

06.08.2019



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STUDY CONFIRMS CARTONS COMPARE FAVOURABLY WITH REUSABLE GLASS BOTTLES

A state-of-the-art environmental lifecycle assessment (LCA) has confirmed that single-use beverage cartons compare favourably with reusable glass bottles – and outperform single-use PET bottles – across the fresh milk, juice and UHT milk market segments.

The results of the critically reviewed LCA study are based on an in-depth analysis of the German beverage packaging market, with expert review and oversight by the German Federal Environment Agency (UBA).

The conclusions are globally relevant and support the findings of previous critically reviewed LCAs that beverage cartons offer environmental advantages to alternative forms of packaging for liquid dairy and juices.

SIG Chief Executive Officer Rolf Stangl commented: “The latest LCA confirms once again that beverage cartons are the preferred environmental choice for milk and juice packaging. The high proportion of renewable content in single-use beverage cartons puts them on a par even with glass bottles that can be reused multiple times. These results are based on standard beverage cartons that are around 75% renewable and SIG already offers customers innovative products that are linked to up to 100% renewable content.”

Rigorous assessments for informed decision-making

SIG is a member of the German Beverage Carton Association FKN, which commissioned the LCA study to support informed decisions on packaging by food producers, consumers and policymakers based on a robust scientific comparison of environmental impact.

The LCA was conducted by the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research (IFEU) in accordance with the recognised ISO 14040/44 international standards. It is the first study to meet the new requirements stipulated by the German Federal Environment Agency (UBA) for beverage packaging life cycle assessments in Germany.

Benedikt Kauertz, Scientific Director at IFEU said: “IFEU supported the UBA in developing its minimum requirements for LCAs for beverage packaging. The study commissioned by FKN is the first to implement these requirements and adopt such a robust approach. The results show that beverage cartons for milk and juice are advantageous compared with single use PET bottles. For milk, beverage cartons are even better than the reference system, reusable glass bottles, and for juices beverage cartons perform on a par with the reference system. For UHT milk, where no reusable packaging option is available, beverage cartons perform better than the single-use PET bottle alternative.”

Environmental advantages of cartons confirmed

Reusable packaging options, such as glass bottles that are returned to food or beverage producers to be used again, are often assumed to be the best option for the environment. That is why reusable options, where available for a particular market, are used as the reference system for comparison.

Based on an in-depth analysis of all three market segments – fresh milk, juices and UHT milk – the beverage carton performs at least as well, or in the case of fresh milk, even better than reusable glass bottles. The latest study also confirms that both beverage cartons and reusable glass bottles outperform PET bottles for fresh milk, juice and UHT milk. Where no re-usable system is installed, beverage cartons are clearly advantageous.

Cartons perform significantly better than the alternatives on climate change – the category given highest ecological priority by the UBA. The climate impact results for cartons are 78% lower than reusable glass bottles for fresh milk, 37% lower than reusable glass bottles for fruit juices and 71% lower than PET bottles for UHT milk (for which no reusable options are available).

The high proportion of renewable material used to make beverage cartons – 75% on average – contributes to their strong environmental performance, together with their highly efficient design which reduces impacts from transport and distribution. The favourable results are underpinned by the industry's commitment to sourcing from responsibly-managed forests.

LCAs support responsible product innovation

LCA is fundamental to SIG's robust approach to product responsibility and informs the focus of the company's product innovation.

This latest study confirms the important contribution that renewable materials make to the excellent environmental performance of beverage cartons and SIG is working to increase the proportion of renewable content in its packs. SIG's EcoPlus pack is 82% renewable and its SIGNATURE PACK 100 is the only aseptic beverage carton to be linked to 100% forest-based materials, using an innovative mass balance approach.

These innovations are part of SIG's commitment to go Way Beyond Good by putting more into society and the environment than it takes out.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SIG'S JOURNEY WAY BEYOND GOOD:

<https://www.sig.biz/en/responsibility/way-beyond-good>

VIEW THE FULL LCA STUDY FROM FKN (ONLY IN GERMAN):

https://getraenkekarton.de/media/file/251.ifeu_fkn_oekobilanz_2018_final.pdf

About SIG

SIG is a leading systems and solutions provider for aseptic packaging. We work in partnership with our customers to bring food and beverage products to consumers around the world in a safe, sustainable and affordable way. Our unique technology and outstanding innovation capacity enable us to provide our customers with end-to-end solutions for differentiated products, smarter factories and connected packs, all to address the ever-changing needs of consumers.

Founded in 1853, SIG is headquartered in Neuhausen, Switzerland. The skills and experience of our approximately 5,000 employees worldwide enable us to respond quickly and effectively to the needs of our customers in over 60 countries. In 2018, SIG produced more than 35 billion carton packs and generated €1.7 billion in revenue. For more information, visit www.sig.biz.

PICTURE CAPTION:

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Photo: SIG

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