

infoil



news and views from EAFA

Further strong growth for aluminium foil in year 2000

Figures published by EAFA show that growth in demand for aluminium foil continued strongly in 2000.

The total deliveries from EAFA roller members went up to 682,000 tonnes. This figure represents an increase of nearly 30,000 tonnes over the previous year (1999: 653,000t). At 4.4%, the growth rate exceeded the average of the last two years.



The main driving force for continued growth came from domestic demand. Sales within the European "home territory", where members of EAFA are based, showed a 5.0% increase. Exports to "non-EAFA" countries went up slightly by 1.8%, achieving the 100,000 tonnes mark for the first time.

The healthy order books for the first weeks of 2001 reported by the majority of EAFA members indicate another year of high demand.

inside...

- New alufoil packs
- Recycling news
- Aluminium for Future Generations
- EAFA website success



– the international body representing foil rollers, converters and container manufacturers
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Consumers prefer aluminium foil packs

Migros customers insist on alufoil for bakery goods

By popular demand, Migros, the major Swiss retail organisation, has decided that aluminium foil containers will be used in future for its bakery products.

Some years ago, aluminium cake containers were replaced with ovenable board cases 'for ecological reasons'. But the apple tarts stuck to the board and the pastry got broken. So, thanks to customer pressure, Migros is again offering aluminium cake containers which avoid such difficulties during baking and use.

'Unlike the paper cases, which get thrown away once they have been used, the aluminium ones can easily be cleaned and re-used by the consumer'.

(Reported in the Migros magazine "Brückenbauer": February 2001)

"Quality and freshness" – the consumer verdict on alufoil trays

Food and foil are considered "a natural pairing", according to consumer research* carried out by an independent research company on behalf of the Aluminium Foil Container Manufacturers Association (AFCMA) in the UK. Foil's brilliant appearance and recyclability offer key marketing benefits to food companies.

Consistent opinion in focus groups across the UK revealed that foil is the top choice of food tray for oven-cooked products offered in a choice of pack materials, such as lasagne, and is associated with a home-cooked quality taste. New product presentations, such as roasted vegetables presented in smoothwall foil containers, were seen as exclusively suitable for foil, and the appearance "promoted quality and freshness".

*Analysis of focus group research in the North, Midlands and South of England by Consumer Insight of Leamington Spa

"Foil is considered far superior to plastic for roasting, browning, crisping and baking and should be used for any food products that need oven cooking" concluded the research company. Oven cooking of ready-prepared foods was seen to be making a comeback, with the microwave reserved for convenience-only situations where quality would be compromised. "The quality of oven cooked ready meals is considered higher, and the taste better."

Recyclability influences choice

Recyclability was seen as an influence over purchasing decisions: "Some people even choose a particular product because the packaging can be recycled", say the researchers. Consumers want to see the benefits of recycling demonstrated in their own area, with local charities and community groups preferred over national or international causes.



Aware of this addition to consumer appeal, leading food retailing chains in the UK now like to have the 'Alu' recycling logo embossed on the base of aluminium foil

containers. For example, Marks & Spencers have now asked their packaging suppliers to emboss the logo on new alufoil container designs.

Tell us what you think of Infoil and you could win a new set of wheels!

– see back page and the questionnaire behind the response form

New polyethylene 'peelable' seal coating

Designated 'PEEL 2000', a new sealing layer for composite flexible alufoil laminates has been introduced by EAFA member Wipf AG. The company claims that the new formula represents an advance in the technology of peelable pouch openings. The aluminium layer assists the rapid heat transfer thanks to its good conductivity.



A larger sealing temperature 'window' has facilitated shorter machine make-ready times and fewer seam quality variations when production runs are started up. PEEL 2000 provides improved 'hot tack' properties, and stronger seam strengths are achieved without detracting from the ease of opening. The composite alufoil film does not easily tear, and the coating does not shred or fray when the pack is pulled open.

Tamper evidence and product hygiene:

Alufoil offers a versatile solution

Many of the jobs successfully done by aluminium foil in protecting the safety of products are done unseen. Sealing membranes for pharmaceutical containers, for sauce bottles, for liquid milk in plastic bottles, for example. Although 'invisible' alufoil is nonetheless essential to the integrity, quality and security of very many products.

