



Edible food coating | Photo source Pixabay

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FOOD WASTE REPURPOSED AS EDIBLE COATING TO KEEP FARM PRODUCE FRESH

 SUSTAINABILITY

A new coating for fresh produce helps increase food security by both reusing and reducing agricultural waste.

Most agricultural practices produce a variety of types of waste. Reducing production of that waste, as well as reusing what is currently produced, helps strengthen circular economies around the world. Using food waste to create a **renewable fuel** for delivery vehicles is one solution. A UK supermarket is trialing 10 trucks that use the new biomethane. The gas is a much more environmentally friendly option than diesel and emits 70 percent less carbon dioxide. Another company developed the technology for converting organic waste into a **naturally occurring polymer** that degrades without harming the environment. Everything from plastic forks to car parts is now made with the new material.

Apeel Sciences, a California-based materials science company, is introducing its edible coating that keeps fruit and vegetables fresher longer. The company extracts lipids from a multitude of types of organic waste, and then creates a powder with them. Lipids are naturally occurring fats and are completely safe to eat. In order to coat produce with the lipid mixture, Apeel Sciences relieves the powder. Different types of fruits and vegetables each receive their own specific coating. The newest introduction is Apeel Avocados for a fruit that is notoriously fast to rot. Produce is either sprayed with or dipped into the coating.

The coatings help reduce pressure on growers and production and transport companies. Food is left in the field for longer and allowed to ripen naturally. Growers now pick produce later as it is less likely

to rot during the transport and retail processes. That creates less waste throughout the agricultural life cycle as a whole. The lipids shield the food from the natural gases that age produce, as well as trap moisture for continued freshness. How else could creative applications of waste solve other commonly occurring problems?

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