

Cafeteria Supplies – Biobased, recycled, biodegradable

Sustainable Cafeteria Supplies Study

The NASA GRC cafeteria currently uses foam containers, plastic containers, plastic utensils, and paper napkins, among other non-sustainable supplies.

Biodegradable supplies, made from plant starch, are available. Also, recycled products may be used where biodegradable items are too expensive or not available.



Biocorp – Plates, cups, utensils from plant starches

Our goal is to replace as many cafeteria supplies as possible with sustainable ones (biodegradable, recycled, etc.). These ideas and practices can be expanded to other NASA facilities, and possibly to other government facilities. Increasing demand for sustainable cafeteria and fast-food supplies should lower costs for production, will assist small businesses (which produce many of these items), and will open the door for wider-spread public demand for these sustainable supplies.

Where foam or paper cups are used within the cafeteria, reusable washable cups can be used, but must not be a safety hazard. The items that cannot be replaced with biodegradable, recycled, or reusable items should be recycled, if possible. Due to the large amount of daily patronage, reduction of waste and resources in this area can have great impact: reduction of fossil fuel use and emissions in the making of foam and plastic products, promotion of renewable resources, reduction of solid waste in landfills, and less non-biodegradable items accidentally find their way into outdoor areas.

After approval by Mark Betlejewski, a one-week study is planned for the GRC cafeteria, to educate and promote the use of these environmentally preferable products. Purchase response data would be collected and analyzed, and further actions planned based on that data.