

P 337/13e  
June 20, 2013

Joint press release of the city of Ludwigshafen and BASF

## **Hygienic disposal of organic waste**

- Compostable organic waste bags made of ecovio® approved in Ludwigshafen, Germany

The public works department of the city of Ludwigshafen (Wirtschaftsbetrieb Ludwigshafen – WBL), in coordination with the waste management company GML-Abfallwirtschaftsgesellschaft as the operator of the organic composting plant, has now approved the use of organic waste bags made of BASF's compostable plastic ecovio® FS for disposal in the organic waste bins in the city of Ludwigshafen. The recommendation made by WBL is restricted to ecovio bags. These bags can be recognized by the flower-shaped ecovio logo and the numerous small seedling symbols.

## **More hygienic collection of organic waste**

The organic waste bags made of ecovio® make collecting and disposing of organic waste cleaner, less complicated and more hygienic. Unpleasant odors and pest infestations are prevented. A current report by the environmental institution, bifa Umweltinstitut GmbH, has once again substantiated the hygienic advantages. The tedious task of scrubbing the container in which the organic scraps are collected is no longer necessary. Thanks to the excellent wet strength of the bags, liquid from teabags or fruit leftovers cannot leak through and so the bag remains intact. The bags are not suitable for disposal on backyard compost piles. Industrial composting installations, however, offer the conditions needed to ensure for residue-free degradation.

### **Successful pilot projects and other official approvals**

A comprehensive series of tests conducted by BASF at the organic composting plant in Grünstadt, Germany, at the end of 2009 also demonstrated that the bags are well-suited for the short cycle times of professional composting installations. “Among the plastic bags tested in the experiment, only the organic bags made of ecovio® actually degraded completely and quickly,” explained Jürgen Keck, head of the global business with biodegradable plastics at BASF in Ludwigshafen. Georg Kosak, of IBK-Solutions, added, “Analyses of the organic waste recovery showed that ecovio bags can be used to collect organic waste without any problems and that this can be implemented in other collection regions and applied to other composting methods after a case-by-case examination.”

Pilot projects with organic waste bags made of the compostable plastic ecovio® FS in approximately 65,000 households in the district of Bad Dürkheim in 2011 as well as in just under 25,000 households in Berlin in 2012 were also positive. In the meantime, the districts of Rhine-Pfalz and Ennepe-Ruhr now also permit the use of ecovio organic waste bags. In Bad Dürkheim, about 90 percent of the residents interviewed were satisfied with these bags for the collection of organic waste; in Berlin the figure was 80 percent.

### **Biodegradable plastics for more biomass**

The material ecovio® FS is made of the partially bio-based ecoflex® FS and polylactic acid (PLA). Thanks to this combination, the bags consist primarily of renewable raw materials. Like the biodegradable waste itself, the ecovio organic bags are completely broken down by microorganisms with the aid of enzymes. The decisive factor for this degradation process is only the structure of the molecules, not the origin of the raw materials. At the end of the composting process, the microorganisms have completely converted the bags into carbon dioxide, water and biomass. This is a crucial advantage when it comes to organic waste recovery, since waste management companies do not have to segregate the bags laboriously and they are processed into valuable compost together with the rest of the organic waste. The bags can help reduce the amount of organic waste that ends up in the regular garbage cans, contribute to protecting the environment and also lower the disposal costs for residual waste.

The seedling symbol that appears on the bags indicates that the bags – like the products ecovio® and ecoflex® – meet the stringent statutory requirements of European standard EN 13432, which defines the requirements for packaging recoverable through composting and biodegradation.

### **Organic waste separation mandatory throughout Germany as of January 2015**

Two dates are important for organic waste management in Germany. German lawmakers have authorized that, as of the beginning of January 2013, organic waste bags that are completely biodegradable and also consist primarily of renewable raw materials are allowed to be disposed of in the organic waste garbage bins together with the organic waste. Moreover, the amendment to the German Recycling Law requires separate collection of organic waste throughout Germany as of January 2015. Organic waste bags made of ecovio constitute a hygienic and clean solution for this requirement, since they not only are completely biodegradable but, unlike other organic waste bags, also consist predominantly of renewable raw materials.

### **Available at points-of-sale in Ludwigshafen**

The 10-liter bags are already available in retail stores in Ludwigshafen. A pack of 10 currently costs less than €2. Information about the points-of-sale can be found on the Internet at [www.ecovio.de/biobeutel](http://www.ecovio.de/biobeutel).

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Press photo: [www.basf.com/pressphoto-database](http://www.basf.com/pressphoto-database), keyword “plastics” or search term “ecovio.” Text and photo are also available in BASF’s plastics press archive [www.basf.de/plastics/pressreleases](http://www.basf.de/plastics/pressreleases).

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