Increasing Plastics Foodservice Packaging Recovery: 
Our Story

November 6, 2014

NERC’s 2014 Fall Conference
About the Author: FPI

- Established in 1933
- Only industry trade association in North America solely focused on all single-use foodservice packaging products
- Members include:
  - Converters and their raw material and machinery suppliers (represents about 85% of the industry);
  - Foodservice distributors and operators
About the Subject: FSP

- Includes a wide variety of products, made from a variety of materials, used in a variety of places

- A small part of the overall waste stream but a very visible part of today’s society
  - Less than 2% of MSW (according to EPA)
  - ~5% of total litter, but ~20% of “visible” litter (according to KAB)
Acknowledged that most FSP was not being recovered after use for a variety of reasons...

- Limited infrastructure and end markets
- Real and perceived barriers
- Cost of recovery versus value of recovered material
- Consumer perceptions of, engagement with and access to foodservice packaging recovery

Greater interest in “sustainability” and recovery

Increased legislative pressures on packaging
The Plot

- Work collaboratively to create solutions for the recovery and processing of used foodservice packaging
- Show that voluntary, industry-based recovery initiatives work...and that new government-mandated solutions are not needed

...All under FPI’s Paper Recovery Alliance (PRA) and Plastics Recovery Group (PRG)
PRA & PRG Member Companies
The Outline

What is FSP? And how much is there?

It won’t flow through a MRF properly.

Oh, that’s too dirty.

There are no end markets.

Not interested in adding new materials.

It’s not recyclable.
Total: ~5.5 million tons in U.S.
Question: How does FSP collected at curbside compare to other commonly recycled food contact packaging?

Answer:

- 2013 study in Boston: No appreciable difference in the amount of residue on FSP and food contact packaging (but samples were exceptionally clean)
- 2014 study in Delaware: FSP had only marginally more residue than other food contact packaging (but samples were exceptionally dirty)

BUT: Understand that increased food contamination is issue for all packaging
Question: Does FSP flow in a MRF to appropriate bales?

Answer: 2013-2014 MRF study

- Project Sponsors: ACC, APR, Carton Council, FPI, NAPCOR
- Project Partners: RRS, Reclay StewardEdge, Moore Recycling
- Target: 5 MRFs with range of sizes, geography, input and sorting technologies
- Results: Coming soon!
Question: Are there end markets for recovered FSP materials?

Answer: Yes!
- Researched potential markets
- Determined impacts on existing bales
Ch. 4: End Markets (con’t)

Adding FSP to PET Bottle Bale*
- Beverage Cups - PET
- Food Containers - PET
- Current

Adding FSP to Mixed Plastics Bale*
- Beverage Cups - PS (Rigid)
- Beverage Cups - PP
- Food Containers - PP
- Food Containers - PET
- Food Containers - PS (Rigid)
- Current

*at 10% recovery rate
Question: Is there interest in accepting new materials?

Answer: Let’s hope so!

- Reality is that new, valuable materials are entering the recycling stream
- Helps public officials reach environmental goals
- Helps with changing waste stream and increase supply for MRFs and end markets
- Growing interest in and use of recycled materials
- Makes good business sense, if done responsibly
**Question:** Is FSP recyclable?

**Answer:** 2013 Benchmarking Study of nearly 70 MRFs in U.S. and Canada

- FSP is recycled in numerous communities
- Many cities collect some FSP materials, even if they do not promote this to their residents
- On average, the MRFs in the study accepted 7 of the 19 FSP types
  - Cup sleeves, pizza boxes and paper carryout bags were most widely accepted FSP items, followed by rigid plastic FSP items
Epilogue: FRC

- October 2014: Foam Recycling Coalition launched to address recovery needs specific to foam FSP
- Conducted study on end markets for recycled EPS (Yes, there are markets!)
- Establishing grant award for public and private entities in early 2015 to recycle EPS in residential curbside programs
The Library

- [www.fpi.org/stewardship](http://www.fpi.org/stewardship) - information on the PRA, PRG and FRC, overviews of reports, webinars
- [www.fpi.org/recovery](http://www.fpi.org/recovery) - Foodservice Packaging Recovery Toolkit, including specific resources for communities, material recovery facilities and end markets