



American Forest & Paper Association

Recycling Paper-based Foodservice Packaging

The industry is working to better understand how recovered fiber containing paper-based foodservice packaging (FSP) is being used to make new paper-based products.

In September 2018, AF&PA published its FSP Recyclability Assessment Report, documenting the industry's ability to use FSP in manufacturing new paper and paper-based packaging.

For the purposes of this project, the working definition of "FSP" is based on the set of products originally identified when AF&PA's FSP recyclability work began in 2014:

- Bags: Kraft paper bags (brown or white)
- Paperboard (can be poly-coated 2-sided, poly-coated 1-sided, clay coated or uncoated):
 - Corrugated cardboard: unbleached brown boxes with a wavy inner layer; clamshell sandwich boxes; hot cup sleeves; take-out containers; pizza boxes.
 - Unbleached and recycled paperboard: take out/delivery boxes; clamshell sandwich boxes; popcorn boxes; beverage carriers and cartons; bakery and confection boxes.
 - Bleached paperboard: take out boxes; bakery and confection boxes; hot and cold cups; milk and juice cartons; drink boxes; frozen food boxes.
- Molded fiber cup carriers

Research conducted in 2018 by AF&PA identified how members are using the FSP-containing fiber, what challenges it can present and how they anticipate their use changing in the future.

FSP is being repulped into fiber that is being used in AF&PA-member mills to make a number of products. The fiber is most likely to be used in:

- Recycled linerboard and corrugating medium
- Recycled paperboard
- Tissue (away from home)

Mills source FSP-containing fiber in various ways: more than half do not actively source it; nearly one-third actively source it; and fewer than one-quarter source it for use in mill trials only.

Some mills reporting that they do not actively source FSP-containing fiber know it is in the bales they use – predominately Mixed Paper and Old Corrugated Containers – and they are able to get some usable fiber from it. Other mills that do not actively source the fiber receive it in bales and find it is not a source of usable fiber as it gets screened out in the repulping process.

The mills that do actively source FSP-containing fiber use Sorted Office Paper, Cartons/Aseptic Packaging and converting scrap to make:

- Freesheet paper
- Tissue
- Deinked Market Pulp

Members recognize the operational and sustainability related opportunities of FSP-containing fiber as a viable additional raw material source.

Looking ahead, members see innovations in mill pulping processes and new on-product moisture barrier coatings as ways to enable increased use of FSP-containing fiber in the future.

5/7/19