Procter & Gamble Ship Out Sugar-Based Shampoo Bottles

The Associated Press

CINCINNATI (AP) — Plastic or ... a different plastic?

Procter & Gamble said Tuesday that it has started producing some of its shampoo bottles from a plastic made from sugar cane because it's a renewable resource. Customers won't notice a difference, the company said, but the environment will: Most traditional plastics are petroleum-based.

The company is starting small with the sugar-cane bottles, replacing the traditional plastic in Pantene's Nature Fusion collection in first Western Europe and then spreading to the rest of the world over the next two years.

The company said Pantene is the first hair care brand to use the technology. Last month, PepsiCo Inc. unveiled a new plastic bottle made from switch grass, pine bark, corn husks and other natural materials.

Procter & Gamble has said it hopes to replace 25 percent of its petroleum-based materials with renewable materials by 2020.

Some recycling groups, while applauding efforts to replace petroleum-based products, say some plant-based plastics aren't as recyclable as they appear because plant-based plastics and petroleum-based plastics can't always be melted down together, and many recycling facilities aren't set up to handle both.

Procter & Gamble spokesman Randall Chincilla said, however, that the new Pantene bottles can be recycled at the same facilities that recycle traditional plastics, and are coded plastic number 2.

And David Cornell, technical director of the Association of Postconsumer Plastic Recyclers, said high-density polyethylene made from plant material is identical, "chemically and functionally," to polyethylene made from natural gas liquids."

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