

Generating momentum for our future

At a time when Europe is going through particularly challenging times, economically and politically, FPE's representative role for the flexible packaging industry is all the more paramount. To meet these challenges FPE's vision is to bridge the interests of all members, regardless of turnover and to ensure we all benefit from becoming increasingly involved with the association to the advantage of the flexible packaging industry as a whole. Responding to important demands from the European Commission can only happen in close cooperation with member companies, their customers and associations along the supply chain.

It was recognised that, to benefit all flexible packaging manufacturers, neither the 'giants' nor the medium and small manufacturers could achieve this on their own. FPE continues to position the complete sector as a pro-active entity focussed on customer demands and the increasing legislative burden.

An essential ingredient is communication along the supply chain to create a meaningful understanding of our efforts to attain improvement in Good Manufacturing Practice including sustainability, technical development and legislation.

Our aim is to generate momentum through measurable progress in key areas for our future.

Regulatory Affairs

Over the past decade EU jurisdiction has broadened to include areas of consumer, social and environmental policy. The resulting increased need for information on complex issues now offers interest groups more opportunities than ever to guide EU legislation.

New look for FPE website

Flexible Packaging Europe's website, www.flexpack-europe.org, has been given an exciting, user friendly, new look and feel. The website now includes 'Library', a new area for members which is a regularly updated resource section containing information, links and documents covering the main topics Food Contact, Hygiene, Traceability, REACH, Packaging Waste and General Packaging Requirements and Standardisation.

For a member's account and login data contact the FPE Secretariat (enquiries@flexpack-europe.org).

The Technical Committee has proved to be very well positioned to take an active role in numerous projects to smooth and guide the legislative and regulatory process, such as the ever changing and increasingly important food contact legislation.

We have an efficient lobbying network that keeps FPE abreast of upcoming legislation and its possible impact. This assists FPE members and the supply chain to stay apprised of all issues that affect our industries through the efficient dissemination of news, regulatory and technical information, as they impact on converters, suppliers and user industries.



Sustainability

Flexible packaging, with its excellent product to packaging ratio, is probably the most resource efficient option available to support sustainability across the supply chain, while also delivering excellent functionality. While we all know that the impact of flexible packaging on the environment is negligible when compared with food production, processing and consumer behaviour, the challenge has always been to communicate that to the relevant stakeholders.

With the publication of the new FPE Thought Leadership Paper, "The Perfect Fit" (see page 2) the message we are giving to the world is a true understanding of the environmental benefits of flexible solutions. The key message is packaging must not be viewed in isolation, and that flexible packaging is a key driver to make sustainable consumption possible. Flexible packaging is part of the solution for a resource efficient society.

2012 will prove to be very challenging for us all. Your continued support on identified key issues is of paramount importance and we look forward to contributions from you to highlight additional areas for focus.

Jan Homan
FPE Chairman

Sustainability

Flexible Packaging is THE PERFECT FIT

During the 2nd half of 2011, FPE proudly unveiled the latest publication explaining how flexible packaging offers the PERFECT FIT solution to today's sustainability challenges. This "thought leadership" paper, which can be downloaded [here](#), targets the packaging industry exploring how flexible packaging, more often than most, is able to seek out and deliver the optimum balance between "effectiveness" and "efficiency".



The Perfect Fit paper summarises why flexible packaging is the "Perfect choice" to address the challenge and illustrates this using examples from the broad portfolio of FPE LCA studies in recent years. Flexible packaging offers:

- Perfect product to package ratio, reducing excess packaging and allowing for a range of pack types
- Perfect 'light-weighting' performance, reducing the impact from materials production, transportation and other impacts along the value chain
- Perfect adaptability to protect, while delivering convenience and portioning
- Perfect performance, giving optimum protection for valuable resources
- Perfect flexibility, an elegant combination of materials to meet the needs of a society that is changing ever faster

The publication borrows the concept of a seamstress "tailoring" the cut of a fine garment to fit the wearer "perfectly". This analogy is

continued throughout the document explain how flexible packaging offers the Perfect Fit for: Function and Performance; Customisation and Convenience and most often delivers the highest Product to Pack ratio of all the alternative packaging solutions.

The contentious issue of "End of Life" is pragmatically covered outlining the various alternatives and trade-offs to minimise waste through recycling potentially difficult recycle light weight plastics or by recovering the embedded energy via Waste to Energy incineration rather than for it to go to landfill.

FPE joins SAVE FOOD

Flexible Packaging Europe, has taken up full membership of the SAVE FOOD initiative instituted by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations and Messe Düsseldorf which was launched officially in 2011 during the world's largest packaging fair, interpack.

SAVE FOOD is a joint campaign to provide a platform for activities and the promotion of initiatives to reduce food waste. Invitations to take part were sent out to key organisations in the food and packaging sectors. FPE is prominent in representing the flexible packaging industry at European level and has already undertaken work in the field of sustainable solutions for food packaging.

