

## **New Initiative to Assist Irish industry 'design out' over-Packaging Launched by Repak.**

- **First Irish Packaging Prevention course launched by Repak**
- **Repak initiatives seek to design out packaging growth over the next number of years**
- **Every 1% of packaging prevented would reduce packaging waste by c10,000 tonnes.**
- **Voluntary packaging reduction agreement with Irish Retail to be announced as part of Repak Packaging Prevention Program**

With increased consumer concern about the volumes of packaging, recycling producer responsibility scheme, Repak has launched a major training initiative to help Irish industry 'design out' over-packaging on products. The nationwide training programme, which is the first of its kind, was developed in conjunction with FAS and RPS.

The course development was funded by Repak and the EPA as part of their packaging prevention programme. This initiative follows a series of earlier initiatives designed to reduce the amount of packaging generated with future plans to develop a voluntary packaging agreement for the Irish retail sector. This agreement will introduce a commitment by the sector to reduce packaging to agreed levels.

The first Packaging Optimisation training programme took place in the Mullingar Park Hotel today and was attended by representatives from the food and drink industries, major retailer chains, packaging producers and wholesalers. The course aims to create awareness and knowledge of packaging waste prevention and enable companies to identify and implement their own packaging optimisation initiatives. Some of the areas that will be explored include light-weighting of materials, alternative packaging solutions and use of replacement materials.

The FETAC Level 6 accredited course is run over 3 modules of 2 days each, and covers Packaging Waste Legislation & Policy, Supply Chain Analysis & Prevention, Impact Analysis; Economic and Environmental Impacts and Organisational Implementation. The course also includes best practice site visits, interactive sessions, comprehensive case studies, video clips and practical exercises. Twenty two participants from a wide spectrum of industry covering the major retailers, large food and drink suppliers, high tech companies as well as other producers along the supply chain attended the inaugural course on the 27<sup>th</sup> May.

Commenting on the course Dr. Andrew Hetherington, CEO Repak said "While recycling rates are on target at 60% emphasis must now go on prevention and minimisation of packaging. There is no easy solution to this growing issue as packaging is an essential requirement in product protection, with food wastage and food safety a major

consideration. However packaging design is a major consideration and we are helping to equip Irish industry with the tools to pro actively manage this challenge. This is one initiative within our Repak packaging prevention program. To help drive additional change in the UK the government funded WRAP program and the innovation fund was specifically targeted to design out packaging growth."

Repak and the EPA under their packaging prevention program are looking to design out packaging growth and to see if packaging growth can be decoupled from economic and social economic drivers over the coming years. Every 1% of packaging prevented will result in the equivalent of 10,000 tonnes reduction in total waste arisings.

"Whilst packaging waste is a highly visible waste with a recycling rate close to 60% it is more under control than other waste streams such as bio waste. Yet as waste growth and packaging recycling rates continue to grow the time is ripe for us to focus on prevention/optimization.", commented Andrew Hetherington,

The Packaging Optimisation Training Programme builds on the successes already achieved through a nationwide seminar series, a best practice website [www.preventandsave.ie](http://www.preventandsave.ie), a household carbon calculator [www.repak.ie](http://www.repak.ie) and an annual packaging design awards.

Repak will be following this initiative with further projects and is currently working with Retail Ireland with the aim of delivering a voluntary packaging agreement for the Irish retail sector. Most leading retailers are currently on board with this initiative which is currently under negotiation with the key retail players in the Irish market. Repak will seek to expand this initiative to include other sectors to help reduce packaging volumes in the future.

The programme initiated by Repak supported by the EPA was developed by RPS consulting and FAS and will run throughout 2008. Going forward this FETAC accredited course will be run by FAS. Those seeking to enrol on the course should contact Colm Munnely of Repak on 01 4670190.

## **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 also achieved and exceed

Ireland's 2005 EU packaging recovery target of 50%, having achieved a packaging recycling rate of 56% in 2004 according to the EPA 2004 database.

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