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INTERNATIONAL

JULY 2023



## Elevating the can

### INSIDE

Filling focus: food

Coatings

Two-piece update

Tooling



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JULY 2023  
Volume 30, Number 10



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**IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE:**  
SUPPLIER PROFILES  
AI & smart technology

# The global beverage can industry is growing. **SO ARE WE!**

To meet the increasing demand, Bunting made a major investment by opening a new facility exclusively for its can decorating cylinder operation. The semi-automated facility will require less labor and feature a moderate degree of machine redundancy to reduce supply chain disruptions for decorator cylinders.

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# The humble can

**F**rom its humble beginnings as simply a solution for storing food, the can has come a long way. This month's edition showcases this growth journey, detailing how the can is now being elevated above the rest of the packaging options available to consumers.

One important aspect to consider in this journey is safety. On page 19, read about how AkzoNobel is making a commitment to this with an investment in packaging coatings at its new pilot manufacturing plant in Huron, Ohio (US). Additionally, on page 20, Joseph Campagna at Sherwin-Williams explains the development of the company's valPure V70 epoxy coating technology, which ensures both safety and sustainability regulations are met.

Producers of primary and secondary aluminium production must have sustainability at the forefront of their operations, and in June, I attended the Aluminium Federation's Sustainability Strategy Day, where this complex topic was addressed (page 24).

Of course, energy has a huge part to play. On page 37, Vladislav Vorotnikov provides an update to the energy crisis that hit Europe toward the end of 2022, and asks whether the

crisis has really been averted, or whether there are further hurdles to come for metal packaging manufacturers.

Someone who has seen his fair share of challenges throughout a varied career, is Luc Nelen. On page 34, he speaks to Evert van de Weg about his involvement in the area of automated quality control in can making, and his journey to becoming president of the Philippines-headquartered company, Innosen.

We move from Southeast Asia to South Asia on page 22, where Simon Jennings examines the beverage can markets there, and the opportunities blooming, from his position as chairman of Pakistan Aluminium Beverage Can.

Consumers are always the driving force behind innovation, and the industry must act on trends that emerge. Recently, tourism in Portugal has resulted in a boost for its canned food products, as Andreia Nogueira explores in our filling focus on page 26.

Enjoy the issue, and remember that next month is our bumper Supplier Profiles edition!

**Alex Rivers, Editor**  
*CanTech International*

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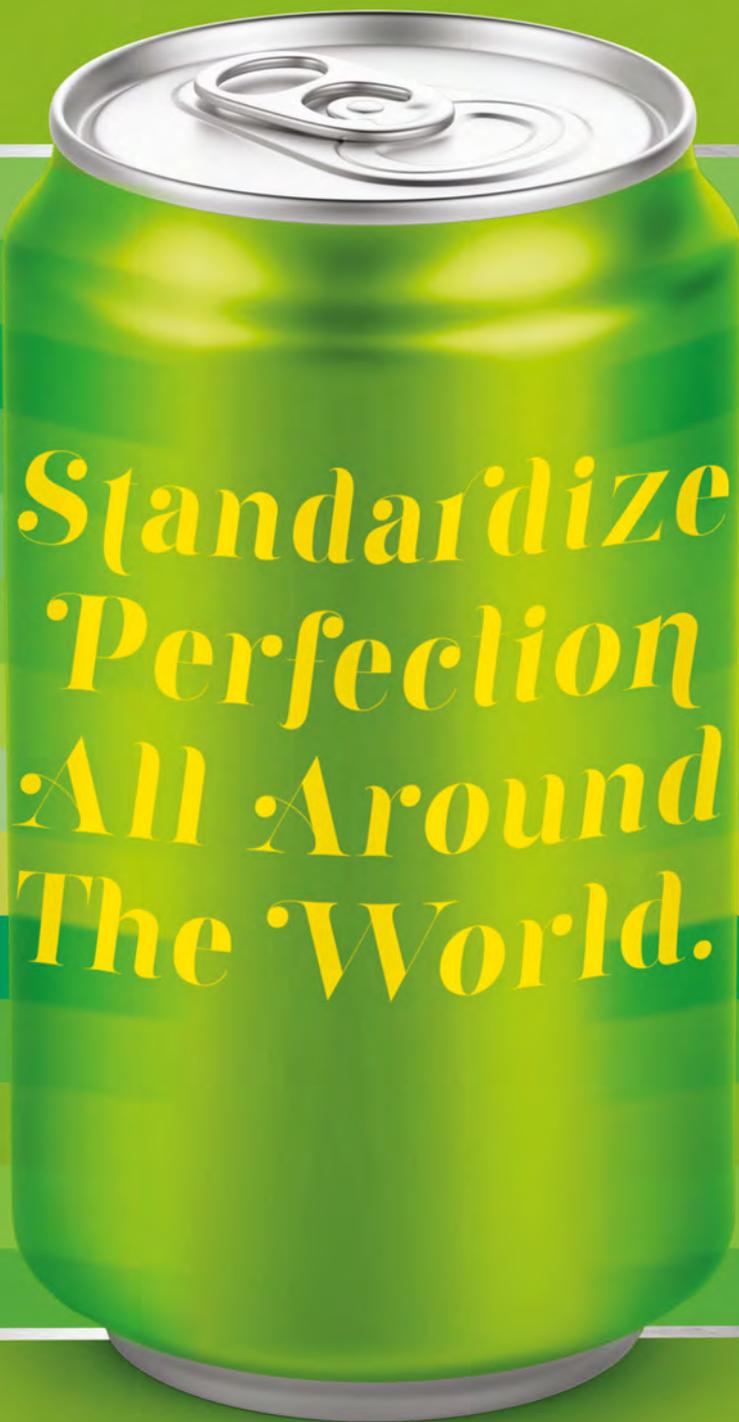
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## Novelis signs new contract with Coca-Cola

Novelis has signed a new long-term contract with Coca-Cola Bottlers' Sales & Services Company, which is the contracting agent for The Coca-Cola Company's authorised North American bottlers (CCBSS).

Under the agreement, Novelis will supply Coca-Cola's authorised North American bottlers with aluminium can sheet for The Coca-Cola Company's family of brands. This includes supply from Novelis' plant in Bay Minette, Alabama, which is currently under construction and expected to begin commissioning in 2025. Under the agreement, The Coca-Cola North American bottlers, through the CCBSS and Novelis agreement, have committed to purchasing a confidential volume of aluminium can sheet over a multi-year period.

"This new long-term contract builds on a decades-long relationship between Novelis and the Coca-Cola system, and further strengthens Novelis' position as the leading provider of aluminium for beverage cans," said Steve Fisher, president and CEO of Novelis. "This contract validates our investment in expanding rolling and recycling capacity in North America and solidifies a strong future for sustainable aluminium as the beverage packaging material of choice."

The contract includes an agreement for closed-loop recycling, highlighting both companies' commitments to sustainability. Through closed-loop recycling programmes, Novelis directly takes back the manufacturing scrap generated during the can making process, recycles it and converts it into new can sheet, which is then made into new beverage cans. In addition to this continuous loop, Novelis recycles more than 80 billion used beverage cans per year into new aluminium for beverage packaging. These efforts result in lower-carbon products, as recycling aluminium is approximately 95% less energy intensive than making primary aluminium, resulting in 95% less carbon emissions.

Novelis expects demand for aluminium beverage can sheet to grow at a 3% CAGR from 2022 to 2031. The demand growth is driven by consumer preference for more sustainable products and size variety, as well as more beverage types being packed in cans, including water, energy drinks, soda, beer, wine, hard seltzers and ready-to-drink cocktails.

Dan Coe, chief procurement officer of The Coca-Cola Company, stated that "the evolving role on behalf of The Coca-Cola Company and our Bottlers is to build a resilient domestic supply chain, thus enabling sustainable long-term growth. We recognise Novelis as a leader in sustainability, committed to supporting our 2030 World Without Waste Targets."

Demonstrating the strength of the aluminium beverage packaging market, the majority of the Bay Minette plant's capacity for beverage can is already contracted.

Novelis' new, low-carbon facility in Bay Minette will be the first fully integrated aluminium manufacturing and recycling plant built in the US in nearly 40 years and is expected to create up to 1,000 new jobs. Boasting an initial capacity of 600,000 tonnes of finished goods for the North American can and automotive markets, it will be powered by renewable energy, use recycled water and operate as a zero-waste facility. Additionally, Novelis is working toward a goal of achieving net carbon neutrality at Bay Minette.



Image: Shutterstock



Image: Shutterstock

## Domestic aluminium demand in North America down in Q1

The Aluminum Association has released preliminary estimates as part of its monthly Aluminum Situation statistical report, showing demand for the aluminium industry in North America (US and Canada) declining 3.5% through the first quarter of 2023. This follows an estimated 4.8% demand growth through the end of 2022 and comes during a period of significant investment by US aluminium producers, fabricators and recyclers.

"The picture for the US aluminium industry remains very strong," said Charles Johnson, president and CEO of the Aluminum Association. "Looking ahead, demand for recyclable and sustainable materials, ongoing infrastructure investment and robust trade enforcement are all making America a very attractive place to make aluminium – as evidenced by the fastest pace of investment for the industry in decades."

Since 2021, Aluminum Association member companies have announced nearly \$6 billion in domestic manufacturing operations (\$9 billion over the last decade) – including new, US-based greenfield facilities for the first time since the 1980s.

A recent automaker survey by consultancy Ducker Carlisle showed that aluminium use will grow by around 100 pounds per vehicle from 2020 to 2030, as electric vehicles continue to penetrate the market.



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Dan Aggertoft Christensen. Image: Envases

## Envases Group acquires Domiberia

The Envases Group, a global provider of rigid consumer packaging solutions, has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire Domiberia, a Spanish manufacturer of metal packaging for food and industrial products in Spain and the Netherlands from Everest Holdings/The Domínguez Family, in an all-cash transaction.

The acquisition is subject to customary closing conditions, including competition authority approval, and is expected to close by Q3 2023.

According to Envases, this acquisition will allow the group to be even closer to its customers and will broaden its geographical reach in Europe.

Domiberia is the second largest Spanish metal packaging company, operating six plants in its home market and one in the Netherlands with a 600+ strong team. With this agreement, Envases Europe will have more than 21 production facilities spread across Europe and a total workforce of close to 3,000 individuals. "By bringing the Domiberia plants and talent pool into our family we will ensure a stronger, wider, and more diverse footprint in Europe, for the benefit of our employees, customers and stakeholders. It is a perfect match for us," said president of Envases Europe, Dan Aggertoft Christensen.

"Envases Europe will continue the good work done by Domiberia and ignite our growth even further," he said.

Envases Europe is a provider of rigid packaging solutions in Europe, with headquarters in Løsning, Denmark, and plants in Denmark, Sweden, the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria and Hungary. It is part of the Envases Group, a privately owned company based in Mexico.

## ITSCI fully aligned with OECD Guidance

The ITSCI Programme for Responsible Mineral Supply Chains has been independently confirmed to be fully aligned with OECD due diligence guidance. ITSCI is the first joint industry initiative to announce a successful second Alignment Assessment (AA) and the first to publish the full report with the completed tool, demonstrating the organisation's sustained commitment to continuous improvement and transparency.

The second AA was commissioned by ITSCI and conducted by the independent advisory firm Kumi Consulting, using OECD methodology. It confirms that ITSCI's activities and operational requirements are explicitly designed to implement the recommendations of the OECD Guidance.

According to the International Tin Association (ITA), this is a tremendous achievement, not least due to the challenges faced on a day-to-day basis in this complex area of operation in central Africa.

Mickaël Daudin, ITSCI programme manager, said, "ITSCI operates in the face of multiple challenges related to security, infrastructure, and complex local environments in CAHRA, as well as limited funding. Yet these results demonstrate that we continue to make significant progress and that facilitating effective due diligence on minerals from CAHRA promotes responsible sourcing practices and leads to positive long-term and lasting change at scale."

## Colep Packaging CEO named MPE president

Colep Packaging has announced that its CEO, Paulo Sousa, has been designated president of Metal Packaging Europe (MPE) for the 2023-2025 mandate.

The election took place during the MPE's Annual General Meeting, which was held in Porto, Portugal, in June, gathering almost one hundred participants and representatives of the European metal packaging industry.

Paulo Sousa, who succeeds Oliver Graham as president of the Association, reinforces "the importance of gathering the sector around the promotion of the advantages of metal, ensuring the growth potential of the industry."



Image: Colep Packaging

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## Hyperion to acquire Dura-Metal

Hyperion Materials & Technologies has announced an agreement to acquire Dura-Metal Products Corporation (Dura-Metal), a US, Pennsylvania-based company that manufactures wear- and corrosion-resistant precision tools and components from cemented carbides, advanced technical ceramics, ferroalloys, and high-speed steels.

"Dura-Metal has exceptional capabilities in machining and grinding of large components, electrical discharge machining (EDM), honing, lapping, and jig grinding that will expand and enhance our ability to serve customers in key markets that rely on custom precision wear parts, including aerospace, energy, battery manufacturing, electronics, medical, metalworking, and food and beverage," said Ron Voigt, chief executive officer of Hyperion.

"We're excited to bring the team into the Hyperion family, and we're already aligned in many important areas, including safety, quality, and building long-lasting relationships with our valued customers and business partners."

Dura-Metal has been making precision ultra-hard parts and tooling

for more than 50 years. The company employs more than 100 people at its 48,000-square-foot manufacturing facility about 30 miles southeast of Pittsburgh.

"We're excited to combine Dura-Metal's application engineering and product finishing abilities with Hyperion's materials science expertise and global footprint," said Joe Freiland, CEO of Dura-Metal. "We're looking forward to this next chapter in our history and the exciting possibilities we can achieve together as we serve our collective and growing customer base."

