

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

REUSABLE PACKAGING

EPA Region 9 provided a grant to StopWaste.Org, Alameda County's Waste Management Authority, to help companies integrate reusable packaging into their product supply chains.

What is reusable transport packaging?

Reusable transport packaging replaces one-time pallets and boxes with more durable, reusable containers such as totes and bins, reusable pallets, and pallet/container rental systems.

Why is this issue important?

- In 2008, containers and packaging made up the largest portion of MSW generated: 31 percent, or about 77 million tons.
- On average, reusables require **39% less** total energy, produce **95% less** total solid waste, and generate **29% less** total greenhouse gas emissions than the corrugated packaging.

CASE STUDY

Ghirardelli Chocolate uses reusable packaging to avoid landfilling and cut costs.

Realizing that cardboard boxes become contaminated with food waste and could not be recycled, Ghirardelli began replacing cardboard boxes used to store food products during the manufacturing process with reusable totes.

As a result, Ghirardelli avoided landfilling 19 tons of cardboard boxes every month.

Not satisfied to stop there, in 2007 Ghirardelli Chocolate identified and implemented a second in-plant opportunity to utilize more totes, **resulting in an additional 2.7 tons per month of cardboard waste prevention.**

Based on a five year life of the reusable totes, Ghirardelli could save \$1.95 Million in packaging and disposal costs.



Grant results

- 6 companies have implemented reusable packaging
- 11 companies have made progress towards implementing reusable packaging
- The Use Reusables website receives almost 1,000 views/ month
- 293 people from 175 organizations have participated in 9 informational workshops



Benefits of reusable transport packaging

- Reduced waste management costs
- Lower labor costs
- Better product protection
- Lower packaging materials costs over time
- Better ergonomics for employees
- Improved worker safety
- Longer useful life of packaging
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions

PRESS COVERAGE

"Go Green, Save Green: Eco-conscious shipping containers allow businesses to realize serious behind-the-scenes savings." East Bay Express, February 24, 2010

"Reusability proves a profitable supply chain logistics solution" www.GreenerPackage.com, February 22, 2010

"Workshop Touts Benefits of Reusable Packaging for Drinks, Produce and More" GreenerDesign, May 14, 2009

"Reusable transport packaging comes of age" Packaging World Magazine, December, 2008

"Interested in reusable containers? Not sure if it makes sense economically?" Triple Pundit, October 1, 2008

"From Sports Drinks to Tractors, Reusable Packaging Nets Numerous Savings" GreenBiz.com, September 26, 2008

"Green Supply Chain: Thinking Outside the (Cardboard) Box" GreenBiz.com and Greener Design.com, September 25, 2008

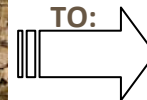
"`Outside the box' saves money" Oakland Tribune, September 26, 2008



Taking a Closer Look

An unintended, but positive outcome of this grant was realized when companies examined their supply chain. Some companies discovered new efficiencies within the chain that became new opportunities to cut costs, conserve resources and improve environmental and economic performance. Starting a dialogue with vendors and suppliers about how to integrate reusable packing can lead to more comprehensive action or market shift at multiple stages along the supply chain.

FROM:



TO:



RESOURCES

Cost comparison calculator – allows companies to determine if reusable transport packaging will add profit to their company's bottom line.

<http://usereusables.com/cost/cctool.html>

Life Cycle Inventory of reusable plastic containers - a "cradle to grave" analysis conducted by Franklin Associates focuses on the energy, solid wastes, and atmospheric and waterborne emissions associated with reusable plastic containers and one-way containers used for shipping fresh produce.

Lists of vendors and suppliers of reusable packaging
<http://usereusables.com/resources/index.html>