

3.2. Our Practices to Reduce Plastic Waste

The dangers of plastic wastes have reached an undeniable level in terms of its impact on climate change and environmental pollution. As a solution to this problem that interferes with natural life, we aim to spread the responsible consumption and production awareness, which is one of the Sustainable Development Goals, to all our operations. First, we focused on plastic bags that make up more than half of our plastic wastes from our operations. In 2008, **we started to use Oxo-biodegradable bags for the first time in the Turkish retail sector** and pioneered our sector in this field. Then, **we introduced customers in Turkey to cloth or non-woven bags for the first-time.** We aimed to reduce the number of bags used by our customers through our innovative practices and awareness-raising activities. We reduced the number of bags per transaction through our checkout counters to 1.67 in 2017 and to 1.48 in 2018. **During the year, we sold 317,518 non-woven and cloth bags.**

The recent regulations published by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanism introduced fees for plastic bags as of January 1, 2019. In close contact with the Ministry, we took an active role in the establishment of the system, sectoral compliance and informing consumers. In the last 2 months of 2018, we informed our customers about the new regulation in our checkouts. Before the paid bag application that started in the first days of 2019, we produced specially designed, foldable non-woven bags and distributed these bags to our customers with a special promotion during the first week of regulation. **Accordingly, in the first three months of 2019, we reduced the use of plastic bags by 75 percent.** Thus, compared to the previous year, we reduced our plastic bag waste from 50 to 55 percent to 28-30 percent.



Dangers of Plastic Waste

The sector that uses the most plastics is the packaging industry with 40 percent. According to the research conducted by Clean Plastic Solutions; only 5 percent of 87 million tons of plastic packaging produced every year can be recycled. The annual amount of plastic entering the oceans is 8 million tons. If we continue at this rate, by 2050; the weight of plastics in the seas is expected to reach twice the fish population by weight. The situation is not very different in our own backyard. According to WWF's research, the Mediterranean Sea has one of the highest levels of plastic pollution in the world. %95 of the waste in the Mediterranean is plastic waste. In the Middle East Technical University's research in Mersin and Iskenderun bays, 58 percent of the 28 species of 1,337 fish were found to have microplastics in their digestive tracts.



Environmental Solutions in the Packaging of Private Label Products

In 2018, we have accelerated our activities in this area when plastic waste was considered as one of the most important agenda items in CGF (Consumer Products Forum) of which we are a member. **We established a committee to make the packaging of our private label products eco-friendlier.** Our committee aims to minimize the use of plastic of packaging weight by considering product safety. Because of our sensitive approach, PVC is not used in any of our private label products at a point that is in direct contact with the product. In addition, **the amount of plastic we use in our 40 different private label products in the detergent and paper category contains 327 tons less plastic** compared to the same products from leading brands. In addition, we increased the weight of our private label yogurts from 2.5 kgs to 3 kgs and reduced the amount of plastic we put on the market. With this method, **we aim to save 16,5 tons of plastics at the end of 2019 with just our yogurt products.** In an interdisciplinary approach, we have launched the Innovative and Alternative Packaging Recommendations Committee in order to take a broader look at packaging design and material use and develop more creative ideas. In addition to all these activities we have undertaken within the scope of environmental management and combat climate change, we have started to examine all the impacts of our private label products on the environment throughout their life cycles in the light of scientific methods. We started to measure the life cycle evaluation and carbon emissions of our products and Expert Butcher products that make up 50 percent of our private label product trade. In this analysis, we aim to examine all stages of energy raw materials and transportation used in the production of products and to provide our stakeholders with a product experience that meets international standards. We are planning to complete the measurement of our private label product range in the years ahead.

Within the scope of our cooperation with **ÇEVKO, 54 percent of our private label products are collected from the market and sent for recycling.**



Other Activities to Reduce the Use of Plastics

Since 2013, we have been using multi-use, foldable crates for the distribution of fruit and vegetable products instead of the durable plastic carrying case. In 2014, we also started to use these crates in our red meat deliveries.

We encourage our customers to use mobile Money cards instead of plastic cards in order to further investigate the environmental impact and reduce the negative impact we have created. **In 2018, the Mobile Money card usage rate at the transactions reached 52.2 percent.**

Also in 2018, we have contributed to the project that Nestle supported WWF-Turkey (World Wildlife Fund) with the revenues from sales of their cereal products. In addition to selling the products on sale in our stores, we undertook the recycling partnership of the project. By creating awareness in our customers, we ensured that our customers brought the packaging waste of the products on sale they purchased to the special areas we established in our stores. As a result of the project, **2.17 tons of plastic packaging was recycled.**

Finally, we are in close contacts with the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization in the establishment of the deposit refund system for disposable beverage containers until 2021 within the scope of Zero Waste Project and actively take part in working groups.

