

Green Dot Norway Reports Plastic Packaging And Drink Carton Recycling Up In 2012

Green Dot Norway released 2012 waste packaging collection data earlier this month. The percentage of plastic packaging recycled rose to 41.7 percent - a 2.9 percent increase. In addition, another 52.4 percent of packaging was recovered as energy.

Drink carton recycling rose to 56.3 percent - a 2.6 percent increase. Another 35.8 percent of drink cartons were recovered as energy.

Data on other types of Norwegian Green Dot packaging was published. Get more information at <http://www.grontpunkt.no/selskapet/rappporter-og-resultater>.

Spain Recycled 4,512 Tons Of Glass Containers In 2012

On Friday, Eco Vidrio, a Spanish nonprofit organization that manages glass container recycling, reported that 4,512 tons of glass packaging was recycled last year, a small increase from 2011. The per capita rate rose nominally to 14.5 kg from 14.4 kg in 2011. The organization noted that consumption of glass containers also fell last year by 4.2 percent due to a slow economy.

According to Eco Vidrio, the glass recycling effort last year saved Spain 819,906 tons of raw materials and 1,031,715 MWh of energy while eliminating 275 352 tons in CO₂ emissions.

Get more information from Eco Vidrio at <http://www.ecovidrio.es/noticiasdetalle.aspx?id=661>.

French Government Agency Publishes Consumer Guide To Understanding Ecolabels

On Monday, the French Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME) published a 21-page consumer guide that illustrates 50 common ecolabels and environmental logos likely to be found on products sold in France and what the ecolabels and logos mean, particularly in regard to product life cycles.

Among the ecolabels and logos featured are the EU Flower, the French NF Environnement, the German Blue Angel, the Nordic Swan, as well as the Forest Stewardship Council, Rainforest Alliance, EnergyStar and EPEAT logos to name a few.

Download a copy of the guide at http://ecocitoyens.ademe.fr/sites/default/files/guide_ademe_logos_environmentaux_produits.pdf.

GreenBlue Institute Publishes Guidelines For Sustainable Paper Products

Today, the US-based GreenBlue Institute released 17-pages of guidelines for sustainable paper products, developed by the Institute and its Forest Products Working Group. According to GreenBlue, companies in the paper products industry often to not share "*a common definition or language for discussing sustainability*", and the guidelines seek to remedy that problem.

The guidelines encourage industry members to do the following: 1) design for the life cycle, 2) source responsibly, 3) ensure material health, 4) optimize renewable energy, 5) embrace transparency, 6) use clean production technologies and best practices, 7) effectively recover and utilize, and 8) create social and economic value. The guidelines include several questions for readers to consider after each of the eight recommendations.

Download the sustainable paper products guidelines at http://gb.assets.s3.amazonaws.com/files/forestProducts/FPWG_Guidelines.pdf.

Floods Pose Special Problem For Household Hazardous Waste Storage, Says MPCA

Last week, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) advised home and business owners in the state to "*move or dispose of products that could become hazardous wastes from flood-prone basements, workshops, garages and other areas.*" Flooding caused by unusually heavy rains is a problem in Minnesota and some other midwestern states this season.

MCPA also advised residents and businesses to store food and drinking water separately from HHW. "*It's also a good idea to move canned goods and other foodstuffs so they will be out of harm's way. Household products and food containers that come in contact with floodwater are assumed to be contaminated and will have to be thrown away.*"

The MCPA offers a web page on household hazardous waste and flooding at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php/waste/waste-and-cleanup/cleanup/emergency-response/flooding/floods-minimizing-pollution-and-health-risks.html>.

US DOE Funds Pilot Project To Convert Municipal Solid Waste To Military Biofuel

On Monday, the US Department of Energy announced it will provide about \$18 million in funding to "*test renewable biofuels as a domestic alternative to power our cars, trucks, and planes that meet military specifications for jet fuel and shipboard diesel.*"

Four projects will receive funding including up to \$4.2 million to Frontline Bioenergy LLC in Ames, Iowa. The firm will produce biofuel from "*woody biomass, municipal solid waste and refuse derived fuel at the Iowa Energy Center's Biomass Energy Conversion Facility in Nevada, Iowa.*"

The DOE announcement is posted at <http://energy.gov/articles/energy-department-announces-new-innovative-projects-develop-advanced-drop-biofuels-military>.

