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### **Packaging Recovery Rate Reaches 65% As Volumes Drop.**

- Repak exceeds EU recovery rate of 60%, reaching an estimated 65% recovery rate of all used packaging.
- Packaging recovery accounts for 62% of all MSW recovery/recycling despite being 32% of MSW waste.
- Paper and Cardboard accounts for almost half of packaging recovered/recycled.
- Plastic packaging rate increases while other packaging formats drop.
- Ireland ranked 8<sup>th</sup> amongst 27 European countries for packaging recycling.
- Organisation Calls for packaging tax consultation to be part of previously mentioned PRI review to inform a decision.
- Repak welcomes the increased landfill charges.
- Ireland needs to maintain current recycling to meet 2011 EU Targets.
- Repak diverts over 5.7 million tonnes of used packaging waste from landfill since 1998.
- Repak has invested €225 million raised from packaging levies since its inception to support the recycling of used packaging in Ireland.

(30.08.2011) Last year Ireland once again exceed its 2011 EU used packaging recycling target by recycling and recovering over 626,000 tonnes or 65% of all glass, cardboard, plastic, metal and wood packaging. The figures were released by packaging recycling scheme Repak, which also reported a drop in the overall amount of used packaging recovered/recycled of 2.8% and a 6.4% drop in Repak revenues, reflecting a more difficult economic environment for members and consumers.

In 2010 €26.3 was raised as income from “Repak packaging levies” from participating member companies. During the year a total of €28.2 million was spent on supporting the equivalent recovery/recycling of 140 kilos of used packaging per person or 15 green bins per household.

According to the organisation, the 3.6% decline in the amount of packaging reported to the scheme by participating members as placed on the market reflects the overall decline in economic activity in Ireland, with less packaged items purchased. All of the different packaging materials recycled/recovered were down in 2010 by an average of 2.8% overall with the exception of used plastic which grew by 12%. Glass experienced the single biggest drop of 9% from 2009, primarily due to the effect of the poor weather on bring collections and the closure of Rehab Glassco glass processing facilities for three months in the latter quarter of 2010. The mix of materials collected were :

1. Paper 46.1% (288,911 tonnes)
2. Glass, 17.1% (106,629 tonnes)
3. Wood 15.5% (96,783 tonnes)
4. Plastic 14.2% (89,130 tonnes)
5. Steel 6.6% (41,292 tonnes)
6. Aluminium 0.5% (3,356 tonnes)

The increase in plastic recovered/recycled is linked to the 64% increase in RDF (refuse derived fuel). The majority of RDF (both paper and cardboard) was commercial waste that was unsuitable for traditional recycling due to level of contamination (e.g. meat juices on cardboard). RDF is currently used as a fuel substitute in companies such as Lagan cement kilns.

According to the latest Eurostat figures Ireland is ranked 8<sup>th</sup> amongst 27 European countries for packaging recycling.

### **Financing**

Last year Repak, through its members, invested €28.2 million in achieving a recovery rate of circa 65%, a year ahead of the 2011 target. This resulted in an operating deficit of €1.9 million as fee income from its 2346 members fell by €1.7 million and costs for domestic collections increased. To date over €225 million has been invested in packaging recycling by Repak participating members such as Diageo, Tesco, Glanbia and Musgraves.

Commenting Dr Andrew Hetherington, CEO Repak said “Reflecting the general economy, last year was a challenging one for Repak with decreasing fees, increased recycling costs, potential higher targets, lack of enforcement and extremely low landfill charges, all making recycling less attractive. The successful packaging recovery rate of 65% also masks the fact that Repak recovered almost 117% of the used packaging our members put on the market. With greater participation and compliance through Repak we could achieve higher recycling and recovery rates.”

Discussing the challenges ahead Dr Hetherington added “2011 is an extremely important year for packaging recycling in Ireland as we need to recycle a minimum of 55% and recover 60% of used packaging in order to achieve the 2011 EU Used Packaging Targets and avoid potential fines. Starting each year we start from zero, certainty of future strategy is crucial, and Repak are confident of meeting and surpassing the 2011 EU targets. With this in mind we welcome the announced review of Producer Responsibility Initiatives (PRI) in Ireland but urge no decision be made on other areas, such as a possible packaging tax, in isolation of the completion of this review.”

In conclusion the Repak CEO thanked all members and stakeholders for their strong support in 2010 without which Ireland’s targets would not have been achieved. He also welcomed the decisive changes to the landfill charges by the Minister for the Environment, Mr Phil Hogan which gives greater certainty to the economics of recycling.

