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EAFA Stats Q3 2020

Aluminium foil deliveries recover in Q3 as exports grow

The third quarter of 2020 saw some welcome recovery in deliveries of aluminium foil which experienced growth of 1.7% in the period. This was caused, to a large extent, by a stronger export performance, with sales outside Europe increasing by 13.7%, according to figures just released by the European Aluminium Foil Association (EAFA). Total deliveries in the year to date now stand at 709,000 tonnes (2019: 715,000 tonnes), a slight decrease of 0.8%

These figures were helped by improved deliveries of thinner gauges, used mainly for flexible packaging and household foils. This category added 5.2% in the third quarter and for the first nine months of 2020 it increased by 1.3% compared with 2019 figures. Thicker gauges, typically used for semi-rigid containers, technical or other applications fared less well, recording a decline of 4.7% in the three months to September and overall YTD deliveries are 4.5% below the year before.

While domestic consumption continues to be flat, showing a 0.6% drop in the 3 months period, the first nine months for these markets remained stable – and even positive in the packaging sector. The return to growth for exports reflects the easing of COVID-19 disruption to trade in the summer. The first six months of this year saw a steep decline in deliveries outside Europe, but as factories reopened across the world, the demand for aluminium foil improved.

Commenting on the figures, Guido Aufdemkamp, EAFA Executive Director said, “The figures reflect a period when the pandemic seemed to be in retreat and the business world was seeing a certain recovery. We now know that coronavirus is not going away as we had hoped and new measures to fight its spread will cause more disruption to trade until the end of this year and beyond.”

“The lead up to the holiday season is normally a good time for the aluminium foil sector, but if lockdowns continue this could severely impact sales in our traditional markets in both directions. While most factories continue to operate and the food packaging sector has been very robust, it is hard to predict what the next three or six months will bring. Fortunately, the foil rolling sector is experienced in dealing with fluctuating demand patterns, so should be able to adapt accordingly,” added Aufdemkamp.

The European Aluminium Foil Association (EAFA) is the main trade association, specifically representing companies engaged in the rolling and rewinding of aluminium foil and the manufacturing of semi-rigid alufoil containers and household foil in Europe. With its more than 40 members, the organisation represents the total aluminium foil rolling market in Europe. www.alufoil.org

Further information:

Patrick Altenstrasser, Manager Communications
communications@alufoil.org.