

PACKAGING AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The environment will remain a major issue for the packaging industry.

The key issues are:

- ➔ Reducing the amount of waste at the source – industry or domestic
- ➔ Reducing the amount of waste going to landfill
- ➔ Recycling
 - o how to sort the different materials from each other
 - o what to do with the recovered material



The driving forces are threefold:

- ➔ The consumer,
- ➔ Commercial interests including the complete supply chain (all the companies and organisations involved in making a product)
- ➔ Government legislation.

Supply chain pressures are likely to play a significant role in reducing the environmental impact of packaging. Cost is a major determinant in the selection of packaging by user companies. It defies commercial reality for a company to deliberately package a product with more packaging than is necessary thus increasing cost.

Supermarkets also have a big role. They "sell" shelf space - and shelf space is in great demand. Excessively packaged goods reduce the amount of shelf space available for other goods to be displayed.

The incidence of excessive packaging has never been high. "Excess" packaging increases the cost of the product and increased cost reduces its competitiveness. An analysis of a product quickly reveals that in most cases all the elements perform a task that we the consumers require: a surface for information on the product including its nutrition, safety tamper evidence materials, packaging to protect the product during transportation etc.

There is no one environmental "answer" but, rather, an answer for each product and each type of packaging.

The key issue is getting the environmental issues and economics "right" along a product's complete lifecycle.

