

Meeting Point Magazine Interview with Founder Eduardo Gordillo, 2015

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[...] Eduardo Gordillo, Managing Director of BIO-LUTIONS was kind to reveal some interesting insight into the new packaging technology, its advantages and applications.

Meeting Point Magazine: Mr. Gordillo, what are the advantages of your concept?

Mr. Eduardo Gordillo: We are offering packaging solutions created using 100% agriculture waste, which is converted into self-binding micro- and nano-fibrillated natural fibres (M/NFNF), which will be marketing the technology globally. Successful trials have been made using wheat straw, because it was available and allowed us to test the principle. However, almost all fibres based on crop residue or waste sources are suitable for conversion to packaging using the BIO-LUTIONS/ZELFO system.

Beyond the obvious ecological, cost saving and logistic novelties, there is another benefit, which from my point of view, could be the most important milestone of the last decades in packaging and related materials industries. The perfect matching between our invention, the simplicity of the process, the size of the machinery and the local production allows us to create a really new relationship with our customers.... They will also be our raw material suppliers. This new business symbiosis pivots upon the absolute control over the prices of the raw materials involved, thereby automatically transforming our customers into our business partners. We can produce packaging for them using their own agriculture waste or for other customers, in the case where there is an excess of agriculture waste. In both cases, the benefits to their pockets will be obvious.

It is very important for us to engage with businesses that have a substantial ecological impact and people who wish to embrace the idea of sustainability. All kinds of packaging made of petroleum based plastics, processed energy or resource intensive cellulose should be replaced ASAP, which means „YESTERDAY“. Within this conceptual framework, we are not interested in producing long life products. In other words, we are not going to produce cars... not yet!

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Meeting Point Magazine: What kind of innovations and solutions are you offering?

Mr. Eduardo Gordillo: Beginning with Agro-industry and moving beyond, the need for cellulose (new or recycled) or petroleum based plastics (new or recycled) in packaging is diminished if not entirely removed. Additives or chemical processes are no longer needed because fibres are self-binding. We do not need extra fields, no animal bi-products are required, forests are preserved, and no problematic 'geo-technology' is employed. Our raw material is just there: simple agricultural waste. The technology is compact so there are no big machines or support plant required! The production is at source!

We aim to fulfil our customers' technical and logistic expectations. Thus, we work on a just-in-time basis and produce simple and very complex 3D shapes. We are potentially the cheapest and most ecological packaging alternative, which is biodegradable under normal conditions. It is also recyclable and it has the lowest possible carbon footprint because it is burnable and therefore close to being CO2 neutral.

The material uses only the food producers' lingo-cellulosic fibre (in this case wheat straw) and requires no additional binder. Designed to meet food industry packaging demands, the resulting products have a robust and flexible form with a smooth surface. Trial mouldings are approximately 250 x 150 x 50mm, but other sizes will be offered as standard; and non-toxic dyes can also be used to colour the product as required.

And last but not least, as a solution, it is entirely elegant!

Meeting Point Magazine: Where it can be used?

Mr. Eduardo Gordillo: Biodegradable under normal conditions and recyclable, the resulting packaging material can be used to produce 3D packs such as tomato trays (retail packaging) made from the yearly agriculture waste from tomato plants; olive oil bottles made from the agricultural waste from olive trees; chocolate packaging made from the agricultural waste from cacao; biscuit packaging made from the agriculture waste from wheat; corn soup packaging made from the agriculture waste from corn; or packaging for the premium gifts made from the tree leaves.

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Meeting Point Magazine: Which industries can benefit from your technology?

Mr. Eduardo Gordillo: Our product range will be oriented around containers for fruit and vegetables at first. These will be offered with and without additional barrier and graphic surface treatments. Fully waterproof vessels will form part of the second wave of products and these are already being reviewed. We can also produce packaging for non-food products. Generally speaking we can offer a substantial range of opaque containers and casings. Transparent packaging is part of a parallel project, which remains 'secret'... for now.

Meeting Point Magazine: Have you already approached some potential customers? What's your main strategy?

Mr. Eduardo Gordillo: Based on our history and extraordinary network in China, we have already started negotiations with potential customers in China, while sales are starting in Germany where the partnership has set-up its R&D/production plant. This plant will have a capacity of 3,000,000 packages per year, which is sufficient for "mini orders". In Spain, discussions are on-going with a potential customer looking to build a plant in Tunisia, where it has a tomato plantation.

Since I am from Colombia, I have also activated my contacts there to find both agro-industrial partners and commercial partners. We also have good contacts in India and we will find appropriate partners. Our strategy is very clear- we move globally but we act locally with our local partners.

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