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RECYCLING INDUSTRY’S VIEW

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Oxo-biodegradable plastics cannot claim compostability or biodegradability. If they break down into small pieces, the plastic debris accumulates in the environment and the potential for ingestion by animals increases. It is therefore crucial that any environmental claims are backed by sound science and research.

These products are made from conventional plastics and supplemented with specific additives in order to mimic biodegradation. In truth, however, these additives only facilitate a fragmentation of the materials, which do not fully degrade but break down into very small fragments that remain in the environment - a process that would be more accurately described by the term “oxo-fragmentation”.

A self-imposed standard for oxo-degradation merely sets out the parameters on how to test the degradation process, not the results or even criteria for passing the test of degradation. There is currently no internationally established and acknowledged standard or certification process that proves the success of oxo-degradation.

If these additives fragmentable plastics are littered and end up in the landscape or even the ocean they start to disintegrate due to the effect of the additives that trigger the breakdown into fragments, which remain in the environment.

Plastics|SA advocates a more responsible and sustainable solution for waste management.