As one of the major themes of the programme is the development and adoption of effective packaging solutions this aligns completely with the work of FPE's members in creating packaging formats for the protection, distribution and preservation of all kinds of food products, whilst also looking at the amounts of packaging used for each product and the optimum materials.

Joining the SAVE FOOD initiative is the logical consequence of FPE's substantial work in food preservation and sustainability. Its approach to consider the full lifecycle when appraising the added value of packaging, and that packaging is an important part of the solution to increase overall resource efficiency, means that FPE feels certain it can play a central role in helping SAVE FOOD make a real difference, particularly through the supply chain, for a great variety of food products.

FPE was present at the first brainstorming session with FAO and to support Messe Dusseldorf to formally establish SAVE FOOD. The success of the initiative to date is a clear indication of the importance now being placed on need to reduce food waste in all markets and all parts of the world.

As a company you can also join SAVE FOOD to show leadership and solidarity on sustainability issues.

More information about SAVE FOOD, including how to join the initiative, can be found at www.save-food.org

European News

Plastics Regulation

Commission Regulation (EU) No 1282/2011 was published in December. This is the second amendment to the Plastics Regulation 10/2011. It adds some substances to the Union List and amends the limits and specifications for some others. Further amendments are planned; we are told that there will be one on substances and another on the structure of the regulation.

It had been hoped that at least some sections of a Guidance Document on the Plastics Regulation would have been published by the end of 2011. However, there are no signs of any progress on this.

Active and Intelligent Packaging

In November, the Commission published their Guidance to Regulation 450/2009 on active and intelligent materials and articles intended to come into contact with food.

This defines the terms used, giving examples of what is covered by the Regulation and what is not. It also uses practical examples to clarify legal aspects. There is a question and answer section relating to risk assessment and authorisation procedures.

Nanomaterials

The Commission published a Recommendation on the definition of nanomaterials in October 2011. The definition applies to both natural and manufactured materials containing particles, more than 50% of which have at least one dimension in the range 1 nm to 100 nm.

In addition to particles, the definition includes structures such as fullerenes, grapheme flakes and carbon nanotubes. Alternatively, a material may fall within the definition if its specific area to volume is greater than 60 m²/cm³. The Commission will review this recommendation in 2014.

Cefic, the European Chemical Industry Council, is critical of this definition, believing that it is too broad and includes materials such as pigments which have been in use for a long time.

They believe that the definition should only include substances that have been intentionally manufactured on the nanoscale. Of particular interest to our industry would be the views of the European Printing Ink Association but these have not yet been forthcoming.

Council of Europe Resolution on Metals and Alloys in Contact with Food

As previously reported, the Council of Europe (CoE) drafted a Resolution which would set a Specific Release Limit (SRL) for aluminium of 0.9 mg/kg food. FPE and member companies were active in supporting the European Aluminium Association (EAA) in its submissions to the CoE to get this limit raised. The response to these direct submissions has been disappointing. There has been little or no feedback from the CoE secretariat and it is not certain that they distributed our material to all the national experts.

However, direct approaches at a national level seem to have been much more successful. It is understood that the revised opinion from JECFA, which doubles the Provisional Tolerable Weekly Intake, will result in a doubling of the proposed SRL. It should be possible for the great majority of lacquered aluminium based structures to comply with this higher limit.

While of no threat to human health, some applications for unlacquered foil may not meet this limit. In these cases, delegates may consider the use of the ALARA principle – As Low As is Reasonably Achievable. A new draft resolution will be discussed at the next CoE Committee of Experts meeting in May, to be followed by further consultation with industry.

Sensory Workshop

In November, the European Union Reference Laboratory for food contact materials held a workshop on sensory testing. The audience was delegates from the national reference laboratories.

Aline Ditché (Amcor), Barbara Hochecker (Constantia Teich) and Maurizio Rossi (Sealed Air/ Giflex) attended on behalf of FPE. They gave a presentation which described good practice for testing odour and taint in the flexible packaging industry.

It was well received and achieved the twin objectives of preventing the discussion becoming too academic whilst reassuring the delegates that, as an industry, we have the issue of taint under effective control.

National News

Swiss Ordinance

In the last issue, we reported that there was a worrying lack of progress in getting some missing substances added to List A. Of particular concern were oxygenated solvents, which may be used as retarders. We now learn that the European Solvents Industry Group has reactivated a sub group to deal with these products and they are taking steps to submit dossiers to the authorities. Dossiers on hydrocarbon solvents are also due to be submitted very soon.

German Ordinance on Printing Inks

The BLL, representing the whole supply chain for packaged foods, has responded to the second draft which was published in October. They welcomed the fact that the regulation would not now apply to packs where it could be shown that there was no possibility of migration from the inks. Although they continue to argue that the definition of inks should distinguish between inks printed on the non food contact surface (to be covered by the regulation) and inks printed on the food contact surface (to be considered as a separate case).

