

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: CRYOVAC[®] Brand Compostable Overwrap Tray

What is the CRYOVAC[®] brand compostable overwrap tray made from?

The compostable tray is made from a renewable cellulose-based biopolymer and 45% recycled content. To form the materials that make up the compostable tray, mixed waste materials are diverted from landfills and broken down into molecules to form acetic acid (vinegar), which is combined with responsibly sourced wood pulp (cellulose) to create a resin pellet that is formed to create the tray.

How does the compostable food tray compare to other recyclable or fiber-based trays?

Compostability addresses a long-standing challenge in the packaging industry: the mismanagement of waste. Trays used for packaging fresh proteins must be pre-cleaned after use and free of food contamination before being recycled. Other alternatives such as fiber overwrap trays are incompatible with existing paper recycling streams due to the high level of grease and moisture contamination that is unavoidable when packaging meat. Compostable trays, however, can be disposed of along with organic waste, bypassing the need for cleaning and separating, and thereby simplifying the recycling process.

What is the difference between biodegradability and compostability as it relates to this tray?

While both biodegradability and compostability involve the breakdown of materials, compostability is a more specific and controlled process that leads to the creation of compost, which is beneficial for soil. Biodegradability is a broader term that encompasses the natural breakdown of materials in various environments. Together, the food residuals from the CRYOVAC[®] brand compostable overwrap tray and the tray itself create a food source for microbial activity that is then broken down and delivers beneficial nutrients back into the soil.



Does this tray replace ones made from EPS and PET?

The compostable trays are intended to directly replace expanded polystyrene (EPS) and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) trays. Historically, EPS has been a mainstay in the packaging industry. However, growing environmental concerns and tightening regulations are shifting the market away from EPS towards alternatives such as polyethylene terephthalate (PET). While PET is technically recyclable, the lack of proper recycling infrastructure in many regions means a significant portion of it still ends up in landfills.

Will the CRYOVAC[®] brand compostable overwrap tray biodegrade in a landfill if not composted by the end-user?

The ability to biodegrade in a landfill depends on the landfill type. Anaerobic landfills may not support rapid biodegradation, while aerobic landfills with oxygen and microbes can facilitate it.

What types of products are compatible with the CRYOVAC[®] brand compostable overwrap tray?

The compostable tray is designed for case-ready overwrap applications and compatible with SES (side-end-seal), BDF (barrier display film), and PVC (polyvinyl chloride). The compostable tray is ideal for fresh poultry, beef, pork, lamb, veal, smoked and processed meats, seafood, and alternative proteins.

Can the CRYOVAC[®] brand compostable overwrap tray be recycled?

No, but it has been tested through materials recovery facilities (MRF) and it will not contaminate the recycling stream. If sent to an MRF, it will be separated like any other non-recyclable material.

Is the CRYOVAC[®] brand compostable overwrap tray compatible with existing overwrap equipment?

Yes, the tray is a lighter weight alternative designed to directly replace the performance and speed of current overwrap trays and run on existing overwrap equipment.

