HEALTHY NEWS

Man Creates Edible Plastic Bags to Protect the Sacred Deer of Nara in Japan

By bestfolkmedicine · 16/10/2021 · 2 min read



Nara is a city in Japan that attracts a lot of tourists.

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It's the home to several ancient temples and artwork of historic meaning. But this city is best known for the Deer Park where visitors are allowed to interact with the sacred Nara deer.

Unfortunately, these animals have frequently become ill and some of them have even died after consuming plastic garbage that was left by visitors.

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After the death of 14 Nara deer that were found to have plastic in their stomachs, one local entrepreneur started developing an alternative to plastic bags that will help protect these sacred animals.

Local Entrepreneur Decides to Help Out the Sacred Deer of Nara

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A local cosmetics wholesaler and president of Nara-ism (a souvenir wholesale agent), Hidetoshi Matsukawa, is one of the three designers of the *Shika-gami* or deer paper bags.

This eco-friendly bag is made using alternatives to plastics.

They used a common cracker that the tourists use to feed the deer or *Shika Sembei*. He was inspired to use them after he learned that the deer are dying from the ingestion of plastic bags. He did it to protect the deer.

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He also contacted friends in the industries that could offer their help in the production of the alternative.

He worked with Takashi Nakumara, a paper-ware business owner, and Kiyoshi Ogawa; a design firm head. They used rice bran from the crackers and pulp from recycled milk cartons to make a new material.

Along the process, they learned rice bran is mostly wasted in the process of rice polishing. This paper helps lower waste too.

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The team also had their innovative product tested by the Japan Food Research Labs to make sure it's safe.

The Bags Are Not Just Innovative, but Look Pretty too

These bags aren't just innovative in terms of their material but are also beautifully decorated with minimal illustrations. The front features a deer with a heart-shaped marking and asks the tourists to respect the place and the animals that live there.

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Matsukawa firmly believes that this initiative could benefit from visitors' social awareness and that this will help them become a part of the solution. The alternative bag is still improving and the partners are dedicated to refining the production and reducing its cost.

In the meantime, the adopters of the bags are local businesses that are supportive of the mission that's focused on protecting the sacred deer and the environment.

Sources:

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