In addition to serving its existing customers, Dura-Metal will become a vital part of the Precision Solutions by Hyperion business unit that provides custom solutions and components for the most demanding applications. Precision Solutions includes Hyperion's global facilities and maximises the collective strength of additional world-class manufacturers Crafts Technology, GLE Precision and Aggressive Grinding Service (AGS) to provide specialised finishing capabilities for tailored, high-quality wear components.

## Edwards joins INX as VP of digital division

INX International Ink Co has announced the hiring of Paul Edwards as the new vice president of the digital division. A longtime and successful printing industry executive, he reports to president and chief executive officer, Bryce Kristo.

Edwards joins INX after serving as the vice president of Ink Technology at EFI since 2011. He directed a team of more than 60 chemists while leading the product development effort and maximised innovation for several business units, including display graphics, ceramics, textile, corrugated, wood and labels. He also managed the print-head technology and analysis group.

He was promoted to that position after serving as the senior director of ink research and development for nearly three years. All told, Edwards was at the company for 19 years after beginning as the director of development at Jetrion in 2004. He began his career in the UK as a project manager and worked in technical positions at Domino Printing and Flint.

"We are very excited to have Paul Edwards join the INX International Ink Co team," said Kristo. "He brings with him over 30 years of leadership and technological experience within the analog and digital imaging field, both from a fluids and printing system perspective. We are focused on digital printing as a primary growth platform. His extensive experience in executing strategy within this market space will greatly help us drive this growth effort successfully in the future."

"The Sakata INX Group has a long and

successful history of providing quality inks and technology. I am excited to be part of the INX family and be able to create differentiated and high performing digital products for our customers," said Edwards. "For much of my career, I have been involved with driving the analog to digital revolution in print, and in the development and commercialisation of digital inks, coatings, and printing systems. Over the last few years INX has embarked on a digital journey for their customers, and I know my skills and experience can help accelerate the progress made by the team."



Image: INX

## Heinz to build new cookhouse for canned beans

A new cookhouse at the Heinz factory in Wigan, UK, has been given the go-ahead by the local council, as its old facility is in need of an upgrade due to health and safety concerns.

Kraft Heinz plans to build a new structure around the existing cookhouse once it is weatherproof. According to the *Manchester Evening News*, an extension will also go ahead on the western elevation of the building during phase two of the development which will allow future provision for an additional cooker.

"The Phase 2 additional capacity of the fourth cooker installation has the potential to create additional capacity which may lead to additional jobs," a planning statement said.

"Ultimately, the proposal is necessary to maintain the safe day-to-day operation of the site and existing processes, which gives security to existing staff numbers."

The Walthew House Lane site in Orrell is one of the largest food processing plants in Europe and the largest Heinz facility in the world. It produces over a billion cans of food annually.

Construction works at the site are expected to last approximately nine to 12 months, Heinz have reportedly estimated.



Image: Kraft Heinz



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## DTE secures funding anchored by Novelis and EIC fund

DTE, an innovator in decision support for the metals production and manufacturing industry, has announced the successful completion of a \$10 million Series A2 round to further accelerate DTE's innovation and expand its reach. The raise includes a distinguished group of investors, with participation by aluminium industry leader Novelis, venture capital firm Metaplanet and the European Innovation Council (EIC) Fund, along with existing investors Chrysalix Venture Capital and Brunnur Ventures.

DTE's first-in-industry, in-line elemental analysis technology complements and replaces current slow, expensive and manual methods for process and quality control. Its proprietary LP-LIBS sensor technology is able to deliver reference-grade elemental analysis directly from high-temperature liquid metals in less than 60 seconds from sampling. This capability provides enhanced process control and decision support.

"We are delighted to secure this substantial funding round, which is a significant milestone for DTE, validating the transformative potential of our technology," said Karl Matthiasson, CEO and founder of DTE. "We are delighted and honoured to welcome Novelis, Metaplanet and the EIC Fund as new investors on our journey to transform the metals production and manufacturing industries. The additional capital secured in this funding round finances expansion of our growing sales pipeline and will accelerate our technology and product development capabilities, as we continue to push the boundaries of manufacturing decision intelligence and predictive analytics."

"As a strategic investor, Novelis recognises the significant potential of DTE's LP-LIBS technology and the opportunities for its

deployment within the metals production, manufacturing and recycling value chain," said Derek Prichett, senior vice president, corporate development at Novelis.

"DTE's solution, with its live elemental analysis capabilities, offers a promising avenue for optimising production processes and enhancing product quality. In addition to using the technology to support Novelis' own goals for carbon reduction, which include a 30% reduction by 2026 and net carbon neutrality by 2050 or sooner, we are also excited to aid DTE in their broader mission to help our industry transform towards ever cleaner, more sustainable production."

"We are impressed by DTE's unique technology and the potential of their actionable decision support platform to optimise production in the metals industry," said Marcin Nowak from the EIC Fund, leading the investment on behalf of the EIC Fund. "The EIC Fund is proud to support DTE to create value opportunities as well as streamline and improve efficiencies within the operations of one of Europe's most energy intensive and emissive industries."



Karl Matthiasson. Image: DTE

## PepsiCo to close facility in Indiana

PepsiCo's US beverage distribution plant in Muncie, Indiana, is set to close "in the coming months," with operations moved to other local distributors.

In a statement, the company said, "PepsiCo is always evaluating our network solutions and reviewing the best possible ways to optimise our service. With many recent distribution changes, we have determined that in the coming months, PepsiCo Beverages North America's operations in Muncie, Indiana, will close and be redistributed to neighbouring locations. We will be working closely with leadership, unions, and other stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition during this process with minimal impact to our employees and customers."

## etma presents Tube of the Year 2023 winners

Winners of the European Tube Manufacturers Association's (etma) Tube of the Year 2023 competition were announced in Amsterdam at the end of May.

Etma's annual conference and the third World Tube Congress, also organised by etma, provided a suitable setting for the award ceremony. A jury of seven representatives of etma member companies selected the winners in the categories of aluminium tubes, plastic tubes, laminate tubes, sustainability and prototypes.

This year's winner in the aluminium tube category was The POREfessional tube by California-based Benefit Cosmetics, which belongs to the luxury group LVMH. The cosmetics brand used aluminium tubes produced by Alltub France, made with more than 95% post-consumer recycled (PCR) aluminium, for the relaunch of its fast-smoothing pore mask.

First place in the sustainability category also went to an aluminium tube from the Japanese consumer goods company, Kao, as part of the reconfiguration of the packaging of its well-known product Goldwell TOPCHIC Permanent Hair Color. The tubes are produced by the German manufacturer, Linhardt.

In the prototype category, the jury chose a range of aluminium tubes from Alltub Italia as the winner. These tubes allow for a wide variety of unique and refined external coating finishes and effects, including Soft Touch, Pearl Glaze, Iridescent Glaze or Multi-Glitter.



Image: etma

## hubergroup Print Solutions restructures UV poly/tin offset portfolio

'Everything from a single source' – with this aim in mind, international ink specialist hubergroup Print Solutions has revised and strengthened its UV offset portfolio for non-absorbent substrates.

The portfolio includes printing inks, varnishes, and fountain solution additives that are optimally matched to each other and thus enable a smooth printing process. Thanks to intensive development work, the globally available food and non-food ink series NewV poly (MGA) and NewV tin (MGA), as well as the varnish series, NewV lac (MGA), are now also formulated to be sensorially neutral and PTFE (polytetrafluoroethylene)-free.

"Our customers are our focus, so it was important to us to provide printers with a well-matched and globally available portfolio with the best printing performance," Roland Schröder, product manager UV-Offset at hubergroup, explains the new positioning as a complete range, which not only includes inks, but also varnishes and fountain solution additives.

Even beyond that, there are some changes in hubergroup's UV offset portfolio: for example, the ink and varnish series are now formulated PTFE-free in order to comply with the regulations of the American market, as well as the requirements of important brand manufacturers, and to be prepared for future specifications in other global markets. In addition, the NewV lac series is now free of benzophenone, a substance that is considered controversial due to its potential carcinogenic effects. There is also a new NewV tin LED series for metal packaging, which includes UV inks and varnishes for LED drying.

According to hubergroup, the common feature of all products is very good reactivity and adhesion. Roland Schröder commented, "With this repositioning, we have designed our portfolio future-oriented. At the same time, however, it was important to us that printers can continue to rely on a stable printing process with high-quality printing results. Our international service staff are therefore available for our customers with their expertise at all times and accompany the complete project handling from the idea to implementation and continuous further support."

Tools such as the company's own HDCC colour management system, which guarantees customers the same colour all over the world, round off the service offering.



Image: hubergroup

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## Updating you on the dates for your diary in the world of metal packaging

### JULY 2023

#### UV DAYS

The focus of IST Metz's UV Days 2023 will be the inauguration of the LED LAB and IST Metz's new UV Technology Campus, which IST METZ will use as a research and knowledge platform.

**Date:** 4 - 6 July 2023

**Location:** Nürtingen, Germany

**Website:** [www.uvdays.com](http://www.uvdays.com)

#### ALUMINIUM CHINA

Bringing together high-quality resources from the aluminium industry and end-use applications at home and abroad to comprehensively display innovative technologies and products.

**Date:** 5 July 2023

**Location:** Shanghai, China

**Website:** [www.aluminiumchina.com](http://www.aluminiumchina.com)

### SEPTEMBER 2023

#### PACK EXPO LAS VEGAS

The event bringing together packaging and processing solutions suppliers and end users from 40+ vertical industries.

**Date:** 11 - 13 September 2023

**Location:** Nevada, US

**Website:** [packexpolasvegas.com](http://packexpolasvegas.com)

#### UK METALS EXPO

The event bringing together the entire metals supply chain, from primary metal manufacture to supply chain management, processing metals, fabrication, machinery, engineering, surface coatings and recycling.

**Date:** 13 - 14 September 2023

**Location:** Birmingham, UK

**Website:** [ukmetalsexpo.com](http://ukmetalsexpo.com)

#### LONDON PACKAGING WEEK

Combining the four events of Packaging Première, PCD, PLD and Food & Consumer Pack.

**Date:** 21 - 22 September 2023

**Location:** London, UK

**Website:** [www.londonpackagingweek.com](http://www.londonpackagingweek.com)

#### IMDPA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The annual conference of the International Metal Decorating and Packaging Association.

**Date:** 26 - 28 September 2023

**Location:** Illinois, US

**Website:** [metaldecorators.org](http://metaldecorators.org)

### OCTOBER 2023

#### BAMA FORUM & AWARDS

The British Aerosol Manufacturers Association hosts its Forum & Awards Dinner for the third year running.

**Date:** 11 - 12 October 2023

**Location:** Chester, UK

**Website:** [bama.co.uk/event/52](http://bama.co.uk/event/52)

#### ASIA CANTECH

The conference and exhibition by *CanTech International* and *Worldwide Expo*, bringing together global suppliers, can makers and fillers from across Asia.

**Date:** 30 October - 1 November 2023

**Location:** Bangkok, Thailand

**Website:** [asia-can.com](http://asia-can.com)

### NOVEMBER 2023

#### BRAUBEVIALE

The international capital goods specialist exhibition for the beverage industry.

**Date:** 28 - 30 November 2023

**Location:** Nuremberg, Germany

**Website:** [braubeviale.de](http://braubeviale.de)



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## Hydro to build aluminium recycling plant in Spain

Hydro has signed an agreement to purchase land in Torija, Spain, with the aim of constructing a state-of-the-art aluminium recycling plant.

The new plant will have 120,000 tonnes of annual capacity and around 65 direct employees. The facility will strengthen Hydro's capabilities to produce low-carbon aluminium and ensure more scrap is kept in Europe.

The agreement has been signed with a subsidiary of the Pulsar Properties Group. The total project investment is currently estimated to be between €130-140 million, depending on the final facility design, market conditions and macroeconomic development. Hydro aims to make a final investment decision by the end of 2023.

"The European and Iberian market for aluminium continues to grow. This investment will be an important step towards Hydro's ambition to recycle more post-consumer aluminium, strengthening our position to capture value from growing demand for greener and circular aluminium," said Eivind Kallevik, executive vice president for Hydro Aluminium Metal.

He continued, "Since aluminium is infinitely recyclable, keeping post-consumer scrap in the loop is crucial, as recycling requires 95% less energy than primary production. Increased recycling of post-consumer scrap is an opportunity for Europe to secure domestic access to aluminium, which is a strategic issue in view of multiple crises facing Europe."

The demand for aluminium towards 2030 in Hydro's main markets is set to grow at around 3% per year, and low-carbon aluminium demand is expected to outpace the rest of the

market. However, every year, around one million tonnes of used aluminium scrap leaves Europe.

"Thanks to our state-of-the-art technology and competent workforce, we aim to dig deeper into the European scrap pile. This investment will enable us to bring more low value scrap types back to life as value added products for electrical transport solutions, building systems and renewable energy applications that will drive Europe's green transition," said Kallevik.

The recycling facility in Torija will be capable of producing Hydro CIRCAL and other recycled low-carbon aluminium, with a CO<sub>2</sub> footprint below 4kg CO<sub>2</sub> per kg of aluminium.

Unique to Hydro, Hydro CIRCAL extrusion ingot contains at least 75% post-consumer scrap, certified by third party auditor, DNV GL, and has a market leading CO<sub>2</sub> footprint of only 2.3kg CO<sub>2</sub>e per kg of aluminium. The Torija project will complement the offering from Hydro's plant in Azuqueca located nearby and bring a wider range of Hydro's value-added products to the Iberian market.



