

In the sustainability mode



The thermoformed containers Huhtamaki developed contain 40-70% post-consumer PET, making the package more environmentally friendly

In rigid packaging, the recent lightweighting initiatives launched by PepsiCo (www.pepsico.com) send a clear signal that sustainable growth is now a key concern for global-leading food and beverage brand owners. Pepsi's ultimate aim is to reduce the plastics used in 500ml non-carbonated beverage bottles by 20%.

The project was led by Pepsi-Cola North America's packaging development team, which aimed to minimise the packaging without sacrificing design, functionality or taste. Experts from within and outside the company fielded over 30 bottle designs in consumer testing to develop the trifecta bottle that weighs only 13.2g.

The lightweighted 500ml PET bottles are used across PepsiCo brands Lipton Iced Tea, Tropicana juice drinks, Aquafina FlavorSplash and Aquafina Alive. Along with reducing the PET content in the bottle by 20%, there will also be a 10% reduction in the label size and a 5% reduction in the shrink wrap film used to wrap the multi-packs.

"We're constantly striving to make our packaging an even smaller part of the waste stream and this new bottle is just one of many examples," says Robert Lewis, PepsiCo vice president of worldwide beverage packaging and equipment development. "The challenge was to deliver significantly lighter packaging that would provide the same shelf life as the heavier bottle, withstand the manufacturing and distribution process yet not compromise aesthetics."

The range of renewable hybrid resins and certified biodegradable resins made by Biograde meet new Chinese packaging regulations



Finnish-based packaging firm Huhtamaki (www.huhtamaki.com) launched a second thermoformed recycled-PET (rPET) salad pot package range in sizes of 180g, 200g, 250g and 300g ideal for packing various chilled, short shelf-life products such as dips and wet salads, as well as applications such as in-store deli counter applications.

Sustainable developments in global plastics packaging market applications continue to be driven by end users who are seeking more environmentally friendly package solutions

Using rPET as post-consumer recycled material derived from recycled PET bottles, the thermoformed containers are made from materials containing 40-70% post-consumer PET, making the packaging more environmentally friendly.

With Huhtamaki's optimised extrusion of these materials, the end products exhibit good clarity, crack resistance and have appropriate food contact approval.

Huhtamaki's first rPET salad pot range was launched last August. The oval-like, space economical salad pot range was developed for Bakkavor, a UK customer who is using it for packing salads for Tesco.

"Retailers in the UK continue switching to more sustainable packaging and rPET is an ideal solution as it performs similarly to virgin APET," says Andrew Lea, general manager of Consumer Goods UK. "The inclusion of high levels of recycle makes these products attractive to customers looking to improve their environmental credentials and reduce dependence on virgin material. We identified the possibilities of food grade rPET early on and will continue introducing more and more products using rPET."



Biodegradable packaging for the Olympics

Reducing environmental impact is a key theme of the Beijing 2008 Olympics (under the "Green Materials, Green Olympics" theme) and Australian company Biograde (www.biograde.com.au) was awarded a US\$1.2 million contract to supply biodegradable packaging to the major sporting event.

Biograde managing director Dr Frank Glatz said the contract was won by the superior performance of the company's resin, which meets stringent European EN13432 compostability standard, and the supply capability facilitated through Biograde's local manufacturing plant in Nanjing, China.

"The Biograde range of renewable hybrid resins and certified biodegradable resins also meet new Chinese packaging regulations enacted June 1 2008 and our Nanjing manufacturing business is one of the few Chinese companies awarded with the prestigious China Environmental Label," Dr Glatz says. "A key element of the Beijing Advanced Material Development Centre selection process was the plan to use the Olympic packaging supply project as a national case study to promote sustainable packaging materials across China. Biograde products more than meet these criteria."