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Press Release

British consumers worried about plastic waste – IFAT survey

Some 84% of British consumers rate plastic waste as a serious environmental threat. At the same time, 63% want industry to consider future waste problems already at the production stage. And consumer qualms are likely to grow because following the Chinese ban on plastic waste imports, the UK can't dispose of waste properly at home. IFAT, the premier global trade fair for environmental technologies, has published its IFAT Environment Index 2018 detailing what consumers think about environmental problems and potential solutions. The survey asked 1,000 people in the United Kingdom.

The British government announced that until recently the United Kingdom had been exporting more than a quarter of its plastic waste to China. Following the import ban, around 500,000 tons of plastic annually will have to be disposed of elsewhere. However, in contrast to paper and glass, mono-fraction sorting of plastic waste isn't possible – recycling is low value due to disposable material in particular. In a BBC interview, Simon Ellin from the UK's Recycling Association said that he had no idea how the British waste industry would cope with the new mountains of plastic in the short term. He went on to say that the country lacked the relevant markets and that industry was facing huge changes.

The vast majority of British consumers view waste as an issue that affects every citizen and advocate responsible treatment of it (84%). Some 65% believe that it's up to local authorities to manage waste disposal. Only 27% want industry to play the leading role in disposing of waste.

“The IFAT Environment Index shows that a large majority of British consumers support applying modern environmental technologies. Three quarters recommend making waste so recyclable in future that it becomes a valuable raw

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material,” says IFAT director Stefan Rummel. “A sustainable circular economy should replace exporting waste to Asia and recycle all plastics with the aid of high-tech environmental technology. Experts will be presenting ways of solving the pressing problems of plastic waste in the United Kingdom, Europe and across the world at IFAT, the world’s premier trade fair for waste and raw materials management, in Munich from 14 to 18 May 2018”.

IFAT Environment Index 2018

In November 2017, IFAT – the World’s Leading Trade Fair for Water, Sewage, Waste and Raw Materials Management organized by Messe München – carried out an international survey of a representative sample of the population in 5 countries on the following topics: drinking water, waste, air, environmental city projects and environmental technologies. Germany (N=1,049), France (N=1,052), Great Britain (N=1,023), Italy (N=1,086) and China (N=1,001).

IFAT

IFAT is the world’s leading trade event for environmental technology. A total of 3,097 exhibitors from 59 countries, and 136,885 visitors from 168 countries took part in the last event. IFAT is held every two years; the next edition takes place from May 14 to 18, 2018 in Munich.

Messe München

Messe München is one of the leading exhibition organizers worldwide with more than 50 of its own trade shows for capital goods, consumer goods and new technologies. Every year, a total of over 50,000 exhibitors and around three million visitors take part in more than 200 events at the exhibition center in Munich, at the ICM – Internationales Congress Center München and the MOC Veranstaltungszentrum München as well as abroad. Together with its subsidiary companies, Messe München organizes trade shows in China, India, Brazil, Russia, Turkey, South Africa, Nigeria, Vietnam and Iran. With a network of associated companies in Europe, Asia, Africa and South America as well as around 70 representations abroad for over 100 countries, Messe München has a global presence.