There are many others where alufoil is very visible, examples we have long taken for granted – champagne and beer bottle capsules and so on.

Protecting the hygiene of drinks cans

One of the big advantages of cans is immediate accessibility – drink straight from the can. However, if a drinks can has been in the cupboard for a while, or has been handled with dirty hands, there is a chance that some dust or contamination may be present when the can is opened and used.



HUECK FOLIEN now offers hygienic protection for beverage cans in the form of a printed and embossed alufoil diaphragm which is attached by crimping it around the can rim. As well as protecting the rim and the can opening, the new foil top offers an opportunity for the pack to be decorated with additional messages and branding.

Tamper protection coupled with an elegant appearance is the objective of another HUECK FOLIEN product, a neck label for crown-capped drinks bottles which extends right over the top of the cap. Developed in collaboration with labelling machine



maker Krones AG, the label uses much less alufoil than a full crimped capsule, and allows the surface to be printed to a very high standard.

Alufoil features in more than half of the 'SIAL d'Or' Awards

Aluminium foil features very strongly in the latest list of food products selected by specialist food journalists in 25 countries for awards made by SIAL (Salon International de l'Alimentation).

Identified as 'commercial successes', the products are categorised by region and by application such as catering, fish products, meat and poultry, milk products, alcoholic drinks, fruits and vegetables. Of the 34 products chosen for an award, 18 had aluminium foil in their packaging (lids, laminated cartons, stand-up pouches) – proof of the versatility and marketing appeal of the material.



The top prize, the Global SIAL d'Or was won by Spanish company Alvalle for its 'Ajoblanco', a traditional recipe gazpacho soup packed in a foil lined carton.

RECYCLING

The 'Trialu'® system

– a major advance in sorting domestic waste

Our previous edition covered the Eureka Project Award won by the Pack-EE Aluminium Group for the development of techniques for the recovery and valorisation of aluminium used in consumer packaging. A significant factor in this success was the development of the 'Trialu'® sorting system which is now in full operation at Rochy-Condé near Beauvais, France.

'Eddy current' separation (See Infoil 3: Autumn 1998), a technology originally used for industrial scrap, has been further developed and refined – originally by researchers at Pechiney – to separate even the smallest aluminium fraction from the domestic waste stream.

Trialu® is the result of a collaboration between two French companies, to whom Pechiney transferred the patents, who have developed special sensors for the purpose. It consists of a battery of LEASar® detectors beneath a conveyor belt carrying the mixed waste, high speed data processors in each of the sensors and programmed dependent upon the type of aluminium content sought, an adjustable pneumatic ejection system plus purpose-designed chutes and physical separation controls.

Trialu® sorts aluminium positively and free of ferrous contamination, identifies all types of aluminium-bearing materials independent of shape or quantity and has very low energy demands for its operation. The system can be adjusted to local requirements: waste characteristics, volumes etc.

The Rochy-Condé sorting plant, for example, is dedicated to the extraction of used foil-lined liquid cartons. In terms of efficiency, it is showing excellent results.

Thanks to Trialu®, a higher percentage of packs containing aluminium foil can be separated for recycling, whatever the amount of alufoil is in the pack.

For liquid cartons, the electromagnetic 'signature' of the alufoil content which is less than 5% of the mix, allows easier recovery of the total materials.

Contact: www.lab-leas.fr

Swiss recycling achievement

The total amount of aluminium packaging collected by IGORA in 2000 reached 2,400 tonnes, a rise of 11%. This great achievement has been made up of increases in all product categories collected. Cans rose from 90 to 91% of beverage cans sold in the same period, pet food foil trays collected rose from 60 to 65%, and collapsible aluminium tubes rose from 25 to 30%.

IGORA is a co-operative venture made up of the various stakeholders in the recycling of aluminium packaging in Switzerland. The partners involved are aluminium producers, trade, consumers, public authorities, scrap dealers and recycling companies. It runs a very active programme to schools and the general public promoting the value of recycling aluminium packaging, communicating through:

- Yearly advertising campaigns in magazines and newspapers
- Various PR activities
- Promotion during and at special events (concerts, exhibitions, parties, etc.)