Brazilian Packaging Institute Teams With Environmental Ministry To Teach Green Packaging Design

This week, the Brazilian Ministry of Environment is partnering with the Brazilian Institute of Packaging to present a three-day program to teach engineers, technicians, designers, buyers, logistics professionals, marketers the basics of designing environmentally-friendly packaging.

According to the Institute of Packaging, packaging should be designed to facilitate three post-consumer steps: 1) the separation of recyclable and non-recyclable materials, 2) the further separation of types of recyclable materials, and 3) reuse of the recycled material.

The Institute of Packaging also said designs should minimize separate packaging elements. For example, a tube of toothpaste or other squeezable consumer materials could use an attached flip cap made of the same material rather than an individual screw cap, especially one made of a different material.

More information on the program is available at

<http://www.brasil.gov.br/noticias/arquivos/2013/04/23/curso-de-embalagens-ajuda-a-minimizar-impactos-ambientais-e-incentiva-producao-sustentavel>

Swedish Recycling Industries Association Calls For Scrap Metal Theft Prevention Law

Last week, the Swedish Recycling Industries' Association (Atervinningsindustrins) called on the Swedish Parliament to enact a law to deter the theft and scale of scrap copper, saying that a voluntary standard supported by the Minister for Infrastructure will not be effective.

"Our trade association introduced a voluntary ban on cash payments in 2008," said Britt Sahlestrom, Atervinningsindustrins President. "But there are numerous companies in the industry that do not belong to any trade association and therefore not subject to the voluntary commitment."

Sahlestrom also pointed out that the United Kingdom and France both enacted bans on cash payments for scrap metals and that Sweden would *"level the playing field"* by enacting a similar law.

The Swedish Recycling Industries' Association communique is posted at

<http://www.recycling.se/Templates/News1.aspx?PageID=c672b5ce-2d01-4c9b-962f-47bdaaed9840>.

Staples Awarded e-Steward Certification

Among the many environment announcements on Earth Day, the Basel Action Network (BAN) announced that Staples has been certified as an e-Steward. The office products retail giant will collect waste electronics at its more than 1,500 US stores and recycle them using certified e-Steward recycling firms.

"Thanks to Staples leadership in committing to use e-Stewards Recyclers, consumers now have many more convenient drop-off locations to ensure their old cell phone or computer will be recycled in the most responsible way," said Jim Puckett, Executive Director of BAN, which is responsible for creating the e-Steward certification program.

The end-of-life products to be collected at Staples include desktop computers, laptops, tablets, eReaders, monitors, desktop printers, copiers, scanners, faxes, all-in-ones, shredders, UPS/battery backup devices, peripherals including mice, keyboards, modems, routers and PC speakers, small electronics including GPS devices, digital cameras, MP3 players, mobile phones and cordless phones, external hard drives and small servers.

More information is available at <http://www.raymond.com/www.e-stewards.org/>.

The Green Perspective

German Environmental Group Calls For Zero Plastic Marine Litter By 2035

Earlier this month in Berlin at the International Conference on Marine Litter, the German chapter of Friends of the Earth (BUND) called for a German tax on plastic bags and asked the German environmental minister and the EU environment commissioner to set goals to reduce plastic litter in the Baltic and North Seas by 50 percent by 2020 and to achieve zero plastic marine litter by 2035.

BUND is the second German environmental organization calling for a plastic bag tax. The **Bulletin** reported last week that Deutschen Umwelthilfe e.V. called on the German Parliament to enact a tax on single-use bags.

The BUND announcement can be reviewed at <http://www.bund.net/nc/presse/pressemitteilungen/detail/artikel/muelleintrag-in-nord-und-ostsee-stoppen-besseres-recycling-und-reduzierung-von-einweg-plastikprodu/>.

Danish Information Center Advises Against Food Packaging With Perfluorinated Chemicals

Last Friday, the Danish Information Center for Environment and Health advised consumers to avoid food packaging containing perfluorinated chemicals, which the Information Center said could be endocrine disruptive, affect the human immune system, make vaccinations less effective and decrease male fertility, among other risks.

In particular, the Information Center advised consumers to void eating microwave popcorn, food packaged in chemically treated cardboard and paper boxes, and reheated takeout food still in its paper wrapping. The agency also recommended purchasing only eco-labeled food and baking paper, and it provided a link to other food packaging recommendations.

The Information Center For Environment and Health announcement is posted at <http://www.forbrugerkemi.dk/fokus/fluorstoffer-i-fokus>.

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