



Heinz: Lightweighting Can Ends

Impress Metal Packaging BV (Impress) has developed a lightweighted full-aperture Easy Open End (EOE) that has set a new standard in the marketplace, for both of the leading 73mm diameter food can sizes – nominally '200'g and '400'g.

With the aid of funding from WRAP's Innovation Fund, the new end was trialled at H.J. Heinz Company Ltd's (Heinz) factory at Kitt Green, and has now been successfully implemented by Heinz across the whole of its production for these can sizes. The weight reduction initiative supports the objectives of the Courtauld Commitment, through which leading grocery retailers and brands have committed to work with WRAP in support of WRAP's objectives to halt the growth in packaging waste in the home.

The new can end has a gauge of 0.18mm and weighs only 10.1g, which is some 13% lighter than Heinz's previous 0.2mm gauge end and as much as 25% lighter than some EOE's in the market. This material reduction provides a financial benefit as a consequence of using less steel and the corresponding savings in carbon emissions.

Achievements:

Cost savings realised from using less steel will depend upon market conditions, but are likely to be around 3 to 4%. Further economies come from reduced producer responsibility charges, and reduced logistics costs since 18% more ends can be shipped on a pallet.

The financial case was convincing for Heinz, who were already Best in Class for optimum EOE weight. Heinz will save over £400,000 as a consequence of the EOE lightweighting.

Developing the new end was a major technical achievement, for which Corus supplied double-reduced steel and Impress Metal Packaging BV was awarded the Metal Packaging Manufacturers Association's Gold Award for Technical Innovation. The trials have demonstrated that the lightweighted end matches the functional characteristics of the previous heavier end, with respect to both the manufacturing processes and consumer properties. Because of this, the issues that need to be addressed by the filler tend to be of a detailed technical nature only. No changes to retorting conditions were required in the trials and there has been no identifiable consumer reaction.

Source: WRAP