

CASE STUDY

RIVER VALLEY CO-OP

PIONEERING PRACTICAL SUSTAINABILITY IN GROCERY RETAIL

At River Valley Co-op, a Massachusetts-based community-owned grocer, sustainability is built into everyday operations.

Focused on local sourcing and responsible practices, the co-op began rethinking its packaging in 2019, aiming to reduce plastic in its prepared foods and grab-and-go offerings.

The team transitioned to compostable containers for items like soups, salads, smoothies, cupcakes, and pre-packaged bulk goods, partnering with a local composting partner and clearly marked collection bins to make disposal simple for customers. “We’re committed to doing what we can to help reduce the destructive impact that plastic waste has on our planet,” says Kalen Joyce, Sustainability and Project Manager.

After testing several suppliers, River Valley Co-op found the balance they needed in Good Start Packaging: competitive pricing, reliable quality, and responsive customer service. “Not only are Good Start Packaging’s prices better, but the quality of their containers has also been great,” Joyce shared. Today, approximately 95% of the co-op’s In-store packaged products are sold in compostable containers.

Working together, the teams also introduced in-store signage to help customers understand compostable materials and proper disposal methods, sparking more conversations about waste and reinforcing the co-op’s commitment to practical, community-centered sustainability.



“Using compostable packaging is a great first step towards our collective goal to create a greener, more sustainable future. We hope that our efforts to reduce plastic contamination inspire others to do the same.”

— Kalen Joyce, Sustainability and Project Manager.

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