Expanding Carton Recycling Within Evolving Fiber Markets

Scott Byrne - 7/8/20

Market Sustainability Manager @ Tetra Pak
Director of Public Affairs @ Carton Council of North America
What Constitutes a Food and Beverage Carton?

**Refrigerated “gable top”**

- Polyethylene
- Paperboard
- Polyethylene

**Shelf stable “aseptic”**

- Outer Polyethylene Coating (Liquid Barrier)
- Paperboard (Stability)
- Middle Polyethylene Coating
- Aluminum (Light, Odor & Oxygen Protection)
- Inner Polyethylene Coating (Liquid Barrier)

No wax or “waxy coating”
The State of Carton Recycling
When we started in 2009

1 Carton Recycler in North America

18% of the U.S. had access, representing 20 million households.

24 States had carton recycling access

Curbside carton recycling rate: 6%
Who is the Carton Council?

- Composed of four leading carton manufacturers, Elopak, SIG Combibloc, Evergreen Packaging and Tetra Pak, the Carton Council formed in 2009 to deliver long-term collaborative solutions to divert valuable cartons from the landfill.

- Through a united effort, the Carton Council is committed to expanding carton recycling access and participation nationwide.
**Carton Council Strategy**

**OUR ULTIMATE GOAL:** Increase the carton recycling rate and decrease the amount of cartons going to landfills or becoming litter

**OUR OBJECTIVES:**
- **Expand Access**
- **Increase Participation**

**STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING:**
- Provide counsel and resources to MRFs to encourage sorting of Grade #52 cartons
- Foster the development of solid end markets
- Engage with recycling facilities/officials
- Educate consumers
- Support implementation of school recycling programs
- Encourage company/brand involvement
- Partner with stakeholders/advocates
- Participate in legislative discussions
The Current State of Carton Recycling

- **Household Access**: 60.8%
- **Households with Access**: 70,969,688
- **Curbside Carton Recycling Rate**: 16%
- **States with Access**: 49
- **Carton Recyclers in North America**: 5
- **Number of Schools with Carton Recycling Programs**: 10,836

*As of December 2019*
End Markets: Helping to Grow Access
Making the Grade- Grade #52

The Paper Stock Industries (PSI) is a national chapter of the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, Inc. (ISRI). It is dedicated to the recovered paper industry and issued this grade in 2011.

- Consists of liquid packing board containers including empty, used PE coated, printed one-side aseptic and gable top cartons containing no less than 70% bleached chemical fiber and may contain up to 6% aluminum foil and 24% PE film.
- Prohibitive materials may not exceed 2%.
- Total out-throws may not exceed 5%.
Best Value for Cartons is by Sorting Them into Grade #52

- Repulping
- Pulp
  - Tissue and Paper Products
- Poly/Alu
  - Molded Plastic Products
- Whole Cartons
  - Building Materials
End Markets for Grade #52 Cartons

- Sustana Fiber (Canada)
  - Levis, QC
- Kelly Green Board
  - Q4 2020
- Great Lakes Tissue
- Sustana Fiber
- Continuus Materials
- Kimberly-Clark de México
  - (Bajio & Ecatepec)

Locations:
- Japan
- South Korea
- India
- Thailand
- Malaysia
MRFs: Carton Recycling in the Evolving Ton
Conducted MRF Study to Better Understand Carton Flow

**FACTORS IMPROVING A PACKAGE'S RECOVERY**

**Size + Shape:**
Dimensions make a difference - items tend to flow with similarly sized and shaped materials.

**Stiffness:**
Holding the 3D shape improves likelihood of moving with containers.

**Common:**
More prevalent resin combination will increase ability to target with dedicated optical or manual sorter.
Common sortation Methods for Grade #52 Cartons

Optical Sorter

Manual Sorting
New Technology to Help Sort Cartons Into Grade #52
Carton Recycling and the Pandemic
Quebec paper mill first in two decades to accept recovered cartons in Canada

Alternative sources required as a result of high demand for household paper products due to coronavirus

By Keith Barker — May 05, 2020
Recycling During the Pandemic - 6/23/20

- During the pandemic over 119 programs were suspended or changed
- 20 MRFs across five states also reported temporary suspensions of service
Recycling’s impact on paper shortages- 6/23/20

- “Recycling programs are extremely important for our facility. We use 100% recycled raw material to the tune of over 2,100 tons per month, with over half of that coming directly from post-consumer recycling operations across the U.S. and Canada” – Tori Berckett, GLT

- “People are consuming a larger quantity of paper products like toilet paper, tissues, and paper towels in their homes currently. It is important for everyone to recycle their cartons because the fibers in cartons are clean and of excellent quality to be used to produce the pulp needed to manufacture these essential items.” – Michele Bartolini, Sustana
Campaign Overview

- **Goal:** Raise awareness that food and beverage cartons are recyclable and are recycled into essential household paper items like toilet paper, tissues, and paper towels.
- **Target audiences:** Consumers and B2B in MI, WI, IL, OH, MN
- **Campaign duration:** May - August 2020
- **Channels:** Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Hulu, website ads

Note: Click [here](#) to access the original post.
Additional Resources- Mail In Program

Carton Council is continuing to grow curbside recycling access. However, if you live in a city that does not yet accept cartons, our network of recyclers can help! Here’s how to mail them:

1. Make sure your cartons are: empty, dry, and keep straws in and caps on, if that applies. Flatten your cartons to save space.
2. Address your cartons to the facility closest to you and include proper postage. Write “CARTONS” on the front of your package.

1. Altogether Recycling
   645 W 53rd Place
   Denver, CO 80216

2. Emmet County Recycling
   7363 Pleasantview Rd
   Harbor Springs, MI 49740

3. Firstar Fiber
   10330 “I” Street; Suite 100
   Omaha, NE 68127

4. Tidewater Fiber
   1958 Diamond Hill Road
   Chesapeake, VA 23324
Additional Resources - Helpful Links

• MRF Flow Study-
  https://www.cartonopportunities.org/MRFStudy

• Community education toolkit-
  https://www.cartonopportunities.org/communitiesfacilities

• Consumer Survey Press Release-
  https://www.cartonopportunities.org/sites/default/files/files/Research%20Release%20FINAL.pdf
Stay in touch...

Email us:
info@recyclecartons.com

Visit RecycleCartons.com
CartonOpportunities.org
Thank you