

# FABBRI GROUP TOMORROW'S PACKAGING



FABBRI GROUP TELLS US ABOUT ITS REVOLUTIONARY NEW CLING FILM AND THE CULTURE THAT MADE ITS DEVELOPMENT POSSIBLE.

# TOMORROW'S PACKAGING

PROJECT MANAGED BY: MAX HUTCHINGS

Fabbri Group is an Italian company that was founded 70 years ago, specialising in producing both the machinery and materials for fresh food packaging. Today the company has become an international Group active worldwide through subsidiaries and authorised distributors all over the world able to support the retail business, food industries and any other fresh food producers (meat, fish, mushrooms, fruit and vegetables, cheese, bakery, delicatessen) with tray-sealing and stretch complete packaging solutions.



With a skilled team of 500 people, Fabbri Group boasts a turnover of 100 million euros, half of which comes from Italy, with the rest coming mainly from Germany, Switzerland, France, the UK, Russia, and the United States.

"We usually invest between 3 and 5% of our yearly turnover into research and development, developing new films, new machines, working efficiently on their own and giving their best results when combined together," explains Stefano Mele, Fabbri Group's CEO "We currently have a portfolio of around 120 patents registered in different countries worldwide."

## A NEW KIND OF CLING FILM

The latest development to come out of Fabbri's research and development workshop is a new certified compostable cling film, the first one of its kind.

"We've developed this product over the last five years and launched it to market in February 2020, just before the first lock-down period. The circumstances became difficult for the global economy immediately afterwards, but with Nature Fresh being the only product of its type worldwide, we could count on a great advantage. Nature Fresh is suitable for both automatic and manual packaging, giving optimal results under both applications, and is certified for industrial and home compostability. That means you can throw it either in your home compost heap or in the brown bin with the food waste to be composted in an industrial setting," Mele tells us.

The development process was one of innovation, but also of close collaboration up and down the supply chain.

"We launched the project between 2015 and 2016, well before the current trend towards a circular economy was in vogue. We thought it could be an interesting solution that was different from what was already on the market. We worked in close co-operation with the supplier of the raw material, BASF, in order to continually approve and adapt the film formulation. Then we contacted some specific, selected customers for the field tests."

The new extrusion line inaugurated at the beginning of 2020 was a sizeable investment for Fabbri at over €3 million.

"When we decided to do this it was not yet clear it would be really successful in the way we are seeing it now," Mele says. "But we believed that we wanted to offer something new to the market. And the evolution of the situation proved that we were right."

"Today, after Esselunga, one of the major retailers in Italy, other retailers and brand owners in Italy and abroad joined: we have customers using this >>

film also in France, Germany Spain, Austria, the UK thanks to the growing attention on environmental solutions coming from consumers, institutions and politicians, just to mention a few, the association Pink Lady® Europe, Rivoira, Mesfruits, and we can also add other projects for domestic packaging and for sale on Amazon.”

Thanks to Nature Fresh, Fabbri Group received awards in recognition of its technological innovation starting with the Packaging Oscars, a historic prize for the packaging industry in Italy, and continuing with Fabbri Group’s UK client, Westaway Sausages, that won the UK Packaging Awards for Packaging of the Year with its 100% sustainable packaging that includes Fabbri’s new cling film.

Fabbri Group is able to develop products like this precisely because the company works both sides of the packaging process at once, the machinery and the materials, being fully aware of all the issues involved in both.

“Our unique selling point is our capability to offer a full solution to our customers. We produce the machines and the film for packaging, and we’re the only company doing that,” Mele says. “This means the customers don’t have to go from one supplier to the other if something goes wrong in production. Additionally, our full awareness of both, machines and films, allows us to find the optimal machine settings to fully operate at best, all of that with consequent savings in time, money and materials.”

As Mele says, “It’s not mandatory that the customer buy both products from us, but if they do the synergies that create are our USP. This is exactly what happens with our new wrappers “Fabbri Hybrid”, able to use any kind of stretch film (PVC, PE, Biobased, Compostable) and soon to be launched on the market.”

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A CLEAR FUTURE

Fabbri is seeing its project pass milestones that demonstrate its importance for the international market.

But when Mele talks about what the cling film means for the future, he’s not just talking about his company.

“The fact is it’s important that we are an active player in the circular economy,” he says. “We’re working together with associations in Italy like Legambiente, the most important ecological association in the country. We have already developed a very good partnership and are co-operating to bring this development further.”

Indeed, Mele is the first to acknowledge that, as a company working in the plastics sector, Fabbri Group has an important role to play in building a sustainable future.

“There is a lot of discussion around plastics in the context of sustainability at the moment, so the future looks complex and challenging because different products of ours are related to plastic. Even this new compostable film is a bioplastic,” Mele says. “In many cases, there has been a lot of correct criticism about how plastic is used. We believe that plastic is a wonderful material with a lot of advantages. What we have to improve is how to manage the end of life of plastic products.”