Sunset in Torija, Guadalajara, Spain. Image: Hydro

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## RIO TINTO EXPANDING LOW CARBON ALUMINIUM SMELTER IN QUEBEC

Rio Tinto has announced it will invest \$1.1 billion (CAN\$1.4 billion) to expand its state-of-the-art AP60 aluminium smelter equipped with low-carbon technology at Complexe Jonquière in Canada. The total investment includes up to \$113 million (CAN\$150 million) of financial support from the Quebec government.

The investment will add 96 new AP60 pots, increasing capacity by approximately 160,000 metric tonnes of primary aluminium per year, enough for 400,000 electric cars. As a result, there will be a total of 134 AP60 pots and a capacity of approximately 220,000 tonnes per annum. Construction will run over two and a half years, with commissioning of the new pots expected to start in the first half of 2026 and the smelter fully ramped up by the end of 2026. Once completed, the expanded smelter is expected to be in the first quartile of the industry cost curve.

This new capacity will offset the 170,000 tonnes of capacity lost through the gradual closure of potrooms at the Arvida smelter from 2024. In addition, Rio Tinto will add 30,000 tonnes of new capacity through the commissioning of the previously announced recycling facility at Arvida in the first quarter of 2025. These facilities will ensure Rio Tinto's casting facilities at Complexe Jonquière continue to provide value added products that meet customers' needs, including integrating recycled post-consumer aluminium into primary aluminium alloys.

The AP60 smelting technology was developed by Rio Tinto's R&D teams and is among the most efficient and lowest carbon technology currently available at commercial scale. When combined with the hydropower used at Rio Tinto's operations in Canada, it generates one seventh of greenhouse gases per tonne of aluminium when compared with the industry average, and half the emissions when compared to the technology currently used at the Arvida smelter.

The project will generate up to 1,000 jobs during the peak of construction and approximately 100 permanent jobs will be maintained as a result of the expanded smelter.

In addition to this investment in low-carbon aluminium, Rio Tinto is working with the governments of Canada and Quebec towards a deployment of the ELYSIS zero carbon aluminium smelting technology at its Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean facilities. With the current development pathway, ELYSIS aims to have its technology available for installation from 2024 and the production of larger volumes of carbon-free aluminium approximately two years later.

Rio Tinto and the government of Canada have also signed a memorandum of understanding that deepens their commitment to strengthen supply chains for low-carbon primary metals, critical minerals and other value-added products. The cooperation will also aim to support projects that have the potential to grow Rio Tinto's activities in Canada, including the current and future decarbonisation of the aluminium supply chain.

The investment in the AP60 smelter is already included as replacement capital expenditure in Rio Tinto's capital investment guidance for 2023 to 2025. The group's capital expenditure guidance of \$9 billion to \$10 billion in both 2024 and 2025 remains unchanged.



Image: rualuminas/Pixabay

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## PPG sets 2030 decarbonisation targets

PPG has announced its near-term 2030 sustainability goals, including greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions targets that have been validated by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi). The company also marked strong progress against its environmental, social and governance (ESG) priorities, reporting increased sales of sustainably advantaged products, more efficient operations, strong momentum toward achieving diversity, equity and inclusion goals, greater supplier sustainability and strengthened support within communities where the company operates.

“PPG has long been committed to reducing the environmental impact of its own operations, and we are proud to have validated science-based GHG emissions targets that are in line with the expectations of the Paris Agreement,” said Diane Kappas, PPG vice president, global sustainability. “By raising our sustainability ambitions and increasing sales of sustainable solutions for our customers, PPG is advancing its leadership in the paints and coatings industry.”

PPG has committed to reduce absolute emissions from its own operations (scope 1 and 2) by 50% by 2030 from a 2019 base year. It has also committed to reduce absolute scope 3 GHG emissions from purchased goods and services, processing of sold products, and end-of-life treatment of sold products by 30% within the same timeframe. The company's emissions reduction strategy for its own operations includes energy efficiency projects and renewable energy sourcing. Within the value chain – or scope 3 – PPG is collaborating with suppliers to identify GHG emissions reduction opportunities and lower-carbon raw material sources. PPG recently signed an agreement with NRG Energy Inc that will enable four PPG paints and coatings manufacturing facilities and 62 PPG Paints stores in Texas to operate on 100% renewable electricity.

## SCOTLAND DELAYS DRS TO 2025

Scotland's deposit return scheme is now set to be delayed until October 2025 at the earliest.

The flagship recycling scheme was supposed to launch in March 2024, but circular economy minister, Lorna Slater, said she had been left with no choice after the UK government excluded glass from the Scottish scheme.

The delay means that the Scottish scheme is likely to launch at the same time as similar proposals for other parts of the UK.



Image: Shutterstock

## EVIOSYS SURPASSES EMISSIONS TARGETS

Sustainable packaging giant, Eviosys, has broken its own records and surpassed its yearly objectives in both CO<sub>2</sub> and volatile organic compounds (VOC) emissions, as detailed in its latest ESG report.

In 2022, Eviosys was awarded EcoVadis Gold Certification for its sustainability credentials. This award ranks the firm in the top 2% of over 100,000 suppliers assessed by EcoVadis that year, and recognises Eviosys as a global powerhouse for sustainability.

Furthermore, as a new signatory of the UN Global Compact – the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative – Eviosys is now turning to address its scope 3 emissions by introducing a new supplier code of conduct which, for the first time, requires their partners to comply with the sustainability principles of the programme, and align with the Sustainable Development Goals. This new code of conduct will see Eviosys conduct an extensive review of the entire supply chain and attribute ratings to suppliers in order to promote improved sustainability throughout.

Having succeeded in reducing greenhouse gas emissions scopes 1 and 2 by more than 10% in 2022, Eviosys has drastically surpassed its annual reduction target of 3.1% per production of a million normalised cans. With a cumulative reduction of 15% since 2020, Eviosys is already ahead of its plan for 20% reduction goal by 2027. This progress in 2022 represents almost twice the already impressive reduction in emissions detailed in the firm's 2021 report and puts Eviosys on track to achieve the Net Zero by 2050 goal laid out in the Paris Agreement.

Eviosys has also been seen to reduce VOC emissions by 10% within a year, thanks to the implementation of smart incinerators, better controlled activity and monitoring to save resources in its activities, and a continuous ambition to convert to water-based products.

Along the way, Eviosys is demonstrating its commitment to reducing emissions. Investments from the firm include new equipment such as smart high-economy oxidisers to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and new solar panels to deliver a 19% energy saving at specific plants. The solar panel installation at Eviosys' plant in Murcia will be one of the largest of its kind in Europe, with 8,411 solar panels. Additionally, Eviosys continues to open new facilities positioned close to customers, such as in Thailand with a new wall-to-wall factory, reducing transport related carbon emissions and eliminating the need for secondary packaging.

Reflecting on this year's progress, Laurent Leucio, EHS and sustainability director at Eviosys, said, “This year's ESG report shows our absolute dedication to sustainability. Achievements of this scale can only be accomplished by a holistic approach to reducing emissions, as Eviosys demonstrates by ensuring that we are all committed and investing at each stage of production and operations to limit our environmental impact and help our customers do the same.”



Image: Eviosys



# Expanding resin investment in North America

**AkzoNobel** is making a major commitment to ensure the safety and quality of canned food and beverage products for North American consumers

**A**kzoNobel has announced a new pilot manufacturing plant at the company's Huron, Ohio facility, providing advanced capabilities for the company's next generation Accelshield packaging coatings, connecting innovation and research and development with trials and production.

Huron's pilot plant is an extension of the work that has been done at the company's Strongsville global resin research and development centre, and ensures AkzoNobel is consistently meeting market needs as it efficiently scales up resin innovations. The company hosted a grand opening ceremony on 14 June 2023, which was attended by employees and community leaders.

Huron's new pilot plant is one in a network of pilot plants globally, and Ohio serves as AkzoNobel's largest footprint in North America (NAM), with locations in Huron, Strongsville, Springfield and Columbus.

Manoel Rodrigues, regional commercial director for metal coatings, Americas, stated, "As AkzoNobel partners with the industry to ensure the safety and quality of the canned food and beverage supply in North America, we have taken a major step

to enhance our ability to innovate and develop next generation packaging coatings with speed and agility.

"This new pilot plant will accelerate our time to market for new products and technologies. It also further builds on our customer-centric approach and strengthens the capability to adjust specifications to customer needs. The addition of this pilot plant is an exciting next step for the future of our Huron factory and our continued success in the packaging coatings industry."

AkzoNobel has invested in expanding in-house resin manufacturing as part of its global resin strategy and Huron is the next step in expanding resin capabilities in North America.

Nate Norris, NAM manufacturing and supply chain director, stated, "Huron's pilot manufacturing plant strengthens our industry-leading resin expertise as we further invest in our resin research and will help us secure sustainable business growth. As we continue to support our innovation pipeline, the pilot plant will also improve our ability to transfer technology among our sites and enhance our global supplier capabilities." 

**Ribbon cutting of the new AkzoNobel pilot plant in Huron, Ohio. Image: AkzoNobel**

# Innovating sustainably

**Joseph Campagna**, vice president for marketing, packaging coatings at **Sherwin-Williams**, explains the development of the company's valPure V70 epoxy coating technology

In practice, being at the forefront of innovative packaging technologies means identifying current and future industry challenges and creating high-performing, safe, and sustainable coatings that set the pace for the packaging coatings market.

In recent years, this has meant staying ahead of emerging regulations. Over the past decade, the packaging coatings industry has been moving away from products containing Bisphenol-A (BPA), PFAS, and other Chemicals of Concern (CoCs), defined here as chemicals that are the focus of heightened regulatory scrutiny or limitations. Coating manufacturers have been challenged to develop new technologies that meet the superior performance standards of traditional BPA-epoxy coatings – while innovating with an ever-shrinking selection of raw materials.

As the regulatory environment becomes more restrictive, simply ensuring compliance with current food contact regulation does not go far enough in creating enduring solutions for the industry. Rigorous R&D methodologies, state-of-the-art chemical screening and toxicological testing are essential to bring solutions to the market that are safe, sustainable and offer superior technical performance.

Sherwin-Williams valPure V70 technology is the packaging industry's only epoxy coating that does not contain BPA and has been formulated without other common CoCs, like styrene. The development of valPure V70 demonstrates that both regulatory and performance challenges can be overcome through rigorous R&D and a unique approach to product development.

**Sherwin-Williams**  
beverage can pack  
types



## Why epoxy technologies are here to stay

Historically, epoxy technologies containing BPA have offered superior performance, enabling universal application across different packaging types. They have been ubiquitous across the beverage can market because they are the best performing technologies. However, with the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) releasing its final opinion to significantly lower the tolerable daily intake (TDI) for BPA, substituting legacy epoxy coatings without compromising safety, performance or high-speed application is a key challenge for the industry.

When the industry began exploring different coating technologies to transition away from BPA, most suppliers started with acrylic and polyester solutions. At Sherwin-Williams, we quickly recognised that for many applications, these chemistry platforms simply could not match the performance of traditional epoxy coatings with respect to flavour performance, pack performance or ease-of-application.

To solve this problem and create non-BPA coatings that matched epoxy performance, Sherwin-Williams committed to not only formulate, but exhaustively test and identify an epoxy alternative, offering the same superior performance without the use of BPA. Recognising the performance challenges of acrylic beverage coatings early on led us to explore more innovative solutions.

To achieve this, we pioneered our state-of-the-art Safety by Design methodology to ensure that any chemicals screened and identified were safe for intended use, not endocrine active, and would stand the test of time in an ever-changing regulatory environment. Safety by Design is modelled on preclinical pharmaceutical safety evaluations, with a data-led and science driven approach at its core.

Through extensive screening, we identified Tetramethyl Bisphenol F (TMBPF), a chemical that is structurally different to other bisphenols and that is not estrogen active. Once identified, Sherwin-Williams established an entirely new body of evidence to demonstrate the non-estrogenic nature of TMBPF. This consisted of commissioning tests conducted by contract laboratories, validating the data through our Safety by Design process, and engaging third parties for independent estrogen activity testing and evaluation.

For instance, Dr Ana Soto, a pioneering researcher who has conducted over 25 years of research on endocrine-disrupting chemicals, concluded that TMBPF has a toxicological profile that is distinctly and fundamentally different from other bisphenols due its inability to alter estrogenic functional pathways. The unique nature of the chemical structure of TMBPF enables a high performing epoxy coating without the estrogenic activity associated with other bisphenols.

In addition to extensive toxicological testing, we engaged proactively with regulators to conduct additional testing, validating that TMBPF is not a chemical of concern or endocrine-active.

After more than a decade in development, valPure V70 is approved for use in food, beverage, cosmetics and personal care products within Europe, the US, Canada, China and Japan. Compliance in the European Union has been confirmed with the Dutch G4 Commission's action to update the Dutch Commodities Act, the Warenwet, with the approval of epoxidised TMBPF for use as a food contact material. Furthermore, the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES) has published two opinions on TMBPF which both confirm that there is no concern about endocrine activity.

As a result of our continued engagement with regulators to demonstrate the safety of valPure V70, TMBPF and TMBPF-DGE were excluded from the restriction of BPA and other Bisphenols of Similar Concern (BoSC) proposed by the German authorities. This reinforces that TMBPF is not viewed as a substance of similar concern to BPA and that there is no intention by the regulator to restrict the use of TMBPF in epoxy resins. TMBPF has been endorsed by NGOs such as the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) which identified the substance as a known and verified safe alternative to BPA. ValPure V70 is also listed by ChemSec as an evaluated alternative for industry-standard epoxy.

