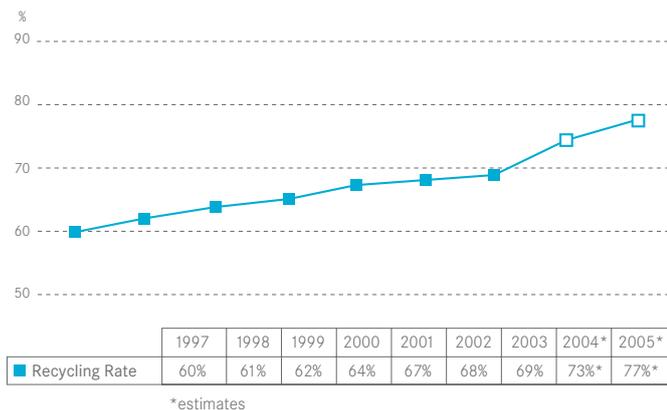


Paper Packaging Excels as Recycling Rate Hits 77%

Preliminary figures indicate that paper and board packaging reached an impressive 77% recycling rate by 2005, well beyond the 60% target set for paper in the Packaging Directive¹ by end of 2008.



1 Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive (Directive 94/62/EC on Packaging and Packaging Waste, as amended by Directive 2004/12/EC). For the new Member States, longer deadlines apply (Directive 2005/20/EC)

2 http://ec.europa.eu/environment/waste/packaging_index.htm

The European Commission is publishing the official figures for various packaging materials under the Packaging Directive. According to the data, for seven consecutive years paper has excelled in this area.



The approved data for all packaging can be found on the Commission web site² along with the legislation that is currently in force in all EU languages. The data collected by the Member States is generally subject to a two-year publication delay, so the preliminary figures from the Paper Packaging Coordination Group provide a good estimate of the previous year's performance.

Paper Packaging Makes Sense for the Environment and the Economy

Corrugated board boxes perform better than reusable plastic crates both in environmental and economic terms.

That is the conclusion of a recent study by the *Packaging, Transport and Logistics Research Institute (ITENE)* at the University of Valencia in Spain. ITENE has produced an independent and peer reviewed study on life cycle and cost aspects of vegetable transportation from Spain to Germany. The main conclusion of the report is that corrugated board boxes have lower environmental impact and costs than plastic crates. The difference is particularly significant in terms of climate change, where the impact of corrugated board is not only lower than that of the plastic crate, but in fact reduces global warming. Also the recyclability of old corrugated boxes provides a significant environmental gain.

The study looked at several rotations of the plastic crate, much beyond those reported by companies using them. Even at the very hypothetical figure of 100 rotations per crate, the impact

ITENE study on corrugated board boxes and reusable plastic crates

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CORRUGATED BOARD BOXES AND REUSABLE PLASTIC CRATES IN THE LONG-DISTANCE TRANSPORT OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

UNIVERSITAT DE VALÈNCIA
 ITENE
 UFB

caused by plastic crates is higher than for corrugated board boxes in six of the ten impact categories considered.

Finally, the study concludes that the costs associated with the plastic crates are higher than for corrugated board boxes in all phases of the life cycle analysed.

Recovery or Disposal?

Good quality life-cycle assessments confirm that **recycling is ecologically the most favourable management option for used paper**, according to the *European Environment Agency (EEA)*. A report published 30 June presents a review of existing environmental and economic studies covering alternative recovery and disposal options for used paper and cardboard.

The life-cycle assessments (LCA) reviewed under the study all had to pass a quality control test, but all delivered the same conclusion on treatment options – namely,

that from an environmental point of view, recycling is better than incineration or land filling. For the cost-benefit analyses (CBA), it is not possible to set a common quality standard due to large variations between the studies. The report concludes that the price put on the amount of time individuals spend recycling tends to have a major influence on the conclusions.

The report can be downloaded at http://reports.eea.europa.eu/technical_report_2006_5/en

Ecobins for Paper and Board Recycling

Recycling must be made easy and accessible to everybody.

For that reason ASPAPEL, the Spanish Paper Industry Association, started the project 'Tu Papel es Importante' where they designed and promoted the 'Ecobin' for paper recycling at schools and offices. In 2006, more than 50.000 of these Ecobins were distributed in Spain.

The Ecobin is made of very resistant 100% recyclable corrugated board and can be manipulated and emptied easily. It has a capacity of 75 litres, and when it is full of paper it weights around 15 kilos. Every year it can be easily substituted if necessary: each old Ecobin can be recycled to make a new one.

Schools offer the opportunity to educate the future generations of recyclers and work towards achieving a recycling society. In this project each classroom has one Ecobin that the children identify as the place to deposit their used paper and board for recycling. Under the supervision of their teacher, they learn to use it and become familiar with the importance of their daily contribution to the environment. The message is clear: paper is not waste.



The Ecobin is also becoming very popular in public and private offices. The habits that the children learn at school are easily transferred to their homes. In the same way, companies reflect their social responsibility image through their employees, and their contribution to the daily recycling at the office is also recognised.

Paper Packaging Coordination Group

The Paper Packaging Coordination Group (PPCG) represents the whole chain of paper-based packaging. The group coordinates communications and advocacy of paper and board packaging in Europe. At the moment PPCG consists of 13 industry organisations¹.

This is the first issue of the PPCG newsletter, which will be published biannually to keep you up to date with the paper packaging recycling rate and news on paper packaging. If you have any comments or feedback, please let us know at the email contact below.

PPCG secretariat can be reached by email at s.ashmead@cepi.org and by phone in +32-2-627 49 13

Contact for PPCG is CEPI, Avenue Louise 250, Box 80, 1050 Brussels, Belgium

¹ Currently the following organisations participate in the PPCG:

CEPI Confederation of European Paper Industries, **CITPA** International Confederation of Paper & Board Converters, **ACE** Alliance for Beverage Cartons & the Environment, **ECMA** European Carton Makers Association, **ECO** European Containerboard Organisation, **EMBALPACK** European Association of Makers of Packaging Papers, **ESBO** European Solid Board Organisation, **CEPI EUROKRAFT** European Kraft Paper Producers for the Flexible Packaging Industry, **EUROSAC** Fédération Européenne des Fabricants de Sacs en Papier à Grande Contenance, **FEFCO** European Federation of Corrugated Board Manufacturers, **GROUPEMENT ONDULE** European Association of Makers of Corrugated Base Papers, **PROCARTON/CEPI CARTONBOARD** Association of European Cartonboard and Carton Manufacturers, **PAPERPLUS** Speciality Paper Manufacturers Association