This is one of the main issues Fabbri Group is addressing in its future activities.

“We want to be involved in the improvement of the complete cycle of the plastic world,” Mele says. “This is of course crucial to understanding how it will develop in the future and how we can prepare ourselves.”

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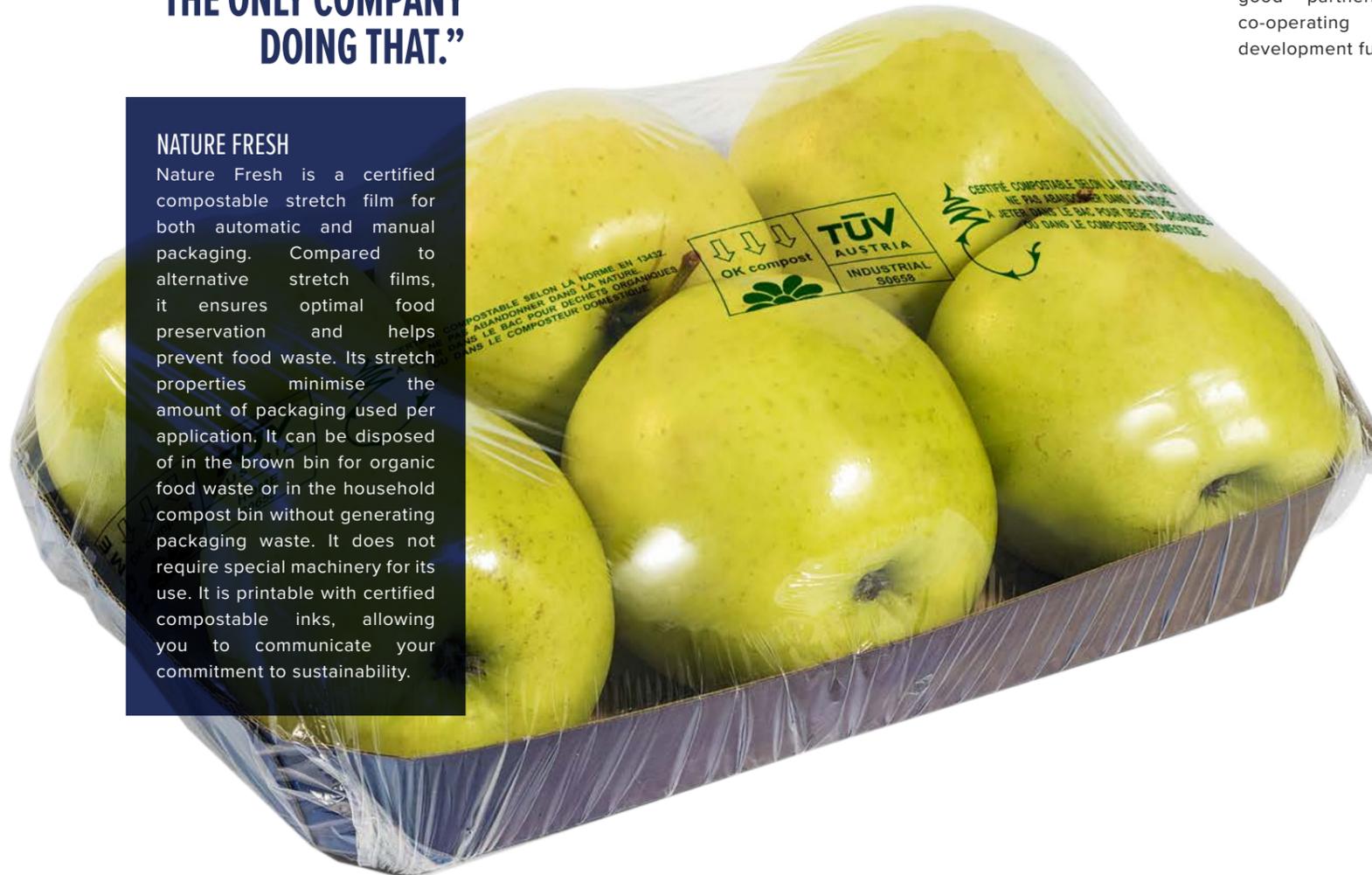
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NATURE FRESH

Nature Fresh is a certified compostable stretch film for both automatic and manual packaging. Compared to alternative stretch films, it ensures optimal food preservation and helps prevent food waste. Its stretch properties minimise the amount of packaging used per application. It can be disposed of in the brown bin for organic food waste or in the household compost bin without generating packaging waste. It does not require special machinery for its use. It is printable with certified compostable inks, allowing you to communicate your commitment to sustainability.





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