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## INDUSTRY INSIGHT: INNOVATIVE PACKAGING IN THE DAIRY INDUSTRY



Innovative packaging can actively support trends in the dairy industry by creating solutions that address both what the consumer wants and what the planet needs.

With the strict European Directive for Single Use Plastics coming alongside increasing demand for convenient formats and individual serving sizes, brands are working closely with manufacturers to develop and produce packaging that ticks all the boxes.

The European Commission predicted a 0.6% growth in the 2019 dairy industry, yet this has been exceeded by nearly 3%, with the organic and specialised dairy products categories seeing strongest growth. In Eastern Europe in particular, dairy has seen growing consumption across the sector.

By working closely with multinational customers throughout the food and beverage industry, global PET and rPET packaging manufacturer RETAL has identified four core trends in the dairy industry.

Key Account Manager Olga Rovenskaya said: "RETAL has been a packaging partner to Danone for many years across Europe and Russia; Danone has chosen RETAL to deliver a solution that meets the growing trend for one-time use products, characterised by a decrease in the volume in the package. We've created a 270ml PET container for yoghurt instead of the previous 290ml that makes it ideal for on-the-go consumption, particularly with the growing demand for higher protein. As PET is the most easily recyclable plastic in standard collections, it is both responsible and practical."

Ms Rovenskaya is also active in identifying the crucial role of shelf differentiation in the dairy sector, particularly for brand-lead products in a crowded market. This type of demographic orientated dairy or dairy-alternative brand development leads into the third trend currently driving RETAL's portfolio. Plant-based drinks are growing rapidly as consumers look to reduce their consumption of animal products, because of a lactose intolerance or personal preference. She noted: "We're seeing a number of exciting on-shelf differentiators for dairy products, both from traditional products keen to highlight their heritage through packaging storytelling and newer plant-based dairy alternatives that are growing in both the on-the-go and at-home sectors."

RETAL Key Account Manager Nedko Nedev explained: "Dairy producers are keen to offer consumers products that match their changing tastes and needs in order to maintain and increase consumption through a new category. The packaging needs to reflect these changing tastes too; the size of the package, the convenience of the format, and the sustainability of the material all comes into play. We create tailor-made solutions from concept to prototyping to production, with preforms from 100ml right up to 2 litres, addressing key technical issues like shelf life and freshness for dairy products with aseptic lines."

With the clear trend for transitioning from HDPE to PET packaging is the fourth influence in the RETAL portfolio for the dairy industry. PET is light weight, offers superior functionality and endless design capabilities, as well as being faster to fill, easier to recycle, and competitively priced. Over 20 years' expertise in developing more sustainable, easily-recyclable PET packaging and up to 100% rPET solutions, means RETAL is well-versed in collaborative partnerships that successfully navigate the specific demands of this dynamic sector.



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