is our ongoing collaboration with packaging supplier **Sudpack** to roll out an improved version of the PP flow wrap material used in our operations in the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Ireland for mince products. The new design reduces the thickness of the plastic material used in flow wrap from 60 microns to 50 microns, helping us make progress towards our commitment to reduce packaging weight and consequently reduce the total plastic used in our products. Once rolled out, this PP flow wrap is expected to reduce packaging weight by a further 70 tonnes annually, with commercial trials now underway in Ireland.

Over the last two years, Hilton Foods and Sudpack have also been working together on a next-generation PP flow wrap for fresh mince products with the latest development being a 90% mono-material PP. By redesigning and optimising the film structure, we have progressed through multiple formulation iterations, extensive testing and site trials to ensure it meets the demands of food protection, machinability, pack appearance and shelf life. By having 90% of the packaging from one single plastic type, the packaging can be much more easily recycled. In the future, more recycled material can be recovered and reused, supporting the transition to a more circular system. This project demonstrates the value of combining Hilton Foods’ operational and packaging expertise with Sudpack’s material science and manufacturing capabilities, turning packaging innovation into practical, scalable solutions.

For us, that's the real value of partnership. It brings together different expertise, helps us move faster than we could alone and enables promising solutions to deliver impact at scale. As the challenges facing our food system continue to grow, working together will be more important than ever.



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