

The packages will initially be launched in the combiblocMini portion-sized format before being extended to other sizes. It is suitable for both oxygen-insensitive products such as plain white UHT milk and sensitive products like fruit juices, flavoured milk or plant-based beverages.

Cheese

With brand owners keen to use light-weight packaging without compromising on barrier properties, packaging products that understand the relationship between the materials used in top and bottom films can help reduce time to market and improve shelf life.

Barrier films with EVOH and PE layers are a popular packaging solution for cheese and offer a suitable atmosphere inside the product, keeping it fresh and guarding against unwanted moisture that can damage the product. However, these materials together can be considered excessive for cheese packaging, most notably because PE layers make them hard to recycle in standard collections.

Retal Baltic Films offers a mono APET solution for dairy packaging, which is useful for cheese applications as it is both lighter in weight than EVOH and PE layered packaging, saving on transportation costs, but can also be easily recycled in standard collections.

Violeta Rusecka, sales manager for Retal Baltic Films, explains, "Mono structures with APET suit cheese packaging; we are already seeing demand for this product across dairy and food applications and, to successfully accommodate

this, we have established a dedicated business unit. We have experience in rigid film production, our flexible films capabilities complement this and including top lidding films in our portfolio allows us to offer a wider solution to our customers across Europe. We're focused on converting flexible packaging; we're producing top lidding films for APET trays and other flexible solutions such as VFFS, HFFS, sachets and pillow bags. We offer roll to roll printing, with possibilities to process the material further."

The growing trend for the use of mono films in the dairy industry is driven by CSR regulations as well as performance, with the ease with which materials can be recycled sitting next to the barrier properties. Rusecka continues, "The down-gauging of the packaging weight instantly saves packaging costs and, later, plastic import taxes. Mono materials are a way to support sustainability goals across the whole supply chain. We're also working on barrier mono APET solutions with top lidding films and tray-to-tray solutions; the goal is to help our customers to achieve a circular economy by closing the loop of their product packaging."

Retal Baltic Films is currently supplying its mono APET films to customers in the cheese packaging sector in Norway, Germany and Poland, with its annual capacity of 25,000 tons seeing upgrades in capacity during 2022. The company's mono APET films can be sealed with mono BOPET lidding film when packaging the product, making them fully recyclable as they are the same viscosity, and both are mono materials.

Rusecka concludes, "Our form-fill-seal testing line means we can test the performance of the top and bottom films before they get to customers' production lines, so the peace of mind in using sustainable solutions like mono APET for dairy products that can be easily recycled is assured, as the two materials work well together."

Better for butter

Packaging supplier Wipak UK for its part is launching a recyclable paper wrap for butter, for recycling at kerbside in the British paper waste stream. It offers a 68 per cent carbon footprint reduction versus standard wraps (aluminium/low-density polyethylene/paper laminate).



Wipak

Made from renewable, FSC-certified paper, the decorative butter wrap is aluminium-free and covered in advanced, ultra-thin natural coatings, which have excellent oxygen and water vapour barrier properties compared to standard paper, as well as superior grease resistance.

"Most butter wraps in the UK market are made of parchment paper or a grease-resistant paper that is commonly made into composite laminates with aluminum and polyethylene," explains Wipak UK's technical development manager, Keith Gater. "Although made from renewable resources, coated parchment papers do not promote a circular economy as they're not easily recyclable."

"Unlike existing butter wraps, which are complex material structures, our consumer-friendly paper solution is fully recyclable in the kerbside paper and cardboard waste stream once it has been cleaned. What's more, it maintains the look and feel of a traditional butter wrap, can be printed with brand imagery, and runs on existing butter wrap machinery."

Having successfully passed shelf-life trials following packing on automated wrapping lines, Wipak UK's recyclable butter wrap has also scored an A+ rating in recycling tests (CEPI's recyclability laboratory test method version 1), carried out by the BioComposites Centre at Bangor University in the UK. "This classification is the highest possible score that can be achieved for paper recycling efficiency, whereby the pulp recovery must be a minimum of 98.5 per cent," continues Gater. "Our wrap is also compliant with UK-set guidelines for claiming paper recyclability, which require a minimum paper content of 85 per cent."

The butter wrap is one of several new development projects using Wipak UK's new combi laminator, part of a recent machinery upgrade. "With growing pressure from consumers, brands and retailers need to take action, with sustainable packaging solutions that challenge traditional methods," Gater says. [DfI](#)

