



HOUWELING GROUP TAKES CONTROL OF ITS PRODUCTION

PCR PACKAGING FROM OWN FACTORY

READING TIME
4 minutes

WHO SPEAKS?
Marc Houweling,
Fred van Beek and
Dennis Jongmans
from Houweling
Group, Gertjan van
Driel from EMM,
Arthur Kalkman
from Koppert

**WHY READ THIS
ARTICLE?**
With the start of its
own factory for
packaging made
from PCR plastic,
Houweling Group
goes further in the
chain. And two
customers speak
about their
sustainability
projects

Houweling Group is taking an extra step in circular packaging. With the setting up of Plastics United, the company is able to produce its own PCR packaging. Customers such as Koppert and EMM make grateful use of the knowledge, services and wide range of rPP and rHDPE packaging from the supplier from Bleiswijk.

TEXT Harry van Deursen

"If you cannot divide, you also can't multiply," is displayed in large letters in the Designlab of Houweling Group. It is a memorable statement from DGA Marc Houweling who after many years of management has now been owner of the family concern for the last six years. He refers here to the importance of collaboration and sharing knowledge in the chain. 'Circular packaging is not something you do alone. Companies have to feel the necessity and have to invest if they are to come to a circular solution. We have to do it together.'

Partnerships

Houweling Group's wish to collaborate and to look for partnerships can be seen, for instance, from the newly set-up packaging producer Plastics United. In the Houweling premises in Bleiswijk, a factory has been set up especially for the production of packaging from Post Consumer and Post Industrial Recycled plastic (PCR and PIR). 'We are now less dependent on external producers,' says commercial director Fred van Beek. 'With your own factory, you have more possibilities to test.

We have, for example, produced a jerrycan with a level line that is made completely from recycled plastic. And the cap is made from rHDPE.' 'It is actually a sustainable factory with solar panels and 100% electric machines. The machines run on green electricity, residual heat is used for heating our new office and we make products from 100% recycled plastic. And because we produce at our own site and do not import from abroad, we have fewer transport movements and so reduce our CO₂ emissions.'

The Houweling Group team working on sustainable solutions. From left to right: Johan van Vulpen (manager purchasing), Frank Houweling (key account manager export), Onno Verhaegen (back office manager), Fred van Beek (commercial director), Inger Spee (marketing & communication) and Dennis Jongmans (business development manager).

Recycling buckets

A customer who has been making use of the circular products and services of Houweling Group is Koppert Biological Systems. The company produces sustainable solutions for the cultivation of edible and decorative crops. For its chrysanthemum cultivation it uses predatory mites to provide a natural method of combating insects called thrips that can damage the plant. Koppert packs these pest control agents in plastic buckets. The farmers disposed of the buckets with their commercial waste, which was costly and did not provide a sustainable solution. Koppert and Houweling Group have therefore set up a pilot project for collecting and recycling these buckets.

'These buckets formed a large amount of waste for the farmers,' says decorative plants consultant Arthur Kalkman. 'Removal via the industrial waste costs money. At present, plastic is the best material for our product in connection with conditioning.

The collection and recycling of the buckets is the most obvious way of minimising the flow of waste.' Houweling Group has placed containers at the farmers in which they can store their empty buckets. Hundreds of nestable buckets and lids can be stacked inside them. The packaging supplier collects the full containers, replacing them with an empty one. Arthur Kalkman is very happy about the collaboration and expects the pilot to be extended to more farmers in the Netherlands. 'It is a service we provide aimed at the quality of our product while at the same time contributing to the process of becoming more green.'

rHDPE jerrycans

The recycled packaging of Houweling Group is also finding its way to the chemical industry. EMM International for example, uses jerrycans made from rHDPE plastic.

'Collecting and recycling is the most logical way to go about things'

The company fills these buckets with tacky coatings for companies that process paints. These water-based tacky coatings ensure that in the spraying cabins the dust and spray mist stick to the walls and not on the objects.

UN-approved rHDPE cans

Another project within Houweling Group is the development of UN-approved recycled plastic packaging. Together with the Belgian Packaging Institute (IBE-BVI), Houweling Group is working on a pilot to produce UN-approved packaging from a closed raw material flow. 'By law, UN-approved packaging has to be made from virgin plastic,' explains business development manager Dennis Jongmans. 'This is actually an outdated requirement. We've had talks with BE-BVI and have carried out various UN tests. These look good and we are now investigating how we can ensure this. In addition, it is fine that we now have the entire chain under our control. From the collection of used packaging at our customers' to the production.'

SUSTAINABLE ENTERPRISE

WHAT IS THE CSR APPROACH?

Houweling Group sells, develops and produces circular products and, in doing so, preserves valuable raw materials, reduces the use of fossil fuels and decreases the amount of waste.

HOW DOES THE COMPANY DO THIS?

Houweling Group supplies and produces packaging made from plastic derived from post-consumer recycling (PCR).

WHAT IS THE EFFECT?

This enables the company to offer its customers the choice of packaging with a lower CO₂ emission.

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Arthur Kalkman van Koppert: 'The collection and recycling of the buckets is the most obvious way of minimising the flow of waste.'



Gertjan van Driel from EMM: 'With the switch to rHDPE plastic we save at least 12,000 kg of virgin plastic.'