Through a state-of-the-art product development process spanning more than a decade, we have developed the world's first non-BPA epoxy for the light metal packaging industry. As a result of extensive testing and a science-led approach, TMBPF is now a widely researched and accepted substance for food contact.

Creating a technology like valPure V70 demonstrates that our industry can innovate to develop a lasting, sustainable, and safe solution for the packaging industry.

### Changing consumer demand

So how do innovative technologies play a role in the future of the packaging industry? There is a growing demand for metal packaging, and with that, high performance coating technologies that can support new and challenging brand offerings. Consumers



#### Safety by Design 7 steps

This process ensures that products are developed to meet long-term scientific rigor.

are increasingly making purchasing decisions with sustainable packaging in mind, leading them to reach more often for canned beverages.

As a result, we are seeing disruption in product categories traditionally dominated by plastic or glass, resulting in significant growth in the market for aluminium beverage cans, in the water and wine market, for example. However, both canned wine and canned water are technically challenging to pack and require highly specialised coatings to protect the can and the product inside.

With the emergence of these new products, at Sherwin-Williams we believe the continuation of non-BPA epoxy technologies can offer a high-performance technology that can be universally applied to different can types and support the transition to metal packaging, even in the face of regulatory challenges.

### Encouraging innovation

The ability to adapt to a fast-changing regulatory environment is now critical for coatings suppliers. Compliance with existing food contact regulations is no longer enough to ensure lasting solutions that support our customers' businesses and sustainability objectives.

In the current packaging environment, removing a singular CoC is not enough. New CoCs will be identified in the months and years ahead, and to ensure the health and safety of end users, we must think beyond traditional technologies. If it fails to do so, the industry risks falling into a pattern of regrettable substitution, offering customers inferior technologies that will not meet the increasingly challenging performance requirements of the future. Good isn't good enough anymore; we must innovate and strive for the best solution possible. [GT](#)

**Sherwin-Williams Safety by Design methodology**

# Soaring potential in South Asia

**Simon Jennings** discusses the beverage can market in South Asia, as well as its key players and trends

**S**outh Asia, with a population of nearly two billion people, has the largest concentration of people in the world. Its 'emerging' economies have been showing strong growth over the past few decades. This trend is likely to continue, though there have been, and no doubt will be, some sharp reversals from time to time in its different countries.

Beverage can usage in the region comes in at just over 1.5 cans per capita per year. This is low compared to many of the other large so-called emerging economies, with a market which is still only similar in size to that of one of the smaller European countries.

This may seem disappointing to some who are driven by short-term needs. However, having been personally involved in the region for the past decade and a half, with the start of the first beverage can plant in India in 2007 (Rexam HTW) and then with first plant in Pakistan (Pakistan Aluminium Beverage Can) in 2016, where I continue to be the chairman of the business, I see opportunity.

The countries of South Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) are part of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which brings some benefits, but there are geographical and

political barriers which impact and influence the market structure for beverage cans.

The countries have many similar trends influencing demand, including: growing GDP albeit from low levels; a proportionately larger young population when compared to the rest of the world except Sub Saharan Africa; low alcohol per capita consumption across the region due to religious beliefs, with an above average focus being on non-alcoholic drinks; traditional grocery distribution, with emerging modern grocery distribution; and a high level but decreasing usage of returnable glass bottles, which will all drive growth and will do so over the medium term.

India is the largest market in the region (physically and in terms of demand), with 2.1 billion cans being supplied from four local can plants and imports from Sri Lanka.

Ball has two plants in India, each with one line, with a total nominal capacity of 1.3 billion units. The original plant on the outskirts of Mumbai was built by a Rexam Hindustan Tin JV, with a small capacity DWI steel line to meet the demand, which at the time was only around 200 million cans. This line was replaced in 2012 with an aluminium DWI line due to customers' preference and line

**Pakistan Aluminium Beverage Can is planning to double its capacity, as well as export 250ml slim cans overland into growing Central Asian markets.**

Image: Shutterstock

performance. Rexam built a second plant at Sri City in Southeastern India, 1,300 kilometres away, which started operations in 2016 and at the time had plans for another plant in Northern India, but this has not been followed through by Ball after the acquisition.

Can-Pack opened its first plant with a single aluminium DWI line in Aurangabad in 2009, 300 kilometres to the east of Mumbai, which had a design capacity of 1.2 billion units. Its second plant, again with a similar single aluminium DWI line, is in Haryana, 1,300 kilometres away in Northern India, which began operations in 2018.

Both Ball and Can-Pack import their ends into India at present.

The Indian market mainly demands 250ml slim cans for soft drinks and 500ml, 211 diameter cans for beers. The proportion of 330ml, 211 cans has diminished with growing demand for 300ml and 330ml sleek and 180ml slim cans.

India is also importing cans, on a tariff-free basis, from Ceylon Beverage Cans, a plant which was set up in 2014 by Muttiah Muralitharan, Sri Lanka's famous cricketer. The aluminium DWI line has a design capacity of 1.2 billion cans, and an ends line. Initially, the plant was going to be focused on the local market and supplies to their related filling company. However, changes in consumption patterns driven by legislation and tourism patterns, and more recently a sovereign financial crisis, led to a more export-focused strategy with deepwater exports of filled and empty cans, as well as those in the region. A recent press announcement (included in *CanTech International's* June news) has highlighted a new ink with the retail distribution arm of the major Indian conglomerate, Reliance and Muttiah Muralitharan, by which Ceylon Beverage Cans and its sister filling company will supply cans and filled cans for the local Campa Cola and other products.

With the diversity of sizes and even with modest growth, it is likely that further production capacity increases through speed ups and/or new lines will be needed to meet Indian demand in the not-so-distant future.

Pakistan is a distinct market to India due to historical and political events, and access to Afghanistan is limited by topography.

Both markets have seen good growth despite different but significant local issues, with demand having more than doubled in the past five years to reach 900 million cans in 2023. The market is predominantly focussed on soft drinks requiring 250ml slim cans, with the demand for 300ml standard 211 cans falling away rapidly.

These markets are mainly supplied by Pakistan Aluminium Beverage Can (PABC), with its single DWI aluminium line in Faisalabad in the north of the country, more or less equidistant from Karachi and Kabul. The business, which was originally set up by Ashmore Group Plc, was joined by the Liberty



Mills Group, whose businesses include textiles, power generation and pharmaceuticals. Its line has expanded from its original capacity of 700 million cans to 950 million cans and is currently undergoing the installation of equipment for its final speed-up to reach its maximum design capacity of 1.2 billion cans.

PABC, which was floated on the local stock market in 2021, is now planning to double its capacity, with the potential for a second line at either the current site or a new plant in Karachi, where the principal shareholder has many operations.

Along with the local and Afghan markets, PABC is also exporting 250ml slim cans overland into the growing Central Asian markets, where can making capacity has or is planned to be installed to meet the demand for 440ml and 500ml cans for beer.

Bangladesh, where the demand is around 250 million cans per annum, imports most of its cans from India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. The Liberty Mills Group, which has strong connections and business interests in Bangladesh, is actively looking with PABC at building a beverage can plant in Bangladesh.

In conclusion, there is huge potential in the South Asia region, where demand at the beginning of the century was less than 200 million cans and is now nearing 3.3 billion cans. Looking forward, I see South Asia meeting its potential with per capita can consumption, rising to the levels seen in the other 'emerging' economies. [CT](#)

**Ball Corporation's team in India worked closely with long-term partner O'cean Beverages to launch its O'cean Energy Drink Sustainability Edition.**

Image: O'cean



# All things EnvironmentAI

**Alex Rivers** provides an overview of the **Aluminium Federation's Sustainability Strategy Day**, held in London in June

**T**he Aluminium Federation (ALFED)'s EnvironmentAI Sustainability Strategy Day, hosted at BMA House in London, UK, welcomed more than 120 members, guests, government representatives, industry experts and sustainable solutions suppliers. The topic of the day (1 June 2023) was the aluminium industry's transition to net zero.

Nadine Bloxsome, ALFED membership and sustainability manager, welcomed the audience and announced ALFED's plans to launch two new member initiatives. The first, an ALFED-accredited ESG officer training programme, will provide resources and support to representatives from ALFED members, which will aid in ESG efficiency to support sustainability transition.

The second, an 'Aluminium Ambassadors' initiative, in partnership with Bloodhound Education, will train and equip professionals from across the industry to go into educational and corporate settings to deliver informative talks and run EnvironmentAI trained workshops, designed to spark subject and career interest.

Lord Rupert Redesdale initiated proceedings with his keynote addressing carbon content and whether companies will win or lose business based on this

aspect. He also stated that he believed reaching net zero "relies on technologies that haven't even been built yet," so there's a great deal of progress yet to be made. Additionally, Lord Redesdale highlighted the complications of ESG framework, and that "one person can't be expected to be responsible" for all the aspects involved in this within one business.

Redesdale noted that in terms of scope emissions, scope 3 is usually the most complicated to tackle – only a few people in the audience admitted they'd begun scrutinising their scope 3 emissions when asked. Thankfully, Redesdale said, ALFED's ESG training programme can help with this.

As Zenergi's Cameron West emphasised, the pathway to net zero will be "a marathon, not a sprint." It was collectively agreed between the speakers and the audience that the work that needs to be done will be complex, but that guidance set out by the government, other bodies and associations should be simpler to follow. Businesses of any type and size need to be able to understand sustainability in the same way.

Industry collaboration was also highlighted as an important factor in making significant progress toward net zero. Many of the companies presenting noted the partnerships they were undertaking.

**Lord Rupert Redesdale delivering his keynote.**  
*Image: ALFED*

Miles Prosser, secretary general of the International Aluminium Institute (IAI), stressed the significance of bringing IAI's member companies together to encourage collaborative working.

During his presentation, Prosser outlined six key issues that the IAI believes the aluminium industry must address going forward, to meet the growing needs of society while also meeting the challenges highlighted UN's Sustainable Development Goals. The six issues include: climate change, emissions and waste; people; water; biodiversity; and circularity. These will provide the framework for the IAI's recently launched Aluminium Forward 2030 initiative.

"We need to be producing more aluminium at a fraction of the emissions we are currently producing," urged Prosser, noting that China has put a cap on primary aluminium production, so that aluminium will instead come from recycled sources. What is needed worldwide in the next few decades, said Prosser, is a mixture of primary and secondary aluminium production, to ensure greenhouse gas reduction pathways are followed.

Prosser said that there are around 50 projects currently occurring globally to reduce emissions in the industry, which is encouraging news indeed.

Also with news was Tomra Recycling Sorting's Terence Keyworth. The segment manager for metal announced the global launch of Tomra's Autosort Pulse machine using LIBS technology, which enables high-throughput production of green aluminium. LIBS is an acronym for Laser Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy, which allows for high-precision sorting of aluminium scrap by alloy types (more detail on this can be found on page 41).

Keyworth explained the importance of deep learning technology in recycling sectors, as currently, they are highly reliant on manual labour that isn't readily available. With data and artificial intelligence, sorting materials becomes much more precise. Tomra's GAIN 5 deep learning solution is able to divide scrap easily into cast and wrought aluminium, giving secondary aluminium smelters a much purer material, Keyworth stated.

The three panels at ALFED's event discussed greenshoring, carbon leakage and eliminating waste. A recently coined term, greenshoring was a topic that even the panel – comprising Rachel Wiffen, senior process engineer and quality systems manager at Innoval Technology; Alupro's executive director, Tom Giddings; and Kilian Schneider, lead material technologist at Constellium – admitted they had to research before appearing on stage. The term involves shifting the focus from low cost overseas production, to sustainable manufacturing closer to home. Schneider noted that 90 per cent of aluminium scrap produced in Europe stays in Europe, but that is not the case in the UK. Giddings agreed the UK needs to boost its scrap levels, and



expressed his hope that the introduction of the UK deposit return scheme will help with this, while also making the scrap cleaner.

Wiffen largely agreed, but also stressed that the UK is a small country and has lost 56 per cent of its flora and fauna species since the 1970s, so manufacturers need to be aware of maintaining biodiversity in their areas of operation.

Elsewhere, panel members discussed net zero and financing. Chris Maclean, CEO of Open Energy Market, called for more weight on net zero in financial modelling. He presented Open Energy Market's True platform, which offers a live, accurate and transparent view of business energy costs. The panel and audience also agreed that having sustainability experts heavily involved in board member decision-making is essential.

During the last panel of the day, Laura Downey, innovation manager (sustainable manufacturing), WMG, University of Warwick, raised that while recycling is usually portrayed as the cleanest way of eliminating waste, "there are still carbon emissions involved." She said what aluminium businesses need to consider is targeting where the waste is in their company, and to work out ways of reducing their product lifecycle, utilising it before recycling even needs to take place.

ALFED presented findings from its recent study throughout the day, but perhaps the most encouraging was that 84 per cent of businesses recognised that net zero was important to growth. Indeed, ALFED's audience on 1 June were incredibly engaged in asking questions after each session throughout the day, which casts no doubt that the aluminium industry will remain vocal on sustainability issues, and continue to hold itself and other decision makers accountable when it comes to setting and reaching environmental targets. [CT](#)

**Tomra's presentation by Terence Keyworth.**  
*Image: Alex Rivers*

# Boosting Portuguese canned food

Reporting from Lisbon, **Andreia Nogueira** explores how tourism and the economic crisis have helped to advance the status of food cans in Portugal

**T**he Portuguese canned food sector, internationally known for its canned fish lines, is thriving – thanks to tourism and innovation, despite the many supply chains issues it still faces.

Statistics Portugal (Instituto Nacional de Estatística – INE) data suggests the sector is growing fast, with Portugal having exported €305.3 million's worth of canned fish products in 2022 (provisional data), 20.3% more than in 2020. In the same period, imports increased 17.5% to €269.6 million.

