Green Packaging Round-Up For February 2011

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Euromonitor International takes a look at the latest sustainability in packaging news. February sees milk bottles in the news with Nampak looking to reduce bottle weight, and WRAP suggesting best practice for milk bottle recycling.

Nampak Plastics launch lighter weight milk bottle in the UK
Nampak Plastics plans to roll out a new design of lighter weigh milk bottle after a Â£1m, two year, development process. Using an octagonal structure to enable thinner bottle walls, the new bottle gives an average 15% weight saving across one-, two-, four- and six-pint and two-litre formats.

In addition to using 10% recycled HDPE content, the new design also incorporates a diagonally-set handle for ease of access when the bottles is stored in a fridge door. Nampak expects to spend around Â£9m on equipment upgrade to product the new pack design with the first roll out expected to be a four-pint format produced at Nampak's Newport Pagnell site in the summer.

WRAP offers suggestions for improved milk bottle recycling
Research supported by the UK Waste & Resources Action Program, WRAP, conducted by Robert Wiseman Dairies, Systems Labelling and bottle manufacturer Alpla, was designed to examine how the green hue of recycled HDPE could be reduced to enable more virgin material to be replaced.

The study examined the effects on recycling of coloured caps, the use of labels, inks and adhesives and the actual recycling process used, with caps being the main cause of colouring in the final rHDPE. The research found that;

* Moving to a natural colour would remove the ability of MRFs to colour sort caps and bottles as well as a key consumer mechanism to choose a particular type of milk;
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* However, moving to a lighter hue would make bottles with more than 30% rHDPE acceptable whilst maintaining a recognisable colour scheme;
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* A wide range of labels PP labels were easier to remove and contaminated the colour less than paper ones.

Click here to read the full WRAP report.

Coca-Cola releases sustainability review
The Coca-cola report releases 25 sustainability goals across seven focus areas for the company and its bottling partners and also reports the company's sustainability strategy and progress. For packaging the reports highlights:

* Systemwide packaging efficiency efforts in 2009 avoided the use of approximately 85,000 metric tons of primary packaging, resulting in an estimated cost savings of more than $100 million.
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* Approximately 85 percent of the company's volume delivered in recyclable bottles and cans.
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* In 2009 the introduction of the PlantBottle PET package, a recyclable bottle made partially from plant-based materials.
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* In 2010, Coca-Cola expect to launch 2.5 billion PlantBottles in nine major markets across Europe, Latin America, North America and Pacific.

Click here to view the Coca-Cola Company Sustainability Review.

Recycling of non-bottle rigid plastics increases in the US
A new report from the American Chemistry Council claims that nearly 480 million pounds of post-consumer rigid plastics were collected for recycling nationwide in 2009 - an increase of nearly 33% from 2008 and 47% since 2007.

Non-bottle rigid plastics includes high-density polyethylene tubs, polypropylene cups, and similar food containers, and durable items, such as pallets, crates, carts, 5-gal buckets, and electronic housings. Plastic bottle recycling in the US grew to nearly 2.5bn lbs in 2009, marking two decades of year-on-year increases.

Click here for the full report.

SIG Combibloc reduces liquid carton closure weight
Liquid carton company SIG Combibloc has launched a new liquid carton closure that weighs just 1.85g. The closure will

be targeted at the milk category and will be offered exclusively for the company's Slimline carton format. German dairy company Humana is expected to be the first company to use the closures for its UHT milk products in the German market

Hanno Berting, product manager for opening solutions at SIG Combibiloc, commented:
â€œWhen developing new products and enhancing existing ones, we make every possible effort to ensure that we systematically continue to reduce the proportion of non-renewable raw materials our products contain.â€•

FEVE announce 2009 container glass collection rates
FEVE, the EU Container Glass Federation, has released 2009 container glass collection rate figures. According to these figures over 67% of glass bottles and jars were collected for recycling in the European Union in 2009, up from 66% in 2008.

Niall Wall, President of FEVE comments:
â€œGlass recycling increases each year thanks to the commitment of consumers everywhere. Our industry is able to turn this waste into a valuable resource to make new bottles and jars because glass by nature is 100% recyclableâ€•

Frito Lay tries again with new compostable bags for SunChips in the US
In 2010 Frito-Lay removed their compostable packaging from the shelves in the US after facing a consumer backlash over how noisy the packaging was. Now the company has re-formulated the pack to reduce the problem and will be relaunching the compostable bag for original flavour SunChips in the US.

The company found that changing the adhesive used for the flexible plastic laminate reduced noise levels from 80-85db to around 70db, a level they claim is comparable to a standard bag.

Analyst Insight by Benjamin Punchard.

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