

14 March 2007 AM: Repak and EPA Launch the First Packaging Waste Prevention Programme

Repak and the EPA have announced the launch of a €200,000 euro packaging prevention programme to help Irish industry reduce the amount of packaging on their products. The Packaging Waste Prevention Programme will be co-funded by the EPA and Repak as part of the National Waste Prevention Programme (NWPP).

The programme measures will see:

- a series of awareness raising seminars
- a what is best practice packaging website
- a supply chain benchmarking study
- exemplar best practice case studies
- consumer research study on packaging preferences and purchase behaviour
- Packaging Design Awards aimed at promoting examples of best practice
- Development of a carbon footprint calculator for member companies
- Development of a interactive householder carbon footprint calculator

The packaging recycling rate in Ireland stands at an all time high of 60%, while the volume of packaging on the market continues to grow in line with changing demographics and economic activity. The Packaging Waste Prevention Programme aims to utilise the best indigenous and international experience and practice to educate and promote improvements in packaging utilisation including product minimisation, material light weighting and replacement strategies.

Dr Gerry Byrne, Chairman of the National Waste Prevention Committee and EPA Programme Manager said: "The EPA has been working closely with Repak Ltd over a number of years on the recycling of packaging waste, and we are now delighted to help extend this work to include the actual prevention of packaging waste. Businesses can save money by reducing their use of packaging and consumers are increasingly looking for this to happen not least for environmental and cost concerns. This is an important initiative under the National Waste Prevention Programme and the EPA is very pleased to be associated with this development".

Commenting Andrew Hetherington, CEO, added "Repak's initial focus was on the achievement of Irelands EU packaging recycling targets. As recycling rates have grown it is now time to increase our focus on preventing packaging waste arising in the first place. Even small prevention steps by Irish industry can achieve a lot. A reduction of just 3% of packaging material could prevent over 25,000 tonnes of packaging waste reaching the market. In an era of depleting natural resources, rising CO2 concerns, increase waste management costs and increasing packaging volumes this programme will help prevent avoidable packaging. We are calling on Irish industry to engage

in the challenge and see where they can make a direct positive impact on the future Irish environment.”

The National Waste Prevention Programme commenced in 2004 and comprises a number of integrated projects aimed at reversing current trends in waste production, decoupling waste from economic growth and maximising resource use efficiency. Significant projects include: Local Authority Prevention Demonstration Programme, Certified Waste Prevention Training, a waste prevention website, waste audit tools, prevention case studies, HAZRED, Green Business Initiative (in development), the National Waste Reports, review of the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan as well as enforcement of a range of Producer Responsibility Initiatives including WEEE, RoHS and solvents.

For more see: www.epa.ie/ourenvironment/waste.

Exemplar Best Practice Casestudies

Daiego Baileys

Daiego Baileys prevents almost 53 tonnes of cardboard (over 900 trees) and 378 tonnes of glass (1.2 million glass bottles) every year thanks to the innovative industrial design of its new bottle introduced in 2004.

eircom

With broadband sales increasing significantly, eircom investigated ways to reduce the packaging of its broadband product without reducing its effectiveness but all to meet the increasing demands for the product. It prevent a staggering 15 tonnes of cardboard reaching the market (over 250 trees) by reducing the amount of cardboard required by 15%. It used one material instead of two and also reduced the amount of ink used.

Georgia-Pacific

By developing a 'coreless' toilet roll, Georgia-Pacific reduced the cardboard packaging by 100%. As well as using 100% recycled paper, by improving pallet utilisation and reducing packaging film, it reduced primary packaging by 76%.

Tetra Pak

Tetra Pak developed a new stronger but lighter inner plastic coating for its beverage cartons resulting in the weight of all its product reducing by 3% and also saving 4% on the Gross Energy Requirement of producing it.

C&C

a) By redesigning the way it transports 9 x 2 Litre packs of 7Up, C&C removed cardboard required by 100% and the amount of plastic shrink wrap required by almost 31%. This means, every year, 290 tonnes (or almost 5,000 trees) of cardboard is prevented from reaching the market and 68 tonnes of shrink wrap.

b) By changing the Ritz PVC sleeve to a PET sleeve, C&C introduced a more recyclable product (PET) and reduced the polymer usage by 6.4%.

Coca Cola Bottlers Ireland

Coca-Cola Bottlers Ireland made its 500ml bottle 0.5g lighter (2% lighter) and as a result prevents 53 tonnes of plastic (the equivalent of almost 2 million bottles) reaching the Irish market every year.

Unilever

In 2005, Unilever produced lighter Persil washing powder packs and reduced the amount of chemical waste per wash by concentration. It reduced both the packaging per pack by 6% and the packaging per wash by 6%.

GlaxoSmithKline

By lightweighting its Lucozade PET bottle and installing new equipment to allow it to move from standard cardboard packaging trays to a simple flat board, GlaxoSmithKline reduced the amount of PET plastic used by 14% and cardboard used by a very significant 40%.

Batchelors

Batchelors saved the amount of tin, steel and energy needed to produce its cans of peas and beans achieving lighter packaging and the energy cost of producing them.

ICI Dulux Paints

A new packaging minimisation initiative resulted in secondary packaging being reduced by 90% by eliminating cardboard cartons used to pack five litre plastic containers. Other changes in pallet packaging and optimisation, increased pallet capacity by 4% and reduced overall packaging per pallet by 43%.

Novartis Animal Health Ireland Ltd.

By reducing the cardboard packaging associated with one litre units of Poron S.P., the company reduced paper packaging by 40% by removing inner cartons and by reducing the shipping case quantity from ten to six units.

About Repak

Repak is a not-for-profit voluntary member's based packaging recycling scheme established under a voluntary agreement between industry and the Department of the Environment and Local Government. It was established as industry's response to the obligations placed on Ireland by the EU directive on Packaging Waste (94/62/EC) and is the only government approved packaging compliance scheme under the Waste Management (Packaging) Regulations 1997. Repak succeeded in reaching and exceeding Ireland's EU National Packaging Recovery and Recycling Targets of 25% of packaging waste in 2001 and 50% in 2005 and is well on their way to achieving their 2011 target of 60%.

For further information please contact:

Eoin Kennedy

Slattery Communications,

Tel: +353 1 661 4055

Mob: +353 86 833 9540