Portuguese company Nobre's sausages



An example of growth in the sector is the announcement last year that a new €15 million canning factory was being built by canner Conseran – Conservas do Atlântico Norte in the Azores.

Portugal exports 70% of its production of canned fish, mainly to “France, Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom and the US,” said the president of the National Association of Canned Fish Industries (Associação Nacional dos Industriais de Conservas de Peixe – ANICP), José Freitas. Meanwhile, imports come first from Spain, followed by Vietnam, with the most imported fish sold in cans being tuna, most actually canned in Portuguese plants, and some re-exported.

This optimistic outlook follows an unstable situation during the Covid-19 pandemic, Freitas told *CanTech International*. After an “initial increase in sales” thanks to the lockdowns caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, sales fell afterwards, “despite consumers becoming more aware of canned goods.” The pandemic caused tourism to decline sharply in Portugal, with 73.7% fewer non-resident arrivals in Portugal in 2020 (6.5 million) compared to 2019, according to Statistics Portugal.

Market research has shown how this makes sense as an inflation fighting tool. Lisbon-based market researcher, Markttest Group, has shown 78.2% of households in the Portugal mainland (excluding the Azores and Madeira archipelagos) consumed canned fish or vegetables at home in 2021. Canned food was consumed mainly by the lower income consumers, it added.

According to the 2022 statistics, released in May 2023 by the INE, in 2021 there was a decrease of 7.2% in Portuguese production of preparations and canned fish products to 56,189 tonnes compared to 2020, and production of the leading species tuna falling 22.7%, (it accounted for 35.3% of all canned fish products processed in Portugal during 2021). This year-to-year fall was caused by lockdowns, which led to a temporary increase in domestic residential sales of canned goods. Indeed, Portuguese sales of preparations or canned food decreased 12.3% in 2021 to €330.1 million, mainly due to lower sales of canned tuna (-27.9%), said the INE.

The good news is that Portugal remains a major tourism destination, with visitor numbers rebounding to 9.6 million in 2021, according to the INE. Said Freitas: “We can safely say that tourism has more impact on sales than the pandemic. We

have different points of sale on tourist routes and in all of them, the demand from international tourists has been growing. We believe that most canned food sold serves as a ‘souvenir,’ which proves that canned food is a reference product for anyone visiting Portugal. Additionally, the cans are very beautiful and easy to carry,” he argued.

Canned food as a tourism sale was featured in the Tourism Leaders Awards, organised by the Portuguese travel industry newspaper, *TNews*, in March. The Portuguese store, Mundo Fantástico das Conservas Portuguesas (Fantastic World of Portuguese Canned Foods), which sells canned fish in colourful cans, received a best creative brand award.

Moreover, Freitas noticed that “in traditional markets [for Portugal resident consumers and tourists], there [has been] an increase in canned food in the gourmet segment.”

Investors are noticing. In May 2023, European Seafood Investments Portugal, the local subsidiary of Thai seafood company Thai Union, opened a factory store in Peniche. The store “displays the factory’s new brand creation Peniche Can Surf,” a canned selection of tuna salads that reflects Peniche’s “vibrant surfer community and all people supporting a healthy and active lifestyle,” according to the company.

**Innovating to boost sales**

Freitas said the sector has been “developing health products, namely with low salt and low calories,” mirroring Portuguese consumers’ growing concerns about their health, highlighted by researchers from the University of Lisbon.

ANICP members have also been adding new species of canned fish for sale, bringing the species total to 34, which “combined with different sauces and toppings,” offer around 800 varieties of canned fish products, said Freitas. Some of them are anchovy, cod (which is central to Portuguese traditional food), cockle, cuttlefish, eel, giant squid, octopus, whelk and razor-shell clams, with recipes ranging from tuna salad with black eyed beans to fish in tomato sauce.

ANICP launched a ‘Let’s Conserve What’s Ours’ campaign in 2020, designed to “revive the consumption of canned food and, above all, the quality and diversity of Portuguese canned food,” said Freitas, noting the “high quality fish” found in Portugal.

The industry has also been touting such claims, with Iara Martins, agrifood expert at the governmental Portuguese Agency for Investment and Foreign Trade (Agência para o Investimento e Comércio Externo de Portugal – AICEP) writing in 2020 that Portuguese canned fish was gaining popularity because of its ‘sensitivity’ in production and processing to ensure a quality product, boosting sales.



In December 2022, the Portuguese Parliament even ruled that 15 November would be celebrated as the National Day of Canned Fish.

In the beverage sector, there is growing interest in cans, sparking innovation. General director of the Portuguese Association of Distribution Companies (Associação Portuguesa de Empresas de Distribuição - APED), Gonçalo Lobo Xavier, sees a growing “diversity of options... of canned drinks or ready-to-drink canned drinks in other formats,” including port and tonic or gin and tonic. Xavier states that “this market is growing a lot.” Again, sustainability is part of the strategy, with APED, in the last two years, launching two packaging return pilot projects, one for used cans in exchange for “a two-cent receipt or another type of prize,” and the other covering plastic packaging.

**Supply chain issues**

According to data provided by London-based market researcher, Euromonitor International, in 2022, 408.2 million units of metal food cans were sold in the Portuguese retail market, down from 2021’s 413.1 million units – while sales of food in metal aerosol cans were stable at 1.1 million units.

“Portuguese cans are made of steel and aluminium, [being] the vast majority from Portuguese and Spanish factories,” said Freitas. He added the pandemic and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine had a “very important impact” on costs, and while the prices of gas and oil “have already returned to pre-war values,” the costs of aluminium, steel, fuel, and transportation are “still very high.”

Xavier noted “almost all factors of production had a very large [price] increase even before the war,” which worsened with the conflict, with some of them increasing “20 or 30 per cent.”

He mentioned, for instance, metal sheets (aluminium) and tuna, adding that the lack of >

**Two cans of condensed milk and sweetened condensed milk, distributed by the Portuguese supermarket chain Pingo Doce**



**Ramirez's canned tuna in olive oil**

supplies led to higher shipping costs.

Manuel Teixeira Marques Ramirez, chairman of Portugal-based canner Ramirez, which has been in operation for 170 years, agrees: Covid-19 and the war “have an impact on almost all production costs, from raw material (fish, aluminium cans, olive oil, oil, etc) to the workforce, including individual protection equipment, energy or machine maintenance.”

Ramirez recalls when the same product/service had its price increasing “five or six” times, sometimes doubling, on the same day, especially “energy, aluminium and sunflower oil.” Product price rises followed.

Nevertheless, Ramirez told *CanTech International*, “to lighten the cost structure,” the company sourced “alternative raw materials” or products “from markets less exposed to the consequences of the Russia-Ukraine war.”

Such measures have paid dividends, as Ramirez’ sales volume was €32 million in 2022, of which 55% was exports, with sales up 26% year-on-year compared to 2019.

The government has helped boost canned tuna sales by including it among 46 products exempted from VAT from April to combat inflation. In April, annual food inflation in Portugal was 15.41%, down from 20% in January and February.

Ramirez said that such help should not be restricted to imported fish, arguing that “sardines and mackerel, which are caught on the Portuguese coast,” should have been added too. However, the government has not yet done this.

Another challenge has been theft. Last year, several Portuguese supermarkets put alarms on basic products such as canned tuna due to an increase in food thefts, according to the newspaper, *Expresso*. That said, APED’s Xavier claims these precautions were staged only in a limited number of outlets, with such problems largely experienced last September, when food prices started to rise. Xavier believes “things are getting back to normal” now.

The good news is that the increase in canned fish export sales shows that inflation is not dampening European enthusiasm for this product. **CT**

# Improving reliability

**Rockwell Automation's Andreu Cuartiella, lifecycle services commercial manager, EMEA, discusses the company's expertise in predictive maintenance**

## What are Rockwell's latest developments in this area?

Predictive techniques utilise on-machine sensors to gather raw data, co-located edge computing for data collection and further workstation-level computing for visualisation, trending, and analysis procedures. But the ultimate benefits of the approach are only realised when the information they generate is fed into two higher-level systems – a computerised maintenance management system (CMMS) and one for asset performance management (APM).

Fiix is a cloud-based, AI-powered CMMS that helps companies manage all their maintenance, including thousands of assets, work orders, and parts in one place.

Whereas Plex is a cloud-based SaaS APM production platform that operates at scale connecting people and systems, automating processes, tracking data from end to end, and capturing and analysing information.

These will run in the Cloud and utilise the data generated in manufacturing operations at the enterprise level. A CMMS deals with everything around maintenance, whereas an APM is more macroscopic – it looks at things from a production standpoint and is concerned with issues such as asset performance and downtimes.

## How has the technology advanced over the past few decades?

The real developments recently have been in data processing techniques and not in acquisition or sensor technologies. The ultimate objective of implementing such systems is to avoid the impact of unexpected equipment failure causing unplanned downtime.

The number of use cases for artificial intelligence is growing exponentially, as an example to enable enterprises to predict maintenance needs throughout the facility and gain access to insights on how maintenance teams should respond in seconds. Users see trends that historically have gone unnoticed, and this is the superpower behind Fiix, which was recently announced as a winner in the Business Intelligence Group Artificial Intelligence Excellence Awards programme.

## What are some of the benefits to manufacturers?

The benefits of a properly implemented predictive maintenance strategy are real and

quantifiable. Research shows it can generate a tenfold increase in return on investment (ROI), a 25 to 30 per cent reduction in maintenance costs and a 70 to 75 per cent decrease in breakdowns, meaning altogether a 35 to 45 per cent reduction in downtimes.

Users of Rockwell Automation's CMMS Fiix and its APM Plex can report their own specific performance improvements. A distillery, for instance, achieved a 50 per cent increase in overall equipment effectiveness (OEE) in an automated processing and bottling application through the use of Plex.

## Are there any challenges involved in this type of technology?

Implementing this technology in an existing production facility may reveal that it operates ageing equipment, automated by a legacy, or end of life industrial control system (ICS) and operational technology (OT) network.

We need to make sure that data flows smoothly from the machines to the information systems, so a reliable and secure network is critical.

Rockwell Automation has a proven approach to increase industrial network security. The Connected Services suite helps assess, design, implement, and manage OT environment. These automation-agnostic services encompass virtual infrastructure, networks, and cybersecurity. We believe we deliver unrivalled capability in OT cybersecurity, with a powerful combination of specialised in-house cyber knowledge coupled with world-class partnerships.

## What do you see for the future of predictive maintenance?

Predictive maintenance will also be applied increasingly not just to the large-scale moving parts of machinery, but to their control systems and even to electronic components. We have already started to look inside the control cabinets. As an example, Advanced Predictive Maintenance functions are included in the algorithms built in to PowerFlex 755T drives, allowing a change of paradigm. Instead of a run to failure approach for capacitors, for power semiconductors or fan/blowers, we can now predict when they need to be replaced before failure, reducing unplanned downtime. 

**Andreu Cuartiella.**  
Image: Rockwell  
Automation



# The rise of Do It With Cans

**Robert Fell**, director and chief executive at the **Metal Packaging Manufacturers Association**, details the success of the website which showcases DIY and craft products sold in metal packaging

**D**uring Covid, DIY searches on the popular photo-sharing platform, Pinterest, dramatically increased as consumers unable to go on holiday turned their attentions and wallets to updating their immediate surroundings.

Phrases such as 'outdoor spaces on a budget' increased three times over; 'diy patio ideas on a budget' up by 17 times and 'backyard oasis on a budget' by five times on the social media site.

As part of the Weekly Coronavirus Tracker by Rare Group, over a fifth of respondents saw themselves spending more on DIY and home management, and a similar number worked on their own DIY projects. It also showed that during June 2020, 12 per cent of respondents in London took part in interior design activities and 13 per cent of those working learned new home-making skills.

DIY has always enjoyed buoyant consumer spend, but in 2020 it received a particular boost. It was against this backdrop that the Metal Packaging Manufacturers Association (MPMA) launched its new campaign, Do It With Cans – a blog aimed at showcasing DIY and craft products packaged in metal to consumers.

Inspired by the success of consumer-focused sister site, Canned Food UK ([cannedfood.co.uk](http://cannedfood.co.uk)), also

run by MPMA, which highlights the benefits of canned food to UK shoppers, Do It With Cans raises the profile of the broad variety of DIY products available in metal packaging through easy-to-follow tutorial blogs written by an expert or influencer.

## Written by experts

The blog will be celebrating its third birthday in October 2023, with over 25 different blogs written by a roster of experts with a collective Instagram and Pinterest following of over 145,000 people. Authors have included Helen Moore, founder of craft blog Whitewood and Linen; Victoria Fitz-Gerald, Fixing Up 58 blogger, and Sam Taylor-Crooks at Dove Cottage blog.

Do It With Cans also launched with a dedicated trade secrets column, authored by DIY Daddy, also known as Nigel Higgins, a qualified painter and decorator, covering topics from giving your boiler cupboard a makeover; decorating a metal garage door; preparing guttering for winter; to perfecting the paint finish on your walls.

In 2023, with the cost-of-living crisis showing no signs of abating, this year's campaign takes inspiration from the 'make do and mend' mentality. The website has teamed up with two new influencers who specialise in thrifty, upcycling projects to help inspire homeowners to tackle projects themselves with straightforward advice.

Cassie Fairy, from My Thrifty Life, and Hester van Overbeek, from Hester's Handmade Home, will be writing about a range of projects, including upcycling old bar stools to make a porch bench; a porch makeover; garden bench repairs; using empty cans to make a bug hotel and creating a new tin lampshade.

