

## SUSTAINABILITY

# Bottoms up, just don't toss that cup



**PORTLAND** — Throw on organic cotton jeans, grab the Prius keys and enjoy a cup of Joe in an environmentally friendly container. Portland Roasting Coffee Company debuted its new “ecotainer” to-go cup at May’s Specialty Coffee Association of America show.

The paper cup has a corn-based plastic liner that can biodegrade in a 170-degree compost pile.

According to International Paper, Americans discarded 14.4 billion disposable paper cups in 2005. But a simple solution isn’t in the can.

Lee Barrett from Metro Recycling says a major problem with bio-plastics is their aesthetic similarity to conventional containers. Without clear labeling people don’t know which container to toss and which to compost. Cross-contamination, where a compostable plastic ends up with recyclable plastics destined for new life as outdoor decking, is also a concern.

On second thought: Just bring your own mug to the coffee house.