The definition for “nanomaterials” follows the EU recommendation (see page 3). There is no longer an absolute prohibition of such materials but those that have not been assessed are given the same status as CMP substances. BLL ask that these should instead be treated as any other substances which have not been assessed with a limit of 10 ppb.

Also welcomed is the addition of a so-called “moving reference” to the Plastics Regulation which would allow substances already approved for the manufacture of plastics to be also approved

(under certain conditions) for printing inks. However, despite changes having been made to the positive list, they point out that there are still important substances missing.

The Regulation requires written statements with information on the inks used to be issued and distributed within the value chain. The BLL feels that these requirements are too vague and that guidance documents need to be developed for each stage of the chain – as the BLL has done for plastics and as is intended for the EU Plastics Regulation. The transition period of one year, they argue, is totally inadequate to allow for the usage of stocks of materials and packaged food.

Our German colleagues hope to have a hearing with the authorities in the near future to discuss these points further.

Belgian Legislation on Coatings

A second draft was published in October. Changes included:

- The permitted use of substances which have been approved nationally, provided the toxicological dossiers meet EFSA standards.
- The acceptability of using overall migration results, worst case calculations or migration modelling to demonstrate compliance with specific migration limits.
- A five year validity for the Declaration of Compliance which should accompany the supply of a coating – provided nothing has changed in the raw materials, production process, etc.

We have collated comments and questions on this draft. These have been presented to the authorities by a Belgium based member.

Substances in the News

Bisphenol A (BPA)

Research reports on BPA have continued to be published. Opinions still differ widely; some reports claim a variety of adverse effects at low doses whilst many others support the current safety limits laid down by EFSA. However, in September 2011, the French Agency for Food Health Safety (ANSES) published two reports, one on the health effects of BPA and the other on its uses. In the first report, based on an analysis of scientific literature, ANSES found that there were “proven effects in animals ... and other suspected effects in

humans”. “These effects were demonstrated at doses that were significantly lower than the reference doses used for regulatory purposes, especially during certain periods of life characterised by susceptibility to the effects of BPA (pregnancy, pre- and post-natal periods)”.

Very soon afterwards, in October, the French National Assembly adopted a proposition which would suspend the use of food contact packaging containing BPA:

- From 2013 for products intended for infants and children
- From 2014 for all food products

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Substances in the News ... continued from previous page

In addition, from 2013, food contact packaging containing BPA must be labelled to advise against consumption by pregnant women and infants.

The proposal needs to be approved by the French Senate and it is not certain when it will be put on their agenda. Although supported by some members of the government, including the Health Minister, there may not be enough time for the measure to pass into law before the Presidential election in April/ May.

In December, EFSA responded to the ANSES study and concluded that it did not contain information which would justify a change to its 2010 opinion. EFSA will look at the issue again in 2012, after the FDA has published the results of further studies.

In contrast, our customers are not waiting for laws to be passed or taking heed of EFSA, but are demanding BPA free alternatives, not

just for France, but for all Europe.

Mineral Hydrocarbons

From the point of view of both the authorities and public concern, the focus is moving onto the mineral oil aromatic hydrocarbons (MOAH) rather than the mineral oil saturated hydrocarbons (MOSH). Our main concern was that hydrocarbons such as polyolefin oligomers or wax components could get confused with the MOSH. This now seems less likely and in general, our products should not contain MOAH or substances resembling them.

Despite voluntary commitments to phase out the use of printing inks based on mineral oils for printing paper and board packaging, and mineral oil-based process chemicals for food contact paper and board packaging materials, the carton industry still has a major issue with the presence of these mineral oils in recycled board. There remain opportunities for flexible suppliers to provide liners

Research activity

Functional barrier

From both a regulatory and a practical point of view, it is of great interest to know what materials can act as a functional barrier to different substances, i.e. by preventing migration at levels more than 10 ppb from layers outside, such as printing inks, or from other "secondary" packaging materials which are not in direct food contact. FPE commissioned the Fraunhofer Institute to investigate this.

FPE members provided 24 different materials which could be expected to show a range of barrier properties. 12 different substances were selected as permeants to give a range of molecular weights and polarities. The test method was to expose one side of the test material to a constant flow of nitrogen carrying known vapour concentrations of the substances. Pure nitrogen was used to rinse the other side of the material and this stream was sampled and analysed to measure the concentrations of the permeants. By measuring at regular intervals, it was possible to show that there is an initial "lag phase" during which the

concentration of the permeant increases. In due course, the concentration levels out as the system reaches equilibrium.

In this way, it was possible both to compare the permeation rates of different substances through the same material and the permeation rates of the same substance through different materials. Using the quantitative data, it is possible to demonstrate which materials act as a functional barrier to a substance.

An example of a practical application would be the case of a flexible pack inside a printed carton. If the carton contains substances such as photoinitiators or mineral oils, there is a risk that these can permeate through the flexible pack into the food. This research allows us to predict which materials will present sufficient barrier to such substances so as to prevent their concentration in the food exceeding regulatory limits.

The final report has now been issued and is available to members on the FPE website.

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