Left: The annual Zurich Street Parade attracts 750,000 people in party mood. A team of around 60 IGORA people collect the used cans for recycling.

www.igora.ch



– building on its first three years of success

In 1998 a joint European initiative was launched by seven major aluminium companies. The purpose was to establish a dialogue with interested stakeholders – from politicians to non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The first three years of this initiative involved an active programme of consultations, discussions and plant visits both at EU level and in several individual countries. These activities have generated strong interest at all levels and have opened communication channels for a constructive critique of the aluminium industry and its values.

Key issues which have emerged include energy use, recycling, climate change, research and development and future markets.

Commitment continues

The progress and future of 'Aluminium for Future Generations' (AFFG) was reviewed in November 2000 and the enthusiasm and conviction of the industry was reaffirmed. The initiative will continue to build on the mutual and growing commitment to the full participation of aluminium in sustainable development and to the interests of future generations.

The intention is to integrate the AFFG initiative into the structure and activities of the European Aluminium Association (EAA) and of the various national aluminium bodies. This idea is designed to further enhance the relationship of the industry with its political audiences and with NGOs. 'Aluminium for Future Generations' will be developed as the 'brand name' of the European aluminium industry and will come to convey continuing commitment to dialogue, sustainability and improvement. Sustainable development, corporate social responsibility and health matters – all essential for future generations – will be the focus of forthcoming discussions.

For more information visit: www.aluminium.org

Web site news:

UK packaging industry award for www.alufoil.org

Visitor numbers still climbing

In the view of the expert judging panel, the EAFA website is one of the best to serve the packaging supply chain. At the awards presentation during Pakex in Birmingham UK,



EAFA received a Commendation for the quality and depth of information provided by its website.

Even more dramatic evidence of success has come in the shape of a much increased level of traffic on the site. The monthly visitor average for the first four months of 2001 was over 4,000, with the April figure reaching 5,200.

Excess Stock Mover Service

EAFA members now have the facility of offering their stocks of excess materials to anyone who may be looking for a bargain. This facility is a service designed to help mobilise unwanted stocks of flexible packaging materials – alufoil, plastics films and paper – which are of good quality but no longer required due to over-makes or changed circumstances.

Additions to the Reference Library

Recent arrivals at the library are copies of two papers which originated from research carried out by the Fraunhofer Institute: 'New Packaging – New Food Quality?' and 'Aluminium: don't substitute it, recycle it.' These are well respected standard works proving the value of aluminium foil in the protection of foods and tobacco products.

A scooter could be yours!

So that we can better understand your needs and so improve Infoil and our website, please complete and return the simple questionnaire on the back of the response slip.

There is no cost – and the first two selected at random will win an aluminium scooter.

Publications

High quality brochure on foil containers

An attractively illustrated brochure entitled 'Brilliant Simplicity...' is now available from the UK's Aluminium

Foil Container Manufacturers Association (AFCMA). As well as presenting the case for the specification of alufoil containers and the great variety of types and applications, it shows how foil trays are fitting into new minimal packaging systems for many of the latest food dishes on the supermarket shelves. The trend towards aluminium foil containers is helped by new transparent lidding options using thermoformed plastics and fully sealed films. Using a modified atmosphere to slow oxidation, the shelf life and quality of cooked and raw meat and fish dishes, can be extended to the benefit of retailers and consumers alike.

Details of the new UK AFCMA Code of Hygiene adopted by its members are set out in the new brochure. The code formalises the industry's long-standing commitment to the highest possible standards of hygiene.

The code covers: hygiene management systems, personal hygiene, clothing and staff facilities, premises, supplier and materials hygiene, packaging and delivery and pest control.



Copies from:

The Foil Container Bureau:
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Aluminium in Packaging: maximum performance, minimum use of materials

A twenty-page illustrated brochure from the Gesamtverband der Aluminiumindustrie (GDA), the Aluminium Industry Association for Germany, gives a very comprehensive overview of the reasons for the use of aluminium in packaging. It covers functionality, properties, applications, benefits, conservation of resources and recycling.

(In German or English)

Aluminium – a contract between generations

Also from the GDA comes an article by S. Glimm and J. Schäfer reprinted from 'Aluminium' - No. 77 (2001) which examines and calculates the sustainability of the metal and makes the case for considering aluminium as a virtually indestructible resource thanks to its high level of economical recyclability.

(Text in English and German)

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