

Serving up a healthy future for portion packs

Single-serve packaging options are as diverse as the markets they serve. From food and drink to health and beauty, from do-it yourself products to pet foods, innovative and convenient single-serve and portion-controlled packs are being used in increasing numbers.

In the food market the convenience of single-serve portion controlled packs are now being promoted as a real means of helping to maintain a healthy diet. Understanding how much a serving should be and how many calories it contains is considered to be a prime way in which to tackle obesity.

Food and drink markets using single-serve packs include ready meals, and products to eat and drink on the go; plus a plethora of products for consumption in restaurants, coffee shops, and hotels.

The trend has led to the launch of a series of "smart" 100 calorie sweet and savoury snack packs to satisfy the health-conscious streak in many of today's consumers. Launches include crisps, nuts, biscuits and sweets.

The move to single serve packs is being driven not only by consumers'



Think healthy or ...? Below: All sorts of alufoil-based portion packs

health concerns and busy life-styles, but also by the 'nomadic' existence of many consumers. Other important drivers in the ready meals market include the increasing number of consumers living in smaller households plus the high level of ownership of microwave ovens.

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Sustainability and single serve

Portion packs and sustainability are not a contradiction in terms in fact they are an excellent means of preventing food wastage.

As food wastage has a larger effect on the environment than packaging there could be real benefits from investigating whether both the portion and pack size suits the nutritional requirements of the consumer, states Nofima, the Norwegian Institute of Food.

However, recent research shows that consumers do not trust food portion

sizes and consequently feel they need to buy extra to satisfy their appetites.

Appropriate portion sizes would contribute not only to a better environment but also to providing the correct nutritional requirements, if consistently communicated to consumers, says a study from the Institute for Grocery Distribution (IGD). The Institute recommends developing good practice guidelines on portion sizes for food producers, based on a consistent terminology.

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Marketing has designs on foil

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Apart from the essential role alufoil plays in creating single-serve ready meals, innovative packs incorporating alufoil's ability to preserve, protect and promote are being used for products as diverse as condiments; soups; teas & coffees; sugar & sweeteners; milk; yoghurt; butter; cheeses; dried snacks; drinks & drink mixes, and much more.

Stickpacks; sachets; pouches; lidding for pots and mini-pots; liquid cartons; pods & capsules; tubes, and blister packs, all benefit from alufoil usage. Its special properties provide extended shelf-life, protection, safety & hygiene; product security; ease of dispensing; and great decorative possibilities.

In the **health & beauty sector** stick-packs and sachets are small, easy, convenient and ideal for pharmaceutical and unit dose packs containing tablets, powders, dry, solid & liquid medications and supplements. Also laminate tubes with alufoil are ideal for hygienically dispensing sensitive products.

A recent report from Freedonia predicts strong growth for pharmaceutical single-dose sachets and pouches. Freedonia also believes the pharmaceutical sector will benefit from increased unit dose packaging of transdermal patches, and topical creams and ointments.

The ability to adapt to unit dose formats will also provide growth for blister

packs, where the size of the external carton, the surface of the blister and the ability to insert a leaflet means that more information can be provided for consumer information.

Single-serve beauty products are also rising in popularity with flexible alufoil/plastic combinations experiencing increasing popularity. Growth products include facial masks, sun tan lotions, creams, perfumes, and shampoos and conditioners.

The variety of preparations on offer also encourages mix-and-match purchases and impulse buys. Plus, of course, unit dose formats are convenient for individuals who travel frequently taking only carry-on luggage.

Sunny days are still ahead ...

Consumers' nomadic life-styles have been captured by an attractive and handy 3D sample sachet for a new sun gel range from Lancaster Sun Sport.

Produced by French contract packer and sachet specialist LCEsa, the convenient stand-up 10ml sachet is made from an alufoil-based multilayer laminate, with a reclosable cap.