Each blog provides simple step-by-step instructions detailing the equipment and materials needed. Importantly, each blog is written to showcase a range of DIY products available in metal packaging, from paint; wax; wood stain; glue; spray paints and varnishes.

## Making headway

Ultimately, the goal of Do It With Cans is to shine a spotlight on metal packaging within the DIY and craft sectors, and to showcase to both consumers and brand owners the benefits of opting for metal

**Influencers including Cassie Fairy and Hester van Overbeek will be writing about a range of projects for Do It With Cans, including upcycling old bar stools to make a porch bench**



packaging. MPMA wants to highlight metal's versatility, durability and its practical benefits – not least its ability to be fully recycled.

To do this, the blog content on the website is coupled with a Pinterest page: [pinterest.com/doiwithcans](https://pinterest.com/doiwithcans). Pinterest is the most popular channel for sharing DIY and craft-based content. In fact, according to the platform's ad information, there is potential to reach up to 8.6 million people who are searching for DIY and craft related content. Home decor, DIY and crafts are consistently listed as one of the top seven subjects searched for on the site.

Through the Pinterest page, we share the most recent blog posts and, in turn, spread the key messages about the benefits of metal packaging to an engaged audience. To date, Do It With Cans has received nearly two million impressions (which means content from the website has been seen nearly two million times) on Pinterest, and has achieved over 23,000 interactions including likes, clicks, comments and shares. It has registered an engaged audience of over half a million.

Similarly, over the last three years, we've seen a dramatic uptake in organic search discovering the Do It With Cans website – [doiwithcans.co.uk](https://doiwithcans.co.uk). When comparing website performance for the period January to May in 2022 versus same period in 2023, we saw a 992.96 per cent increase in the number of users finding the website via a search engine.



To date, the website has received over 11,000 page views from 7,900 users and received 34,000 event counts – the number of times users triggered an event on the website such as clicking a link.

Interestingly, our most popular blog posts are those that tackle common household DIY chores. 'How to get the perfect finish on a skirting board' has achieved over 2,100 views alone, while 'How to paint tiles to transform a kitchen or bathroom' has had 1,500 views and 'How to renovate a metal garage door' has had 1,298 views.

On the other hand, blog posts inspired by hashtags like #IKEAHacks and other Instagram and TikTok trends, such as 'pimp your kid's play kitchen (to match your own),' consistently perform well. This tutorial takes the iconic IKEA Duktig kitchen, often available for next to nothing on secondhand sale sites, and shows you how to upcycle it to match your own kitchen. It is always in the top four posts on the site.

### What's next?

Really, we've only scratched the surface of Do It With Cans' potential. The format goes from strength to strength and there are many more avenues for us to explore. Not only do we continue to expand our roster of influencer experts, but there are clearly opportunities for us on other social media platforms, not least Instagram and TikTok.

We'd also love to work with even more members and industry partners collaborating on content creation, writing new tutorials or dedicated Pinterest campaigns, highlighting an even greater variety of DIY products in metal packaging. Do get in touch via [info@doiwithcans.co.uk](mailto:info@doiwithcans.co.uk) or the MPMA directly.

For 2023, we've a series of new blogs coming up from our make do and mend influencers. **CT**

**Do It With Cans writers comprise of experts with a collective Instagram and Pinterest following of over 145,000 people**



**According to Pinterest's ad information, there is potential to reach up to 8.6 million people who are searching for DIY and craft related content on the platform**

# Tool suppliers in times of change

Germany-based **Wallram Group** outlines the tooling developments it has seen during its 50 years in the field

**A**fter its six-year break, Metpack 2023 was an opportunity to not only see old friends and business partners again, but also to experience the latest developments in metal packaging first-hand. The numerous exhibitors present had used the long hiatus since the last trade fair to present an impressive programme with an array of new developments.

One of the many participants to this year's show was Wallram Group, which was honoured at the event in Essen, Germany, for its 110-year history. At the same time, Wallram was able to celebrate 50 years in the field of can tooling, during which time the group has seen much change.

While steel tools had a firm place in the manufacture of metal packaging for many years, despite wear problems, the advantages of carbide and later, ceramic, and its significantly better durability were recognised.

Here, Wallram also became part of the business as a carbide manufacturer. The developments accelerated from there: ceramics and specially coated steel were introduced and further optimised. Today, individually configured carbide, different ceramics and coatings are standard. The question of whether the current choice of material is still up to date should always be scrutinised. Ongoing analyses of the current state-of-the-art and increasingly demanding customer requirements are important.

In addition, there are a wide variety of surface

textures that are created in the manufacturing process of the tools. Special knowledge of tool processing, especially in the grinding process, is required.

Beside the tool manufacturers, the drivers of these developments were also the customers, who tried to reduce costs and, above all, make significant material savings and sustainability strives with ever smaller wall thicknesses. Additionally, the high demands from the customers of can manufacturers changed the market permanently: mergers to create global, powerful can makers were the necessary result. This was also not without consequences for the suppliers and thus also the tool manufacturers.

As a result, it became increasingly difficult for some local manufacturers, who operated can tooling as a by-product alongside other product areas, to meet the volume, quality and product support requirements of global customers. This led to the emergence of specialists in this area who were positioned worldwide and could therefore react flexibly to changing customer quantity requirements, and actively support customers in the application with their market and product knowledge.

Then, with the emergence of new markets for the can, primarily through craft breweries and wine makers, another element came into play: smaller batch sizes alongside a growing variety of can sizes and shapes. After the focus had previously been on the process-optimised production of larger quantities of tools with a similar design, a high degree of flexibility was now also required. Smaller quantities of tools had to be manufactured in a short amount of time. Optimising set-up times played a major role, so that the faster changing of tools in the machine was still cost-effective.

Some of the biggest changes can be seen in the production of tool manufacturers.

Despite numerous changes in material and design, a punch does not look significantly different than it did many years ago. However, a worker from the 1950s would no longer recognise his or her workplace today; manually operated machines have given way to machines with CNC controls, and physically demanding activities are carried out – or at least supported – by robots. The usual workshop production was replaced by an optimised flow production with automated feed and transport routes.

**Lizzini Punch  
Grinder at  
Wallram's Essen  
plant**



This is a development that will be intensified by increasing digitisation: while the analysis of production data is already standard today, intelligent systems will automatically recognise possible improvements in the future, suggest them, or even implement them independently. This change was and is accompanied by the need to continuously invest in state-of-the-art equipment and to consistently train and develop employees' skillsets.

The importance of the tool should not be underestimated: in relation to the purchase price, it seems to be a subordinate product compared to the machines and the material – but the consequences of compromises in the precision and quality of the tool can be devastating. The consequential costs of production downtime and loss of scrapped cans far exceed the price of the tools. One should not save in the wrong place here.

With production facilities in Germany, the USA and Poland and customers in all parts of the world, Wallram Group is globally active. Its production capacities are constantly being expanded. An investment programme in machines and equipment of 15 per cent of the annual group turnover was initially announced in 2021. Since then, 25 per cent has been invested in this area.

The main focus of Wallram's investment was on grinding and turning technology, but the area of quality control was also significantly strengthened. In addition, a completely new production hall was inaugurated at the group's Poland location, and in the US, the complete steel processing was moved to an additional hall to create additional expansion areas for the grinding applications. At the same time, staff numbers were increased to serve the additional capacities. Currently, additional personnel in Wallram's engineering department

are working on product improvements through contact with customers, but also with universities and research institutes.

There are different approaches to the area of raw materials. While some tool manufacturers emphasise the advantages of in-house production, others rely on the optimal selection of suitable suppliers for the respective application. Wallram continues to focus on tool optimisation through ideal grinding processes, which can be achieved with the group's own grinding machines (Wallram Grindtec - Lizzini).

However, customers and tool manufacturers are jointly faced with the task of optimally designing the tools for use, monitoring them in can production and using the knowledge gained in this way to further optimise the tools, as well as find the best possible settings for the machines and systems. Just like everyone else, Wallram must have the right specialists ready for this.

The group is a family-run business that has passed through several generations. Long-term partnerships and the stability of the business relationship from which both sides benefit, are the result of a philosophy that thinks first in generations and only secondary in short-term results.

Overall, the requirements of the market have increased significantly; in particular, flexibility and the ability to respond to short-term customer requirements without compromising precision and quality, have become increasingly crucial. The suppliers of metal packaging products have had to react to this and make the necessary improvements, and thus their suppliers have too. Cooperation is the key to further improvements, as it is a joint task of all parties involved to continually advance metal as the most sustainable packaging material. 



**Mix of ceramic and carbide for can tooling**

# Years of enhancing performance

**Evert van de Weg speaks with Innosen's Luc Nelen about his involvement in the birth of automated quality control in can making**

Luc with Alex Rivers, giving an overview of Innosen's new products and providing comment for CanTech's Metpack 2023 review

In the 1970s, companies in the United States and Europe started to develop solutions for improving quality, maximising efficiency and cutting costs on metal packaging manufacturing lines. This included solutions for the manufacture of cans and ends for food and beverages, but also for aerosols and tubes. The boom in can making and easy open end production caused by the quick development of the draw and wall-ironing technology in that decade, in particular for the production of beverage cans, undoubtedly played an important role in that trend.

At the same time, brand owners of canned food and beverages became increasingly important in their markets. Poor or variable quality of the cans used added costs and put brands at risk. The last few decades of the 20th century saw a strong increase of the use of fundamental manufacturing aids in metal packaging production, such as statistical process control, process monitoring and the general strive for continuous improvement.

Several companies in the USA and Europe took part in these improvement paths, such as Altek, Pressco, ISRA Vision and Prime Controls in the USA, and Heuft, Qualiplus and Sencon in Europe, to name but a few.

Someone who actively took part in these developments is my former colleague at the Dutch can maker, Thomassen & Drijver-Verblifa, based in Deventer, the Netherlands, Luc Nelen. He is now president of the company, Innosen, based in Manila, the Philippines. I met him on the Innosen booth at the recent Metpack exhibition in Essen, and we had much to discuss about his journey to his current position in the much-respected company, specialising in quality assurance for the can making industry.

## How did you begin your career in this specialised area?

"After finishing my degree in chemical engineering, my first job was at Philips Research in the Netherlands, where I worked on the development of the VLP, short for Video Long Play, which later became what we now know as the DVD and CD.

Although I loved the challenges the work presented, it was also frustrating to sometimes see an idea you had worked incredibly hard on over a long period, rejected, either because it did not work or someone else had a better idea.

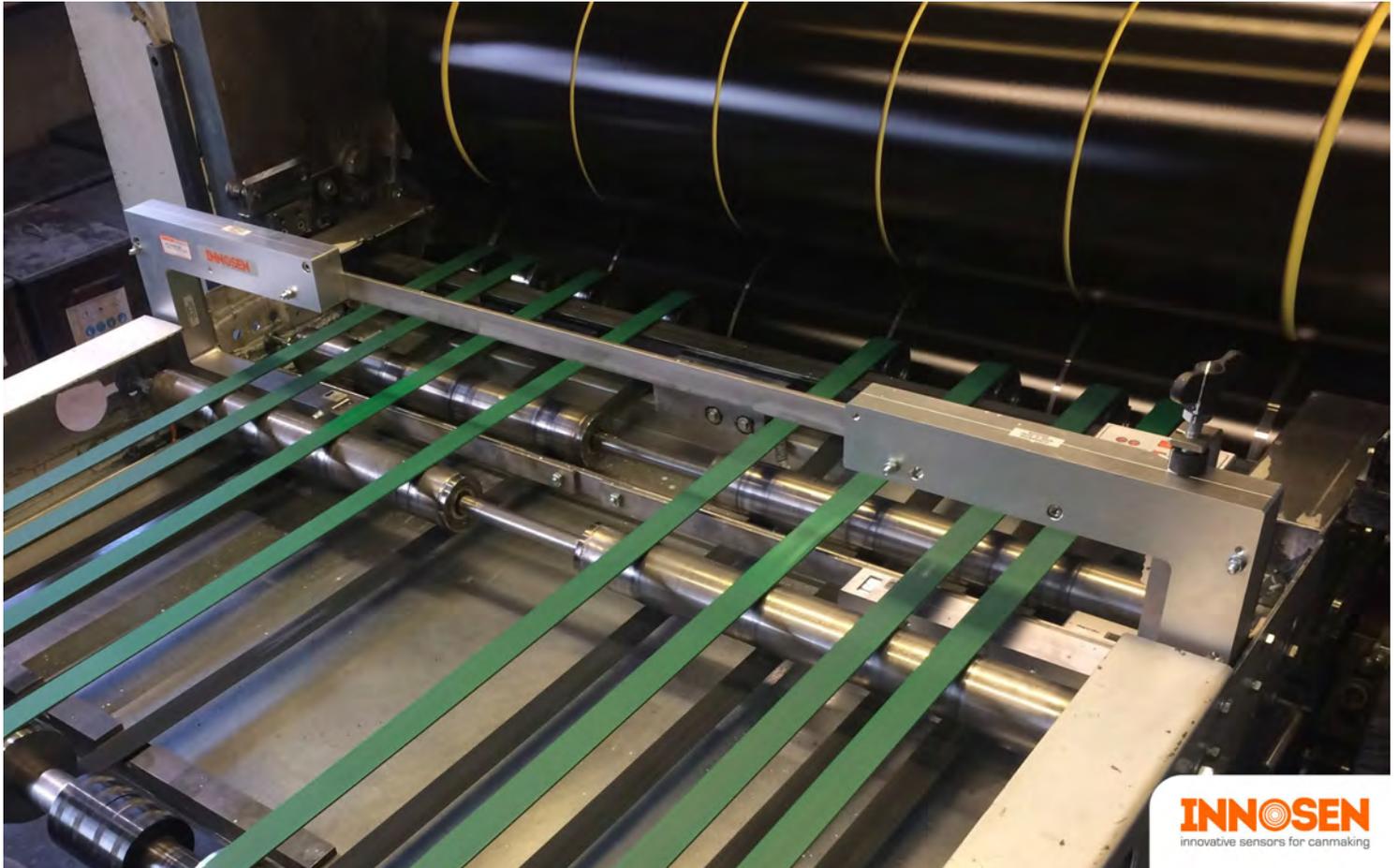
"For me, that meant I needed to move away from the more fundamental research and look at more practical engineering challenges. I found those at Thomassen & Drijver-Verblifa (TDV)."

