

Irish People need to be lead into recycling

- **Despite investment, 80% of used packaging is NOT recycled**
- **69% would support ban on 'binning' recyclables**
- **62% in favour of pay by weight - 68% state that pay by weight/by use would encourage them to recycle more**
- **14% of people still claim to recycle nothing**
- **86% aware of local Bring Bank facilities, yet 24% of people claimed to have never used a recycling centre/bring centre**

Embargoed for publication until 4th October 2004

(04.10.04) A national survey commissioned by Repak has proven that Irish adults are openly admitting that we need to be forced into changing our recycling behaviour. 69% of Irish Adults* would support a ban on people putting recyclable materials into ordinary bins which end up in landfill according to a Milward Brown IMS survey commissioned by Repak of 1,200 adults (aged 15 plus) in July. The research was carried out in advance of Repak National Recycling Week, which starts today running from the 4th to the 10th of October and looks at the habits and attitudes of Irish people to recycling in Ireland.

* Excluding Don't Knows

According to the survey one in four farmers admit to recycling nothing and overall one in seven Irish households admit to recycling nothing. 39% of those who report recycling nothing came from the Connaught and Ulster area. Despite a 48% increase in the rate of packaging recycling reported last year just 20% of all used packaging in the average household bin is recycled.

Commenting Andrew Hetherington CEO Repak said "It is alarming that 14% openly report dumping all their recyclables such as bottles, cans and paper, etc. The research is clearly showing that the significant investment in making recycling facilities accessible is not enough to get people to choose recycling and that seven out of ten people would support a ban on putting recyclable materials into the household bin. This is important given that currently there are over 2,000 bring banks nationally and over 42% of all households are serviced by household green bin collections of dry goods like cans, cardboard etc. As experience in Ireland with penalty points has proven we need often strong leadership and need to be lead into doing the right thing but once lead we do so quite readily. However the current growth in recycling rates demonstrates that once people do engage in recycling that a lot of success can be achieved, as those who are recycling are doing more than initial figures would suggest."

Pay by Weight and Bans

With Pay by Weight/Use expected to be introduced nationwide next year the survey reported that 80%* of people who currently participate in Pay-by-Weight say that it has helped them recycle more. Pay by Weight is seen by 67%* as an effective way to encourage more recycling with 62%* of people in favour of the introduction of Pay-by-Weight schemes. The biggest advocates who say Pay-by-Weight would increase recycling rates are those from:

- Rural Communities - 64%
- Munster - 66%

Indicating the appetite for increased recycling, 69% of people said they would support a ban on putting recyclables in ordinary rubbish bins. This was supported in particular by 65% of Dubliners and 60% of ABC1s around Ireland.

* Excluding Don't Knows

Commenting Mr. Hetherington said, "Currently this ban on recyclable going to landfill exists for Irish businesses and similar bans have been successful in countries like Switzerland in increasing household recycling rates. Now that the infrastructure is improving and a financial incentive will exist in the form of Pay-by-Weight, a ban on dumping recyclables would have a big impact on the amount of packaging that could be recovered/recycled. Trials on Pay-by-Weight in Cork and Monaghan have shown that this has resulted in a decrease of nearly 30% in the amount of waste being sent to landfill by householders."

Awareness of recycling facilities and recycling practices increasing

- 86% of people are aware of a Bring Bank in their area compared to 77% awareness in 2003
- Last year, 28% of people claimed to have never used a recycling centre, compared to this year's improved figure of 22%
- 50% of people visit a recycling centre at least once a month compared to 41% last year

In summary Mr Hetherington said "Overall recycling in Ireland is improving driven by increased awareness and appetite by householders in addition to increased infrastructure. However the average amount of recycling of used packaging is still low at 20%. This survey points to a need for changes in the collection infrastructure and habits by householders for Ireland to really make a big dent on the waste mountain that is on the horizon. Details of the week and the nearest bring banks are available on www.repak.ie."

Last year, the Repak National Recycling Week campaign helped grow awareness of Repak to in excess of 72%. It also contributed to growing household packaging recycling rates over the month by a staggering 48% increase on the previous year's figures, which was partly attributed to the growth in collection infrastructure in 2003.

Ireland is on track to meet its 2005 EU target to recover 50% of all packaging placed on the Irish market. Last year Repak members contributed over €15 million to directly fund the recovery of 414,000 tonnes of used packaging, 47% of all packaging placed on the Irish market. Packaging recycling from the domestic sector grew to 74,000 tonnes, up 48% on the previous year. This represents approximately 56 kilos per household from a potential 280 kilos. Repak membership fees are used to subsidise the collection of used packaging in Ireland through the network of 2,000 bring banks, over 50 recycling centres and household kerbside collection schemes which reach in excess of one in four (over 350,000) Irish households.

According to Repak, two third of the household bin is recyclable but on average only 10% of household waste is currently being recycled according to the EPA.

Who make the worst recyclers?

The research revealed that one in four farmers and two in five people from Ulster and Connaught admit to recycling nothing. One in five of people aged over 65 and one in four of the disadvantaged also admit to recycling nothing.

Who makes the best recyclers?

The best recyclers in the country are ABC1 householders with children under 10.

The survey also looked at the frequency of householders running out of space in their household recyclable bin and reported that 60% of people run out of space before their monthly collection. In particular, 42% of households with a family run out of space after only two weeks. Similarly, this desire to recycle is illustrated by the 62% of people living in Connaught and Ulster who also run out of space after only two weeks.

Commenting Mr. Hetherington added "This result shows how successful household recycling bins are for Irish households once they actually start to recycle. This success could be increased with increased regularity of household collections from monthly to bi-weekly but only if we are substituting the extra recycling bins for a regular grey bin collection."

* Excluding Don't Knows

What people say they recycle and what is actually recycled:

- 46% say they recycle beverage cartons but only 2% were recovered in 2003 considerably below the European average rate of 30%.
- 63% say they recycle aluminium cans but only 17% of aluminium was actually recovered.
- 53% say they recycle plastic bottles. Only 18% of all plastic is recovered with only 2% of plastic bottles recovered.
- 69% say they recycle glass. While 67% of glass was recovered in 2003.
- Just over 54% say they recycle paper/cardboard. Yet only 45% of paper/cardboard packaging was recovered in 2003.
- 46% say they recycle steel food cans. 54% of steel was recovered in 2003.

About Repak

Repak is a producer responsibility scheme for the recycling of used packaging, currently Ireland's only producer responsibility scheme, which was established under a voluntary agreement between industry and the Department of the Environment and Local Government in 1997.

It was created 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 compliance scheme under the Waste Management (Packaging) Regulations 1997. Repak succeeded in reaching and exceeding Ireland's National Recycling Target of 25% of packaging waste in 2001, as set by the EU directive.

The organisation also performs an administrative role for the recycling of used farm film (silage cover) through the IFFPG.

Repak also runs a variety of educational initiatives such as Repak National Recycling Week in October, Repak Green Christmas, Repak National Conference. It is also a sponsor of An Taisce's National Spring Clean campaign, the Tidy Towns Competition and the schools based Repak Cash for Cans programme.

Last year Repak launched a trial plastic and beverage carton recycling scheme as part of a strategy to target traditionally more difficult material types. The beverage carton

scheme has now been extended to all households in Dublin with a Kerbside/Green Wheelie Bin collection scheme.

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