Alcan Packaging Montreuil-Bellay, a specialist flexible packaging company for pharmaceutical and cosmetic applications, printed and laminated the PET/ALU/PE multilayer structure to give the right combination of flexibility and resistance



for ease of dispensing. It also protects and preserves the active ingredients of the sun gel, even in extreme climate conditions.

The large decorative surface of the sachet features high-quality rotogravure printing in 4-colours, which together with its stand-up position on shelf, provides excellent branding and promotional opportunities for the colour coded range of sun gels.

Another advantage of the 3D sachet is its higher ratio of product quantity to surface of laminate compared with the equivalent flat sachet.



Tea drinkers get a boost

Tea drinking has become more convenient thanks to alufoil single-serve capsules with easy-open lids from Constantia-Aloform. Used for its VERITY range of premium liquid tea concentrates, TEEWERK described the range as "the world's first liquid, ready-to-drink, pure tea concentrate".

The single serve capsules and easy peel lids are manufactured from

lacquered aluminium foil. VERITY vacuum-packed teas come in four flavours – 'Absolute Green' sencha green tea; 'Finest Ceylon' black tea; 'Fruity Hagebutte' rosehip fruit infusion; and 'Pure Rooibos'.

The contents are only water and tea and contain no additives. The capsules are packed in a striking decorative cardboard tube.



Smoothies a health option

Health and on-the-go consumer trends have been brought together in these single-serve 'smoothies' from J. García Carrión packed in combifitMini 200 and 250ml aseptic cartons from SIG Comblibloc.

The alufoil layer provides protection from light and oxygen providing the demand for longer life drinks from many retailers.



One for the pot

Consumer-friendly individual PP containers for Knorr Stock Pots feature an innovative peelable foil lid.

The laminate lid (matt lacquer/PET (reverse side printed)/paper/ALU/PE) manufactured by Huhtamaki Ronsberg provides excellent peel properties and has been optimised to provide protection against migration of the chicken fat.

The alufoil layer also provides stability when opening and reclosing the lid.

Stock Pots contain a liquid concentrated stock in three flavours – chicken, beef and vegetable – to give a rich flavour to home cooked meals. The stock is made with natural ingredients.

'Rip and tip' snack

Meat snacks producer Jack Link's has introduced two light sausage snacks – X-Bites and X-Sticks – for the more health-conscious consumer in alufoil-based packaging from Amcor Flexibles.

Aimed at the on-the-go market the PET/ALU/PE modified atmosphere packs feature a PE patented by Amcor Flexibles to ensure a perfect seal.

The packs also feature Jack Link's 'rip and tip' opening which allows the consumer to eat the product with one hand.

The meat snacks contain 30% less fat than comparable products and Jack Link's X-Bites are said to be the first light meat snack on the German Market.

The casing free production method



means the snacks leave consumers' fingers grease free. Printed in 7-colour gravure the packs offer excellent on-shelf appeal.

"What's for dinner?"

Wholesome meals with a home-cooked taste but with the added benefit of convenience are high on the consumer's wish list.

Hormel® Fresh Pantry™, for example, is producing a variety of vacuum-packed meat-based meals produced in SKINfoil alufoil trays from Nicholl Food Packaging.

The smooth wall alufoil trays measuring 37mm and 76mm feature a film to give an extended shelf-life.

The film also holds the product firmly in place allowing trays to be displayed vertically.

The consumer simply removes the alufoil tray from the outer sleeve, peels off the clear film and roasts in the oven.

This provides a no-touch, no-prep, no-mess, perfectly seasoned answer to "what's for dinner?" An added advantage is that the alufoil tray can be easily recycled.