## What was the landscape of the can making market when you entered it?

"When I joined TDV in the late 70s, the company was part of the USA-based Continental Can Company. CCC at the time was the world's biggest can company and TDV was its subsidiary in the Netherlands.

At the time I joined TDV, two-piece can making





was just getting started in Europe, and for all sorts of reasons, most of the two-piece cans were made out of tinplate. CCC had a lot of experience in two-piece cans, but mainly in aluminium. That meant that there were interesting process challenges I could help resolve. In the 1970s, Continental Can decided to build a factory to make two-piece cans in Wrexham in the UK.

“I joined the project team building that factory, together with colleagues from Germany and Continental’s European headquarters in Brussels. This factory had to be one that made aluminium cans, and I had to make sure the CCC experience and know-how was used in the design and operation of the Wrexham factory. I also used the opportunity to design systems in such a way that the whole factory would be much more energy efficient.”

“Once Wrexham was up and running, more two-piece can factories were built in Lint in Belgium, in Hassloch, Germany, and in Bierne, France. After that, it became quiet on the expansion front. That is when I had an opportunity to join in the diversification TDV had started.”

**Entering new fields**

In the 1980s, can maker, TDV, had to face saturation in the canned food market, accompanied by decreasing profits. The management decided, also under the pressure of parent company, Continental

Can, to look at diversification of its activities. The management called in the internationally renowned consulting agency, Innotech, and assigned it to the task of finding activities in adjacent areas to can making technology. This resulted in the foundation of the new company, Qualiplus, which was created to develop systems for automated quality control.

**How actively were you involved in Qualiplus’ inception?**

“Very actively indeed. Qualiplus designed machine vision systems for high-speed packaging lines. There were naturally enough opportunities for vision inspection in the can making factories, and that is where we started. The vision systems were initially bought from the company Hajime, in Japan, and based on analog electronics, as digital was not fast enough. Later, as the capabilities of digital processing improved, hardware was also bought in the USA and developed in-house. Inspection systems for returnable and new glass bottles, tobacco leaves and cans were the main products for Qualiplus. After the takeover of Continental Can by Kiewit in 1984, the Qualiplus company was sold to Heuft in Germany, and I stayed on as the managing director.”

Qualiplus continued on as part of the company Heuft Qualiplus. Luc Nelen stayed on board there as managing director for several years. >

**Innosens’ IS415 Sheet Skew Measurement System with the IS430 Sheet Translation Measurement System near the coating line**



Innosen's Hoverprobe II in action, alongside Sencon's S19600 Coating Thickness Gauge

### What was the reason behind the shift in your career?

"Heuft was mostly interested in the refillable bottle market and my interest was more in can making. Therefore, I decided to join Sencon. They were already quite active at that time in can making. I started initially as their European agent and later I became one of the owners of a new division that would concentrate on three-piece can making. It is in this period that I designed products that many of *CanTech International* readers will recognise, like the Hoverprobe and the first fully automatic double sheet sensor without any settings. Aside from the expansion of the product range, I also expanded the company geographically by setting up offices – firstly in Spain, and later, Manila in the Philippines – to be able to better serve our customer base."

Years later, Luc again decided to take another career path.

"In 2012, I amicably split from Sencon, to be able to concentrate my efforts even more in the three-piece can market. The split enabled me to have an R&D team that is fully dedicated to the market we serve. The products we are working on now are generally inspired by problems our customers are facing in their day-to-day operations. Considering that the first cans were produced over 200 years ago, it is amazing that so many challenges still remain unsolved. It is probably fair to say that the issues remaining after such a long time are not the easiest to resolve. But finding solutions by applying

new technology to a mature process, to help our customers make better cans more easily, is exactly what Innosen loves doing.

"We believe that with the offices we have in Spain, Manila, Hong Kong and, more recently, Fort Collins in the USA, we are able to leverage our global footprint to the advantage of both our customers and ourselves. It enables us to procure materials and labour where the price/quality ratio is most attractive, while at the same time allowing us to provide a better service to our customers. Our team can communicate with our customers in eight different languages and we have recently been able to put this to good use at the Metpack show in Essen, Germany.

"Apart from our Hoverprobe in an updated version, our new products for the welder were particularly popular at Metpack. We introduced the self-calibrating IS670 Missing Side Seam Lacquer Detector, which is able to detect if the external sidestripe for the weld protecting is present, and the IS625 Inverted Can Label Detector, which can see if decorated cans are facing the right way up as they exit the welder. For the rest, it can also detect if a can is inside-out or has the decoration on the inside instead of the outside.

"We have more exciting products coming later this year, which all address a specific need in our market. Thanks to the unwavering support of our customers and the hard work of our employees, we are looking at a bright future for all of us." 

# Is the energy crisis really over?

It seems as though the worst forecasts expressed at the end of 2022 concerning the European energy crisis were not destined to come to fruition. Still, the state of play is far from perfect. **Vladislav Vorotnikov** reports

**S**oaring energy and input prices were among the key factors driving metal packaging production down in 2022. Now, the storm seems to have passed, although optimism in the industry remains cautious.

The metal packaging industry's production value in Europe contracted by 1.9% in 2022, as the industry faced a number of challenges, including rising costs of energy and input materials, commented Justinas Liuima, industrial research manager at Euromonitor International.

However, at country level, the situation differed.

For example, the production volume index of metal packaging in France and Spain improved in 2022, as these countries were less severely affected by the energy crisis. On the contrary, the production volume index of metal packaging in Germany, the UK and Italy fell by 6.6%, 7.5% and 12.8%, respectively, as these countries were highly affected by the rising energy costs, Liuima said, adding that for example, the metal packaging industry's spending on gas in the UK increased by 9% in 2022, while the metal packaging industry's spending on gas in Germany soared by 120% in 2022. >

*Image:  
distelAPPArath/  
pixabay*





**The MPMA has proposed to the UK government that they change the target of the CCL scheme from energy efficiency to hydrocarbon energy efficiency, so that a single investment in, say, solar panels, would meet both targets. Image: StockSnap/Pixabay**

Still, the UK energy industry suffered from a stronger spike in energy prices compared with some European countries, commented Robert Fell, director of the UK Metal Packaging Manufacturers Association.

“Energy prices put a severe strain on our metal packaging manufacturers, especially given the significant differential between UK energy prices and those ‘enjoyed’ by our European neighbours and competitors,” Fell said, pointing out the fact that some companies were unfortunate to renew their long-term energy contracts in the period of the peak prices.

For these companies, the energy crisis will continue for as long as their current contract unless the government intervenes, Fell admitted. In addition, for the UK metal packaging industry, the gap with energy prices in continental Europe remains a particular issue.

“That said, energy costs will remain an issue for UK can makers for as long as the differential in energy costs between the UK and Europe remains,” Fell said.

The same phenomenon is seen in continental Europe. For example, in the Baltic states, local companies also complained that the energy suppliers want to switch to shorter-term contracts to be protected from losses, in case of new price turbulence in the market.

### Seeking a remedy

Liuiima, however, stressed that despite the challenges, the European metal packaging industry managed to

maintain relatively stable profit margins in 2022, as manufacturers benefited from sustainability trends favouring non-plastic packaging, and managed to pass on cost increases to the buyer industries.

For example, the producer price index, which indicates the level of manufacturers' selling prices, grew by 14-18% in the largest Western European countries of Germany, France, Italy, Spain and the UK. This indicates that metal packaging producers managed to sell their goods at much higher prices and compensate for cost increases.

“Better production planning also helped the industry to maintain relatively stable profitability and adapt to the rising costs environment. For example, in the fourth quarter of 2022, the production of light metal packaging in Europe declined at a faster rate than the demand. This helped manufacturers to reduce stocks of finished products, avoid higher increase in energy costs and prepare for the anticipated demand recovery in the first half of 2023,” Liuiima said.

This is largely in line with the official position of the European authorities. The European economy has managed to weather the energy crisis thanks to a rapid diversification of supply and a sizeable fall in gas consumption, the European Commission has recently said.

Markedly lower energy prices are working their way through the economy, reducing firms' production costs. Consumers are also seeing their energy bills fall, although private consumption is set to remain subdued as wage growth lags inflation.

To face the rising energy prices, European business

last year largely looked into green opportunities. The metal packaging industry was no exception.

“On-site green energy generation would certainly help [to mitigate rising energy costs]. However, there is a problem with regard to the investment required,” Fell said.

“All our large can makers are part of the UK’s Climate Change Levy scheme (CCL), which requires them to increase their energy efficiency in return for significant discounts on the CCL costs. Currently, on-site green energy generation does not count towards CCL, as it’s an energy conversion rather than an energy reduction. Thus, if the UK can makers wish to install green energy systems, they must make two investments: into the green energy system and into whatever investment they require in order to fulfil their CCL obligations,” Fell added.

The UK Metal Packaging Manufacturers Association has proposed to the UK government that they change the target of the CCL scheme from energy efficiency to hydrocarbon energy efficiency, so that a single investment in, say, solar panels, would meet both targets. There would be no cost to the government, but it would certainly stimulate green energy investment.

**Inflation bites**

While energy prices have largely subsided across Europe during the past several months, the governments keep struggling against rampant inflation. In some countries, authorities speak about a full-fledged cost-of-living crisis, which forces consumers to revise their budgets.

The cost-of-living crisis in Europe will make it more difficult for metal packaging producers to pass on cost increases to end consumers in 2023, Liuima warned.

For example, 35% of consumers globally in Euromonitor’s Lifestyles Survey 2023 indicated they plan to increase spending in discount stores in 2023, while 44% of consumers plan to save more money in 2023. These trends show that consumers are pressured by rising prices and are planning to make changes in purchasing patterns.

As a result, metal packagers will also have to focus more on cost discipline in 2023, Liuima said, adding, however, that the overall demand for metal packaging products is expected to remain stable in 2023, despite the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

“A large share of metal packaging is used in the food industry, which is less sensitive to the changes in economic cycles or price changes. Sustainability trends will also continue to support demand for metal packaging, which is easier to recycle. For example, 52% of consumers globally in Euromonitor’s Lifestyles Survey 2023 stated they prefer recyclable packages when making a purchase,” Liuima said.

Fell shares the same opinion. He explained that,

in general, metal food cans always tend to do well in a crisis, as consumers see them as a safe and secure choice for their food. He admitted, though, that beyond food, it’s likely all sectors are adversely affected to some extent.

**High uncertainty**

Still, high uncertainty in the energy markets remains among the key risks for the metal packaging industry in 2023, Liuima warned.

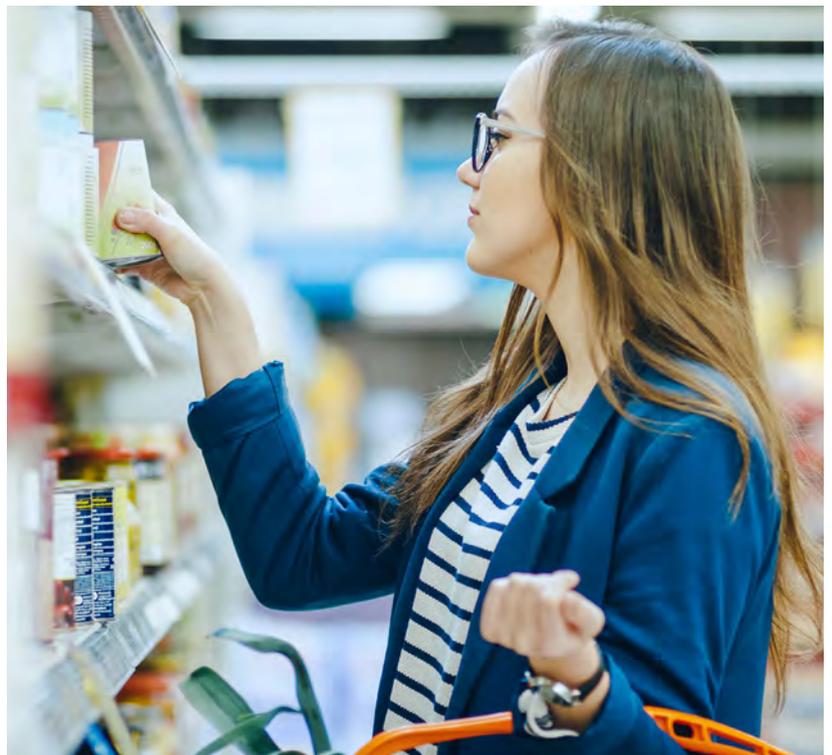
“Even though energy prices have stabilised as the global economy cools, factors such as OPEC supply cuts, a colder winter in Europe in 2023, or spillovers from the war in Ukraine, could add to the higher volatility in the energy markets,” she stated.

The downward price rally on the energy market happened largely because Europe has amassed higher-than-usual inventories due to a relatively mild winter, record imports of LNG, and tepid demand. Still, market players are wary of the persistent risks, including the possibility of even lower Russian supplies and competition with Asia for LNG.

The average price of the European gas features jumped by nearly 20% between March and June, and under a certain scenario, the energy crisis could return.

