

BRC standards revision due out

The British Retail Consortium's (BRC) revised packaging standards will have "greater clarity and wider appeal" when they are published in January.

The latest edition of the *Global standards for packaging and packaging materials* has been expanded from food packaging to cover all types of product categories.

It also includes more focus on the analysis of potential hazards and a commitment to quality management systems.

Geoff Spriegel, the BRC's director of global standards, said: "Technical managers are good at ensuring standards are applied, but it's important to involve more management to ensure they are applied efficiently."

The revised standards have been developed with a wide variety of stakeholders, suppliers and certification bodies. The BRC is also updating its food safety standards.

The packaging standards were first established in 2004, with the aid of the Institute of Packaging, to set requirements for suppliers to UK retailers.

Industry slams PM over bag ban plan

by Gordon Carson

Packaging leaders condemned Gordon Brown last month after he used a major speech on climate change to outline plans to outlaw single-use plastic bags.

Packaging Federation chief Dick Searle said he was concerned about the signals the Prime Minister had sent out by calling for a ban, even though government figures show plastic bags only account for 0.3% of domestic waste.

And the Packaging and Films Association said Brown's thinking was "seriously flawed" and "took no account of science accepted by experts in his own departments".

Brown said retailers could "go further" than their commitment to cut the environmental impact of plastic bags by 25% over the next year.

"So the government would convene a forum of the supermarkets, the British Retail



M&S: bag charging extended

Consortium and other interested groups to assess together how, and how quickly, this reduction can be achieved."

Searle accused Brown of "undermining" the Waste & Resources Action Programme's new campaign to tackle food waste by placing such an emphasis on plastic bags without mentioning the environmental impact of food waste sent to landfill.

And he said Brown needed to focus more on the massive changes needed in habits such

as car use and home heating, which were far bigger contributors to climate change.

Brown's speech came after London council leaders approved a bill to ban the distribution of free plastic bags.

London Councils' decision followed a London-wide consultation on proposals to introduce either a ban or a tax on carrier bags in the capital.

Only 2,000 people responded to the consultation, which ran from 14 September to 26 October, but London Councils said it would press for action after almost 60% of voters backed an outright ban. However, it decided against imposing a plastic bag tax on shoppers.

● Marks & Spencer is to extend its carrier bag charging scheme to 33 stores in south-west England next year, following successful trials in Northern Ireland.

No change in view of 'excess' packs

Consumer attitudes to 'excessive' packaging have barely changed since 2001, a government report has revealed.

Only 12% of people regularly decide "not to buy something because it had too much packaging", exactly the same proportion as in 2001, according to a report last month from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

The percentage of people who "occasionally" decide not to buy products because they have too much packaging increased from 17% to 27%, while 57% said it had no effect on them.

The report, based on the sixth survey since 1986 of public attitudes towards the environment, also found that 38% of respondents never take their own shopping bag to the supermarket.

And despite improving recycling rates, more than two-thirds of respondents only put paper out for collection.

🔗 From www.defra.gov.uk/environment/statistics/pubatt/index.htm

Tri-Star buys MG sushi business

Tri-Star Packaging Supplies has made its third acquisition of the year with the takeover of the sushi-packaging division of MG Plastics in Chesterfield.

The buy follows the Enfield-based firm's earlier swoops for Stadium Disposable and Nu-Line Marketing, both based in London.

MG Plastics owner Malcolm Gill has joined Tri-Star to help the firm develop its sushi-packaging sales.

Tri-Star managing director Kevin Curran said the acquisition would enable the firm to supply for the first time a "comprehensive range of sushi containers" to retailers and the food-to-go sector in APET, HIPS (high-density polystyrene) and PS materials.

Tri-Star now supplies everything from sushi to disposable cutlery.

Crown Easylift can closure takes three MPMA golds

Crown Food Europe's Easylift tab for cans was the unanimous winner of the supreme gold award at this year's Metal Packaging Manufacturers' Association (MPMA) Best in Metal Awards.

The Easylift tab, which also took gold awards for Functionality and Technical Innovation, was tested with Nestlé pet food in the Netherlands.

It features a generous gap between the can lid and ring-pull tab, allowing the can to be opened more easily by older people, children and the physically impaired.

Impress Metal Packaging triumphed in the Food section with its drawn aluminium 4oz can with Easy Peel lid for



Easylift: tested on pet foods

Daesang's Club luncheon meat. It also won gold for Sustainability for components for lever lid paint cans for general use.

Rexam Beverage Can's aluminium can with registered deboss for Heineken took the Alcoholic Beverages award,

and Roberts Metal Packaging took the Health & Beauty gold for an embossed aluminium box for Lush shampoo bars.

Meanwhile, Crown wants to extend the use of a new paint-packaging concept to Western Europe after a successful launch in Finland.

The Clipper Can system features a plastisol-lined metal lid with easy-grip openings and has been adopted by Finnish paints company Tikkurila.

Didier Sourisseau, vice-president of Crown's Speciality Packaging division, said the company would target the system at new markets, including the UK.

🔗 Visit www.mpma.org.uk

Pay deal settles strikes at Coke

Workers at Coca-Cola's Wakefield and Milton Keynes bottling facilities have finally agreed revised pay deals after months of strikes.

Industrial action began at both sites in June after workers refused to accept the proposed 2.5% pay increase because it fell below the national rate of inflation.

It took until mid-October, and a number of 24-hour stoppages, for a pay settlement to finally be agreed at both Milton Keynes and Wakefield.

Workers at both sites will still receive the proposed 2.5% basic salary increase, but additional value packages have been agreed.

A Coca-Cola Enterprises spokeswoman said: "We are very pleased that the situation has been resolved."