The Sustainable Ryegrass Products (STARS) project led by the BioComposites Centre at Bangor University and the Institute of Biological Environmental and Rural Sciences (IBERS) at Aberystwyth University and informed by industry partners including Waitrose, has been researching the use of Welsh grass for food packaging.

Funding from the Welsh Government’s Academic Expertise for Business (A4B) programme is supporting the project, which is utilising the biorefining process used to isolate and extract sugars and other components from ryegrass and convert them into low carbon products.

Some of these products include biofuels, platform chemicals and pulp-moulded packaging for retail applications such as food packaging. The project is currently collaborating with six industrial partners, representing all links in the SME supply chain – from biomass cultivation and harvesting to processing and commercial end use – and will demonstrate the production of these materials at pilot scale.

To inform the process, Waitrose is researchin...
Sustainable Rye Grass Products

green products.

The STARS project takes previous research in this area to the next level, which is a demonstration at commercially relevant scale using the BEACON pilot-scale facilities and working with a supply chain to bring the concept to the public’s attention.

In November 2014 the project showcased some of its prototypes to the public for the first time at Waitrose, Menai Bridge store on Anglesey.

The idea behind the grass packaging is that the material fibre can go into the same compost bin as the food it was used to display, giving an environmental alternative to the tons of plastics being used today, reducing landfill and in turn the environmental impact on our planet. The Waitrose store hosted a display of the range of products that have been produced as a result of this collaboration, and the group were canvassing the opinions of the general public during the day in order to feed back into their research and development.

Summary

Project Lead: Dr Adam Charlton adam.charlton@bangor.ac.uk

Lead Institution: Bangor University

Other Institution(s): Aberystwyth University

Project Partners: Waitrose British Chlorophyll Ltd Axium Ltd Chemoxy International Ltd Ed Galley Associates Adare (Haverhill)

Sponsors: Academic Expertise for Business (Welsh Government)

Project Value: Institute(s) Value £584,920 + Extra Funding £33,080 Partner Contribution £300,471 Total Project Value £918,471