“Economic growth in China is another factor for the industry to watch in 2023. So far, economic recovery in China remains fragile. However, faster consumption and economic growth towards the end of the year could increase global demand for metals and commodities, in turn leading to higher input costs for the metal packaging industry,” Liuima said. 

**MPMA's Robert Fell stated that, in general, metal food cans always tend to do well in a crisis, as consumers see them as a safe and secure choice for their food. Image: Shutterstock**



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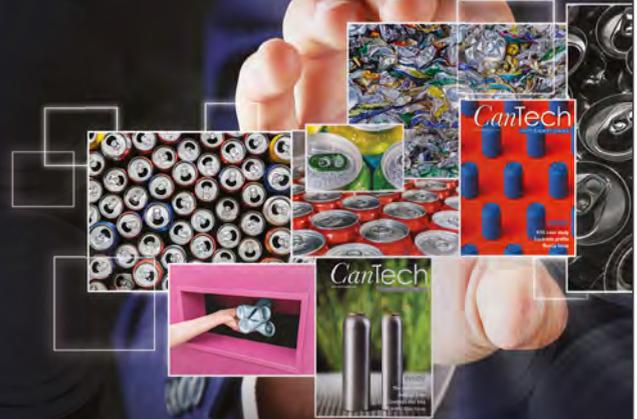
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## Tomra launches Autosort Pulse with LIBS technology

Tomra is celebrating its next milestone in the metal segment by introducing the Autosort Pulse to the market, as announced at the ALFED Sustainability Strategy Day in June.

Equipped with dynamic LIBS technology for high-precision sorting of aluminium scrap by alloy types, the new sorting system can be used across a wide range of applications to create high-quality secondary metals.

As the metals industry strives to increase recycling rates to reduce both energy consumption and the use of new materials, the use of best-in-class sorting technology is indispensable. They recover pure mono materials from mixed scrap that can be further processed and turned into virgin-like material with high recycled content. Frank van de Winkel, market strategy segment manager for metals at Tomra Recycling Sorting, explains: "Aluminium scrap consists of multiple alloys. Depending on the application, they contain a mix of different alloying metals that define the material's properties. To recycle a specific alloy without downgrading quality, it must be separated into specific alloy classes – a task that can only be done with the most sophisticated technologies, such as LIBS.

"Our team of in-house engineers has dedicated significant time and effort in the development of this technology to make it excel in performance. Autosort Pulse gives recyclers the means to sort aluminium by alloy classes and produce furnace-ready products for demanding applications."

Autosort Pulse combines leading-edge technology in one machine, enabling high-throughput production of green aluminium. Featuring the patented, dynamic LIBS technology, it delivers outstanding performance in the separation of, for example, 5xxx and 6xxx aluminium alloys. The machine's 3D object scanning detects each object regardless of its size and surface, while multiple single-point scans enable sharper detection of materials in any condition. Due to its AI-based object singulation feature, even overlapping and adjacent objects can be accurately separated to maximise yield.

Conventional sorting machines like x-ray fluorescence (XRF) or standard LIBS technologies are limited in maintaining industry-level throughputs when sorting aluminium alloys. Autosort Pulse has a combination of the most innovative technologies, leading to peak precision and high-purity



sorting results. According to Tomra, multiple material tests have demonstrated that purity levels of more than 95% can be achieved.

With a bulk infeed system and a processing capacity between three to seven tons an hour, operators can create high volumes of recycled content and thereby meet industrial standards across a wide range of applications.

The Autosort Pulse design also protects workers from any potentially harmful or penetrating light emissions.

Matthias Winkler, product manager at Tomra Recycling Sorting, stated, "We have a long-standing legacy in the metals segment and our finger is on the pulse of the market. Based on our extensive in-house knowledge, we started developing the dynamic LIBS technology when we sensed alloy separation could help businesses reduce downgrading material. After an extensive innovation phase, we have now extended our product portfolio with Autosort Pulse to complement the new generation X-tract.

"Customers testing the machine are impressed by its results and the operational benefits it brings. They can run high throughputs and create high-quality products, which gives them access to new material streams and makes them benefit from operational flexibility and a quick return on investment. I strongly believe that Autosort Pulse will solve the sorting challenges of tomorrow."

## VK introduces zero sugar RTD cans

UK alcopop brand, VK, has announced the launch of a new zero sugar range to the off-trade.

VK & Soda comes in two flavours – VK & Soda Berries and VK & Soda Lime. Each 330ml can contains 69 calories, fewer than the iconic VK range.

Charlie Leaver, head of brand at Global Brands, commented, “We’re absolutely thrilled to release this true innovation for the category – a product enticing the rapidly growing segment of health-conscious consumers, with the full flavour and taste that VK delivers.”



“Following brilliant feedback from VK fans in trials across NUS venues and nightclubs, and a successful entry into the off-trade through insertion in Tesco Mixed Packs, we’re thrilled to bring VK & Soda to the masses in a convenient canned format.”

“At 3.4% it appeals to consumers looking for moderation and healthier drinks – the perfect product for Gen Z consumers looking for zero sugar and lower calorie options, cross-selling existing customers and attracting a new segment to RTDs.”

Image: VK

## Bumble Bee Seafoods debuts new canned tuna

Bumble Bee Seafoods is continuing to expand its line of canned, pouched and kit-based tuna products, with 12 new additions to retail store shelves across the US. Many of the new products or line extensions will be nationally available at leading retailers.

Among the new SKUs is the Bumble Bee Prime Yellowfin in Extra Virgin Olive Oil in three flavours: Lemon & Pepper, Balsamic & Herb and Basil Pesto & Roasted Garlic, all available in 5oz cans.

“We are proud to be able to offer our valued retail partners a range of new product offerings this year that deliver superior consumer value,” said Connie Shepherd, senior vice president, strategy and commercialisation.

“Our goal is to offer our retailers a variety of seafood products that are delicious, accessible, and affordable. From our premium Yellowfin Bumble Bee Prime product line, to on-trend new pouch flavours, to the kid-friendly new Ranch flavour addition to our popular Snack on the Run! Kits, there really is something for everyone to enjoy.”



Image: Bumble Bee Seafoods

## NICE adds sparkles

London-based, female-led wine startup, NICE, has launched its first canned sparkling wine.

The white wine product comes in at 10% ABV and offers dry, crisp and sparkling notes, according to NICE. It is a Spanish Airén from La Mancha, Spain, and comes packaged in a 200ml can.

The new product joins NICE’s current lineup of Sauvignon Blanc (11.5% ABV); Pale Rosé (12% ABV); and Malbec (13.5% ABV).

“We’re here to celebrate the wins in people’s lives, no matter how big or small the occasion, so we created this sparkling white wine for a night out with a sparkly outfit, all the way through to celebrating on the sofa with a takeaway,” said NICE co-founder, Lucy Busk.



Image: NICE

## GUNNA DRINKS LAUNCHES ALUMINIUM SODA BOTTLES

UK-based Gunna Drinks’ anti-plastic campaign continues with the launch of what it is claiming as the UK’s first range of aluminium bottled soft drinks.

The range begins with three immune-boosting lemonades in Tropical Lemonade, Raspberry Lemonade and Twisted Lemonade, all with added vitamin C and zinc. The drinks will come in a 500ml bottle format (compared to its usual 330ml can).

Melvin Jay, founder of Gunna Drinks, commented, “Putting the planet first is at the heart of Gunna’s company ethos and we’re proud to be the first-to-market with aluminium bottled soft drinks.”

“We’ve invested heavily in this new planet-friendly packaging and although this comes at a premium, costing around 10% more than other formats, our research resoundingly shows consumers are prepared to pay a little more to avoid plastic. Coupled with the new immune boosting sodas, we believe this is a compelling proposition for retailers, with average spend on functional wellness drinks currently more than twice the average price per litre spent on soft drinks.”

“We hope to see other brands follow suit and switch to an aluminium bottled format.”



Image: Gunna Drinks

## Swooning over Barbie

With the release of the Barbie film this July, US-based zero sugar beverage company, Swoon, is releasing limited edition pink lemonade cans.

The beverage company has stated that 10% of net sales of Barbie x Swoon Pink Lemonade will support the Dream Gap Project, an ongoing global initiative that aims to give girls the resources and support they need to achieve their dreams.



Image: Swoon

## MARLISH ENTERS NEW WATERS

UK-based Marlish Waters has announced the launch of a new 150ml beverage can format for its tonics and mixers range.

The aluminium format launch focuses on four of the brand's most popular SKUs of English Tonic Water, Premium Lemonade, Ginger Ale and Soda Water.

The beverages will be supported by a range of launch offers and promotions with partner wholesalers over the summer season.

Marlish Waters co-founder and director, Joe Evans, commented, "Aluminium cans are infinitely recyclable and both cheaper and easier to recycle than glass. Cans also take less time to chill down in a fridge, requiring less energy to do so. Research has also shown that

150ml is the perfect quantity for a single-serve spirit and mixer, meaning no leftover mixer going to waste.

"If you then add in that fact that we have our own on-site canning line, powered by renewable energy, canning our tonics and mixers range really was a no brainer!"

As of April 2023, Marlish Waters has been using 100% solar, wind and biomass energy at its Hartburn site in Northumberland.



Image: Marlish Waters

## Fishers Island Lemonade welcomes summer with canned cocktails

Fishers Island Lemonade is introducing a new look, as well as two new canned cocktail flavours to the US, in the form of Blueberry Wave and Nude Peach.

The new flavours mark the brand's second ever line extension.

The line of spiked lemonade cocktails is recognised by Drizly as one of the top selling canned beverages in the US, and continues to be one of the only canned cocktail brands crafted with a dual-spirits base, combining barrel-aged whiskey, premium vodka, lemon and honey.

"Our fruit-forward flavours are made for summer and are clear winners for the next evolution in our family of lemonades," said Fishers Island Lemonade founder, Bronya Shillo.

"We have received a strong positive response to the initial rollout of Blueberry Wave and Nude Peach, and could not be more thrilled to start seeing them hit shelves. The quality of our ingredients continues to be a focus for us, and we can't wait to hear how consumers react to the delicious, full-flavour taste consumers have come to expect from Fishers."

The complete Fishers Island Lemonade portfolio is gluten-free and available direct-to-consumer across the United States and on Drizly in Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, South Carolina, Rhode Island and Vermont.



Image: Maaiké Bernstrom

## Vina launches new prebiotic flavours

Here Studio has announced an expansion of prebiotic soda, Vina, through a US national rollout with Sprouts Farmers Markets.

The launch includes two new flavours: Dr Spice, a playful take on spiced cola, and Peach Pop.

Both new flavours are part of a new caffeinated collection, which feature 40mg of Clean Caffeine. The Clean Caffeine is sourced from yerba mate extract and green coffee beans and promises the gentle focused buzz of caffeine without the steep crash associated with more traditional sources, according to Vina.

The roll-out will cover all 393 Sprouts locations nationwide, spanning 23 states.

"We're really excited to see Vina take off in such a way," said VINA founder, Alex Matthews. "When we started this company, we knew there was a space for beverages that actually did something, added something beneficial. We challenged ourselves to create an alternative that wasn't only better for you, but tasted amazing too. Our focus has always been to create a product that could appeal to the masses and make smart swaps easier, more of a no-brainer."

Two additional flavours are available at the retailer, Pomegranate and Cherry Pop. All four flavours will retail at stores for \$2.49.



Image: Vina

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**PEELABLE MEMBRANE ENDS MACHINERY**



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SHELL SYSTEMS



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# Dust Bowl: when canned meat provided relief

By Roberto Baroni

**Cooperative canning plant at Lake Dick Resettlement Project, near Altheimer, Arkansas, June 1936. Image: Carl Mydan**

**T**he term ‘Dust Bowl’ refers to a series of dust storms that hit central United States during the 1930s. To increase productivity, the soil of the Great Plains was subjected to deep plowing, which destroyed the grass that preserved its hydration.

During the drought, the soil dried into dust, which was blown eastward in great black clouds that reached as far as Chicago. This ecological disaster caused an exodus from Texas, Kansas and Oklahoma, and over half a million Americans were left homeless.

To support the population, in 1933, under the presidency of Roosevelt, a programme called the ‘Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA)’ was established. Instead of handing out mere cash aid, paid jobs were offered to those in need. Over 20 million Americans were employed in community work such as maintenance of public facilities, production of clothing, food, etc.

The drought also exhausted the herds of cattle: through the FERA relief workers, the animals that were unable to survive were slaughtered at Bryan Texas plant. Then, the meat was ground, cooked and canned by means of a semi-automatic can seamer.

We have no information about who the can supplier was, but both the American Can Company and Continental Can Company had plants nearby.

From a video illustrating the meat canning process here, dated 1934, the can size seems to be the standard D.307x409 (dia. 84mm x H 116mm) or Nr. 2, as it was called at the time.

After the necessary quality controls, both olfactory and with a vacuum gauge, the cans were kept for ten days in the warehouse to check their tightness.

Finally, the canned meat was then distributed through the Relief Centers to the needy population as a subsidy in those difficult years.

To view a video of the meat canning during the Dust Bowl, visit *CanTech International’s* LinkedIn page. [CT](#)



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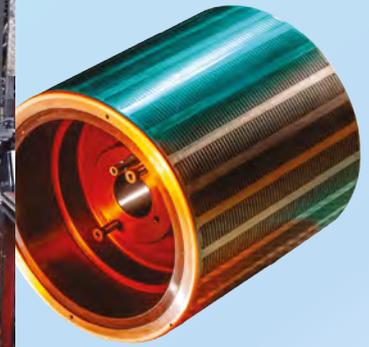
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