

ECMA response to the consultation on Food waste reduction targets

ECMA – the European Carton Makers Association – is the voice of the European cartonboard and folding carton industry. Folding cartons play an essential role in packaging food and non-food items ensuring the highest standards of product security, hygiene, and waste prevention.

Well designed, responsibly sourced, efficiently produced, low-carbon folding carton packaging that is appropriately used and effectively recycled provides multiple benefits – it minimises damage to products, extends their useful life, facilitates efficient distribution, and gives safe and convenient access to goods.

We would like to see the positive contribution folding cartons and the wider packaging sector makes to reducing food waste included in the road map document; indeed, we are disappointed the only reference to packaging in the road map document is to identify the increased use of packaging to reduce food waste as a potential negative impact of a food waste reduction strategy.

Studies have demonstrated the contribution packaging makes to reducing food waste...in developing countries, the lack of packaging or inadequate packaging in the distribution sector causes 30% to 50% of all food to decay before it reaches the consumer. In "packaging-oriented" countries, the amount of food that deteriorates is "only" 3%. It should be noted that packaging generally represents only 3–3.5% of the carbon footprint of a food or beverage product, while 80% is caused by growing and preparing the food and 7.5% by transport – therefore the environmental benefit of reduced food waste is significantly higher than the environmental burden of the packaging.

We would ask that EU policymakers fully recognise that packaging is **an asset to reducing food waste**. Policymakers should facilitate dialogue and collaboration across the entire value chain to ensure food waste is minimised.

About the European Carton Makers Association

ECMA brings together folding carton converters, cartonboard mills, national associations, and suppliers to the folding carton industry. ECMA represents over 500 carton producers with a current workforce of 50,000+ located across nearly all countries in the European Economic Area – this equates to over 80% of the €13 bill European folding carton market.