Waste Week facts

Week 1

DAY 1



DID YOU KNOW? It is estimated that more than 5 trillion pieces of plastic waste, weighing more than 250 thousand tonnes, are floating in the world's oceans.

- The plastic is broken down into small pieces, about the size of a human fingernail, and this makes it difficult to collect.
- Most of the plastic floating in the sea is found within 3 metres of the surface.
- The plastic accumulates in five rotating currents, called gyres. The concentration is so great that there is on average six times more plastic than zooplankton.
- A 19 year old entrepeneur, called Boyan Slat, has come up with an invention to clean up these floating waste patches.
- His Ocean Cleanup Array concept estimates that it could remove almost half the North Pacific Garbage Patch in 10 years.

Find out more with the Boyan Slat case study on the Pod.

DAY 2

DID YOU KNOW?
Glass is 100% recyclable and can be recycled an infinite number of times without loss of quality, strength or functionality.

- New glass takes a lot of energy to make, first in transporting the materials to the furnace and then to heat them to a high temperature. An efficient furnace burns 4GJ (gigajoules, a unit of energy measuring heat) to melt every tonne of glass – that's the energy equivalent of burning 250kg of wood.
- The UK currently recycles around 50% of container glass (like bottles and jars) and while this figure has doubled over the last five years it still lags behind other countries. For example, both Switzerland and Finland recycle more than 90% of their glass.
- Archaeologists have found evidence of man-made glass which dates back to 4000 BC; this took the form of glazes used for coating stone beads.
- It was not until 1500 BC that the first hollow glass container was made by covering a sand core with a layer of molten glass.
- Most glass is made from sand, soda ash and limestone. It is then melted in a furnace at temperatures of around 1700°C. Chemicals can then be added to make different coloured glass.



Sources: **Day 1**: http://news.sciencemag.org/environment/2014/12/how-much-plastic-there-ocean.html, http://www.theoceancleanup.com/the-problem.html **Day 2**: http://www.britglass.org.uk/infinitely-recyclable, http://www.recyclenow.com/facts-figures/how-it-recycled/glass-bottles, http://www.britglass.org.uk/history-of-glass, http://www.britglass.org.uk/about-glass

Find more waste facts at
www.jointhepod.org

THE pod jointhepod.org
EDF ENERGY
Energy | Science | Sustainability

Waste Week facts

Week 1

DAY 3



DID YOU KNOW? Around 20 - 40% of UK fruit and veg are deemed too ugly to be sold by supermarkets.

- A food policy journalist called Peter Crosskey once reported that a farmer had to destroy 25 hectares of cauliflowers because they had grown too big for the retailers plastic bags.
- In 2014 French supermarket chain Intermarché introduced The Inglorious Fruits and Veg campaign to prove that ugly produce is just as tasty.
- Gleaning Networks coordinate volunteers, farmers and food redistribution charities in order to salvage the thousands of tonnes of fresh fruit and vegetables that are wasted on farms every year across the UK and Europe, and direct this fresh, nutritious food to people in need.

Why not post your own pictures of ugly or pretty vegetables as a blog on the Pod?

DAY 4

DID YOU KNOW? 75% of the aluminium ever made is still in use today.

- Around 12.5 billion steel cans are used annually in the UK. The thinnest part of a steel can wall measures only 0.07mm thick - that's thinner than a human hair. Aluminium and steel are endlessly recyclable so it is important that they are saved rather than dumped.
- The UK produces over 9 billion drinks cans every year - 80% are made of aluminium.
- In a whole year, an individual drinks can could be recycled eight times, saving enough energy to make 160 new cans.



DAY 5



DID YOU KNOW? It takes just 7 days for a newspaper to be recycled and come back as a newspaper again.

- As a nation we throw away 12.5 billion tonnes of paper every year!
- All of the newsprint used in the UK contains around 78% of recycled paper.
- 11 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent emissions were avoided by recycling paper and cardboard in 2008. This is the same as taking around 3.5 million cars off the road.
- 67% of the paper and cardboard used in the UK is recovered for recycling.

Sources: **Day 3**: http://feedbackglobal.org/food-waste-scandal/ **Day 4**: http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/fast-facts-metals-and-steel **Day 5**: http://www.recyclenow.com/facts-figures/how-it-recycled/paper

Written Feb 2015

Find more waste facts at

www.jointhepod.org

THE pod jointhepod.org

EDF ENERGY

Energy | Science | Sustainability