### **Household Packaging Recycling**

Domestic packaging recovery/recycling accounted for 30% of the tonnes supported by Repak, but accounted for 76% of total expenditure, reflecting the higher costs of household packaging recovery. Over 190,000 tonnes or 40 kilos of used packaging was recycled per person through the network of household recycling bins, bring banks and recycling centres. The yield and throughput from the 1.2 million dry recycling household kerbside bins continued to grow in importance as the main route of domestic recovered tonnes accounting for 56% of the household packaging recovered while bring banks and recycling centres experienced a drop of 21%, reflecting the sharp drop in glass collected and reprocessed in 2010.

## **Packaging Recovery/Recycling contributing to Ireland landfill diversion targets**

According to Repak, the disproportionate importance of packaging recovery/recycling in helping Ireland achieve its EU Landfill Diversion Targets is reflected in the fact that 62% of all municipal solid waste (MSW) now recovered/recycled is made up of used packaging despite it only accounting for 32% of all MSW. Likewise according to the EPA 2009 waste database report packaging accounted for 40% of bio waste diverted from landfill.

### **Key recycling stats:**

**In 2010 Irish recyclers filled our Green Bins, Bring Banks and Recycling Centres with the equivalent of:**

- 920 million metal cans
- 451 million plastic bottles
- 210 million glass bottles
- 21 billion 750 ml cardboard cereal boxes
- 4 million wooden pallets.

### **Repak Achievements to Date**

- Repak was Ireland's first PRI (Producer Responsibility Scheme), established by industry to help Ireland meet its EU packaging recovery targets.
- Increased packaging recovery/recycling from under 15% in 1998 to nearly 70% in 2009 (source: EPA WDR)
- Repak has invested over €225 million supporting the diversion of over 5.7 million tonnes of used packaging from landfill since its inception, which has resulted in a carbon equivalent savings of 5.3 million tonnes.
- Repak directly or indirectly helps support mixed kerbside dry recycling bins reaching 95% of all households in the state (1.2 million households), in addition to supporting packaging recycling collections from 2,200 bring sites and 100+ recycling centres nationwide.
- Repak subsidies help support 4,000 jobs directly in the waste industry
- Repak helped Ireland achieve its 2001, 2005 EU packaging Recovery/recycling targets, as well as meeting Ireland's 2011 Packaging recovery target by the end of 2008 (3 years ahead of target).
- Repak helps Ireland achieve not only its EU packaging recovery/recycling targets but also helps contribute to Ireland's other EU waste targets, such as our Bio waste landfill diversion targets
- Packaging recovery supported by Repak
  - accounts for 62% of all municipal recycling nationally (despite packaging only accounting for 32% of municipal recycling) – source EPA 2009 WDR
  - accounts for 40% of Ireland's bio waste diverted from landfill helping Ireland towards the achievement of its 2013 landfill diversion targets. – Source EPA 2009 WDR
- Repak has helped drive packaging and recycling in general in households and businesses throughout Ireland through its educational campaigns such as Repak Recycling Week, Repak Green Christmas and , where on average 84% of all adults now claim to regularly recycle

their used plastic bottles, glass containers, cardboard packaging, steel and aluminium cans. (– source Repak Annual MRBI Omnibus tracking survey 2010)

- Repak has invested over €8 million in driving packaging recycling educational campaigns in Ireland since 1998.
- Repak’s support and involvement in of National Spring clean saw 32% of collected material now consistently recycled versus zero prior to Ropak’s involvement. (Source : NSC annual evaluation reports)
- Repak has directly helped grow the national bring bank infrastructure in Ireland by investing in placing in excess of 800 new sites increasing the number of bring banks to nearly 2,000.
- Repak is a major sponsor of Ireland highly successful An Taisce Green Schools program.

### **About Repak**

- Repak is a not for profit producer responsibility scheme for used packaging funded by packaging levies charged to participating members companies.
- Member companies are charged according to the amount and type of packaging they place on the market.
- These levies are used to help fund the nationwide recycling collections for used packaging through local authorities and waste contractors.
- Since its inception in 1997 Repak has invested €225 million in supporting packaging recycling in Ireland.
- Repak directly supports packaging recycling collections reaching
  1. 1.2 million kerbside dry recycling household bins (e.g. green or blue bins)
  2. 2,000 bring bank sites
  3. 100 recycling centres
- Repak members continue to meet Irelands recycling targets and have helped grow packaging recycling from under 15% in 1998 to 65% in 2008.

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