

## **Convenience foods and takeaway culture impacting on aluminium recycling rates**

- aluminium trays and foils dumped worth estimated 3 million euro per annum
- estimated 90 million Aluminium trays dumped each year
- Repak target takeaways in attempt to improve recycling rates of aluminium trays
- Counter reminders send to takeaways throughout the country
- Improving recycling rates of aluminium foils and trays would boost our overall aluminium recycling rates
- Recycling aluminium saves 95% energy versus primary raw materials
- Aluminium can recycling hits circa 50% but Aluminium foils and trays recycling rates are lower

(date) "In Ireland the can recycling rate has steadily increased to an all time high of circa 50%, an impressive improvement n last year. In order to improve these recycling results we will continue to work hard on increasing aluminium beverage can but also other aluminium packaging types. Based on our experiences in toher EU countries particularly Switzerland and Great Britain we know aluminium food trays and foils are collected separately for recycling. recycling. As these aluminium containers are also increasingly being used in Ireland to packa convenience food products collection and recycling of these items will increase our overall aluminium recycling rates." according to Maarten Labberton of European Aluminium Association.

In excess of 90 million aluminium trays are consumed daily in Ireland from takeaways, prepacked meals and confectionary. However, while the can recycling rate is circa 50%, the overall aluminium recycling rate stands at around 30%, this is due to the fact that flexible foils are increasing in use but currently we are not recycling trays and foils as much as we could, despite aluminium being one of the most valuable and most recyclable materials.

In light of this Repak and the EAA have launched a call for takeaway devotees to wash out their takeaway trays and place them in the recycling bin or aluminium Bring Banks. Also they are calling on people to recycle their other aluminium food trays, which are used for tarts, pies etc. In an effort to highlight the need to recycle trays, Repak has distributed counter top recycling reminders to all Chinese, Indian and other takeaways restaurants throughout the country.

"Aluminium cans and foils can be recycled endlessly and new drinks cans could be back on the shelf as quickly as 60 days after they have been collected for recycling. Recycling cans results in a 95% energy saving and it is saves extremely valuable natural resources. Because one tonne of recycled aluminium replaces the production of one tonne of primary metal, thus reducing the carbon footprint substantially."

“Simply washing out and placing your used food trays into the recycling bin or can bank will reduce landfill, use less natural resources and save on waste bills. We are also calling for people to remember other aluminium materials that can be recycled such as tomato puree tubes and aluminium foil and not forgetting the millions of aluminium cans we consume each year.” added Mr. Labberton

Commenting Andrew Hetherington, CEO Repak said “Ireland compares well internationally on our recycling rates for Aluminium cans but not for other aluminium packaging. This year during Repak Recycling Week we are focusing on one material a day to highlight the extra packaging types that people can recycle. Last year we recorded an exceptional packaging recycling rate of approximately 64% but the only way to increase this rate further is to target the items that people have not readily being recycling such as aluminium trays and foils. Frequently people are simply unaware of the wide range of items they could be recycling but we also ask that people see the environmental good that can be achieved by making the extra effort.”

The 7<sup>th</sup> Repak Recycling Week 2007 takes place from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> of October and each day targets a different recyclable material, Monday for Aluminium, Tuesday for Glass, Wednesday for Plastic, Thursday for paper and cardboard and Friday for WEEE. Last year household packaging recycling jumped by an incredible 24% during the period of the campaign. However overall household packaging recycling is still only at approximately 43% compared to commercial packaging recycling rate of over 80%, so an extra effort is needed by households to drive up this rate. During the week recycling will be taken into cyberspace as Repak launch its very own Bebo profile page. The page will have hints and tips on recycling, before and after photos and videos of the Bling my bring bank project, drawing competitions where you can design your own Bring Bank and recycling themed computer games. To accompany this Repak will also be posting videos on Youtube, running a blog and offering podcasts.

For a full list of local recycling centres and for more information on activities during Repak Recycling Week visit [www.repak.ie](http://www.repak.ie)

## Notes to editor

- Recycling uses only 5% of the energy needed to make aluminium from its raw material, bauxite - that's a 95% energy saving
- Aluminium products are infinitely recyclable, so when you get into the recycling habit you really do help save natural resources
- Aluminium's high value means that it makes a big contribution towards the collection costs of multi-material recycling schemes, whether doorstep collections, or steel and aluminium can banks
- The high value also drives charity or community-benefit collections, such as schools collections – we would encourage the donation of your collected cans and foils to community collection schemes thereby providing valuable income to these groups whilst protecting the environment

## **About Repak**

Repak is a not-for-profit voluntary member's based packaging recycling scheme established under a voluntary agreement between industry and the Department of the Environment and Local Government. It was established as industry's response to the obligations placed on Ireland by the EU directive on Packaging Waste (94/62/EC) and is the only government approved packaging compliance scheme under the Waste Management (Packaging) Regulations 1997. Repak succeeded in reaching and exceeding Ireland's EU National Packaging Recovery and Recycling Target of 25% of packaging waste in 2001 and is well on the way to Achieving our 2005 EU packaging recovery target of 50%.

## **About EAA and EAA Packaging group**

European Aluminium Association, founded in 1981, represents the European Aluminium Industry from alumina and primary production to semi finished and end use products, through to recycling.

About 18% of all aluminium goes into packaging products, such as beverage cans, food and aerosol cans, menu trays and other foil products such as wrappings, and bin and flexible foil applications.

The EAA packaging group represents the main producers of aluminium and can foil sheet and promotes the use and recycling of aluminium packaging throughout Europe, by working closely together with National packaging and recovery/recycling organisations, customer groups and other key stakeholders, such as Local Authorities, NGO's and consumer groups. The European Aluminium Industry directly employs 236,000 people.

Aluminum is all around us. It is light and strong, corrosion resistant and durable, formable, and highly conductive, it has natural shine and is fully recyclable. Aluminum provides intelligent solutions for present and future generations.