

WASTE REDUCTION

MEMORANDUM by British Glass Manufacturers Confederation

1. Introduction

1.1 British Glass is both a trade federation and materials organisation, which promotes glass as the first choice material in all sectors which for ease of convenience divides generally into the following: container, flat, special (includes technical and scientific), decorative and fibre applications. Its main activities involve representing the industry at European, national and local level on a wide range of topical legislative issues, for instance, waste, packaging and social policy. It acts as the industry's voice on health and safety, HR and environmental issues as well as technical standards and specifications likely to affect its members.

2. Better design and the use of materials

2.1 The UK has made great strides over the years in reducing waste. There is however concern that when companies look at waste reduction because of the way waste is measured companies automatically focus on heavy packaging. Whilst this may seem 'common sense', what it results in is a higher use of materials that are not as environmentally friendly. With the introduction of initiatives such as the Courtauld Commitment many retailers are now focusing solely on weight and not sustainability. Glass is a heavy material which can be recycled indefinitely with high recycled content, Plastic in particular PET, is lighter in weight and seen by many as being an alternative which at present can not be recycled in the UK.

2.2 British Glass and its members have for some time now been working with WRAP and the supply chain to lightweight containers produced in the UK. The projects have resulted in discussions regarding bulk importing of products to be filled in the UK as well as highlighting some of the constraints associated with using glass containers.

3. Business Framework

3.1 The Courtauld Commitment and the targets signed up to by retailers are becoming a main decision tool regarding container types. Weight is driving waste reduction rather than other causes of waste such as over packaging/ unnecessary packaging.

3.2 Sustainability is becoming a major decision tool for companies however as with any business it has to be economical to do so. The Glass Container Industry has the capacity to use more recycled glass to reduce the amount of waste. However the amount they are able to use is reducing due to the recycled

glass (cullet) not being fit for purpose. The reason for this is due to the increase in Local Authorities collecting materials mixed and sending them to Material Recycling Facilities.

4. Government Policy

4.1 Over packaging and food waste tend to be the main issues with regards to waste reduction. Suppliers unnecessarily wrapping a coconut in shrink wrap is a prime example of over packaging/ unnecessary packaging and where possible some form, of deterrent should be in place, set by Government and possibly policed by LACORS.

5. Consumer behaviour

5.1 Consumers are becoming more and more aware of waste and over packaging however they are of the opinion that they do not have a choice.

5.2 It is believed that offers such as 'buy one get one free' which appeal to consumers add to the issue of waste arising, as most people tend not to use them within the sell by period.

6. Skills

6.1 Material Science with more emphasis on packaging and sustainable design should be integrated into the design syllabus. Sustainability is a growing concern that as previously mentioned is becoming a driver in decision making.

19th October 2007.