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TESCO HAS GREEN SHOPPING IN THE BAG

Tesco will make it easier for millions of British shoppers to keep their New Year resolutions to be more environmentally friendly by introducing degradable carrier bags in every store.

Tesco is the first UK supermarket to commit to offering all of its 13 million customers the chance to shop using totally degradable carrier bags in 2004 and is currently using a pioneering new additive (TDPA).

The additive developed by EPI Environmental Products Inc, means that the plastic bag will start to break down in as little as 60 days and leaves no harmful residues.

Announcing the bag breakthrough, Group Corporate Affairs Director, Lucy Neville-Rolfe said: "This is great news for customers who tell us that they want to do more for the environment but need our help to do so. It is also a huge boost for the environment and will help to keep our streets tidy

"Unlike many other 'green' carrier bags, the new Tesco bag will break down quickly even if inadvertently discarded outdoors - although we would never encourage people to dispose of them in this way.

"These new bags are the latest initiative to help our customers use carrier bags responsibly. Our reusable 'Bag For Life' is hugely popular with tens of millions in use around the country, saving tonnes of waste plastic from going to landfill. What some people don't know is that you can bring these back when they wear out and receive a new one free.

"Last year we also introduced carrier bag recycling units in hundreds of stores, encouraging customers to return their bags to us for recycling. Now with our degradable carrier bags we have made it even easier for customers to do their bit for the environment with very little effort."

ENDS

For further information, or to arrange an interview, please contact - Deborah Watson Tesco Press Office 01992 644 905

Notes For Editors:

1. Tesco has been trialing the new bags in stores throughout the South East of England. They will be rolled out to all Tesco stores in the New Year.
2. The new bags are as strong as regular bags and can be recycled and re-used up until the degrading process begins ie. when the bag becomes brittle. Once degraded, biomass, carbon dioxide, water and a small amount of mineral matter is all that is left.
3. Carrier bag recycling units are available in most stores, millions of carrier bags are recycled each week. The scheme was recently highly commended by recycling industry experts Valpak. Tesco has been distributing renewable 'Bags for Life' in its stores since 1996. Customers can return their 'Bag for Life' once it has worn out and it will be replaced for free.
4. Degradable carrier bag visual, please see attached.