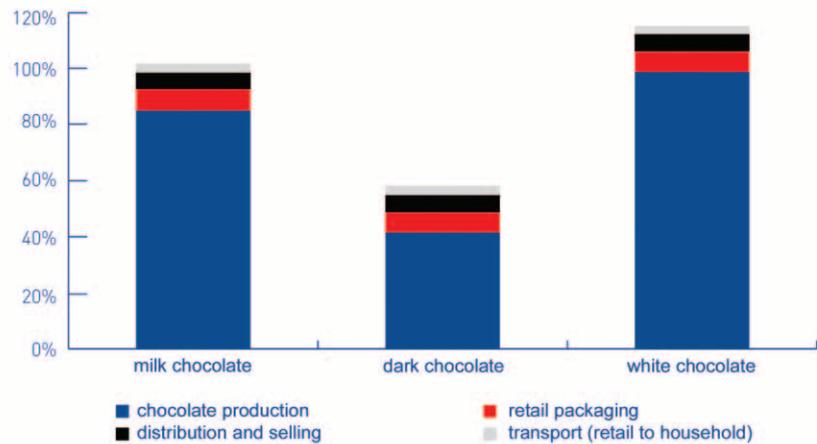


The role of packaging in the life cycle of a chocolate bar

Were you to ask a consumer in a retail outlet what are the major contributors to creating an adverse environmental impact one of the first answers will be packaging. This will be true even if applied to a bar of chocolate. But nothing could be further from the truth.

A recent Life Cycle Assessment (LCA), undertaken by ESU-services on behalf of GDA, the German Aluminium Association, in cooperation with EAFA, shows that the contribution of alufoil packaging in conjunction with a paper sleeve to the environmental footprint of chocolate is small.

The objective was to investigate the life cycle of chocolate wrapped in aluminium foil and paper. Different chocolate compositions were investigated starting with the cacao production but also covering retail and storage in the household. As well as climate change, the study also considered ozone layer depletion and acidification.



Greenhouse gas emissions associated with the life cycle of different chocolate compositions relative to a 100g milk chocolate bar in percent

As in other studies the major contributor to the environmental burden was the production of goods to be filled.

The contribution of retail packaging to green house gas emissions varies

between 6% – 12%. But while the impact of packaging is significantly lower than food production and filling, improvements to packaging and material optimization are important tasks.

As well as environmental considerations, the composition of the pack has a major influence on overall performance making brand owner, retailer and consumer packaging choices critical.

Alufoil packaging provides a barrier to light, moisture and gases; facilitates wrapping and rewrapping; and with the outer paper wrap, provides excellent decorative possibilities.



ESFERO Crema's eye-catching chocolates are wrapped in an alufoil laminate from Constantia Hueck Folien. Offering increased tear strength the embossed Tepro2 alufoil 9.5µm/BOPP 5µm laminate gives the same dead fold properties as mono alufoil wrappers. It also offers good scuff resistance, outstanding product protection, a good feel, and quality flexo or gravure print.

EAFA's new president takes on sustainability

François Coëffic, President, Foil & Technical Products, Novelis, has been elected president EAFA, and chairman of the Roller Group, following Fred McDonogh, of Hydro Aluminium, who has left the alufoil industry.

Elected at EAFA's Annual Assembly held in June, François Coëffic told a packed audience, "Sustainability is a key challenge for the alufoil industry.

"While the industry is continuously improving performances in light weighting, recycling and energy



François Coëffic

efficiency, one of the major hurdles will be to create real consumer understanding of the key role of alufoil packaging in saving resources."

Thomas Hauser, Vice President and Managing Director Technical Markets, Alcan Packaging Europe, was elected as Vice-Chairman of EAFA's Roller Group.



Find out more about alufoil !

– visit www.alufoil.org where you can find out all about every EAFA member, make business enquiries and see the latest news about alufoil applications and the industry.

European Aluminium Foil Association
Am Bonneshof 5 D - 40474 Düsseldorf

Telephone: +49 (0)211 4796 150

Fax: +49 (0)211 4796 408

Email: enquiries@alufoil.org

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European Aluminium Foil Association
Am Bonneshof 5
D - 40474 Düsseldorf

Germany