

Paper Cup Recovery & Recycling Group report critical first learnings

The Paper Cup Recovery & Recycling Group (PCRRG) has announced its first major findings in the recovery and recycling of the fibre content of paper cups. The group is also greatly encouraged with its progress in the initial stages of its work with paper mills and collection services. During the trial process the group has identified that to maximise the recycling potential of this high quality fibre it is critical that post consumer contamination is minimised. Contamination is the inclusion of residual food stuff and other waste, such as foil wrappers and stirrers, with the paper cups.

The group, working with UK paper mills and waste management companies, including Save-A-Cup, has identified that a contamination of around 10% (by weight) is the maximum that is reasonably acceptable and therefore achieving below this level should become a clear target for the group and those involved in the recovery and recycling chain.

In some recovery trials initial contamination levels have been as high as 25% (by weight). High levels of contamination can lead to rapid deterioration in the fibre quality contained in paper cups resulting in material rejection and, as a consequence, alternative disposal routes that are less desirable than recycling, at best being energy from waste recovery or worse land fill.

The key message from the group is that it is extremely important to educate the consumer to separate as much liquid and other waste from the cups at the point of collection. As consumers become more accustomed to segregating waste the situation can only improve; indeed with education and clear instructions trial sites have been able to minimise contamination levels to an acceptable level.

The PCRRG has been formed with the objective of identifying ongoing sustainable routes for the recovery and subsequent recycling of paper cups and similar products. The Group is currently made up of members from the vending and hospitality industry and consists of representatives from paper cup manufacturers, board manufacturers, beverage suppliers, the Save a Cup Company and vending & catering operators. Current members include: Costa Coffee, F.Bender Limited, Huhtamaki (UK), Kraft Foods UK Ltd (owners of the Kenco brand), Ltd, Mars Drinks (owners of the Flavia and Klix brands), Maxabel International, Nestle (UK) Ltd, Sodexo, Solo Cup Europe, Stora Enso (UK) Ltd, The Paper Cup Company and Walki Ltd.

The Group is co-ordinated and independently advised by the Fibre Technology Association and the Group's activities have been endorsed by the **Automatic Vending Association (AVA)**, the **Foodservices Packaging Association** and the **Beverage Service Association**.

Any companies interested in joining this exciting initiative should contact:

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