Food Fight: Plastic vs. Cardboard Pallet Solutions

Wooden pallets are no longer the only option for manufacturers when shipping and receiving goods to customers and from suppliers. In this installment of "Food Fight," from sister publication *Food Manufacturing*, industry experts go head-to-head on the topic:

Wood Pallet Alternatives: Plastic vs. Cardboard

Andy Mintz, President/CEO, CorrPak Bulk Packaging Systems LLC

Initially, paper corrugated pallets were developed to offer an alternative for export shipments. By containing no wood, they are exempt from international regulations imposed on wood pallets and far less expensive than plastic pallets.

Paper pallets consist of one or two corrugated top deck sheets, corrugated blocks or runners, and an optional bottom deck sheet. Often these pallets are referred to as paper pallets or cardboard pallets. They are customized for each application by altering the pallet size, selecting the deck strength necessary to support the load, and choosing the block quantity and block pattern to fit the pallet size and weight capacity requirements. Paper pallet designs do not require users to pay die charges, common with competitive pallets.

Corrugated pallets are a great solution for reducing costs and being environmentally conscious. Today, more and more companies are "going green," looking for solutions to help the environment and reduce pollution while saving money. Many manufacturers can do this just by shipping on paper. Corrugated pallets have a smaller eco-footprint than pallets made of wood or plastic.

Corrugated pallets can handle up to two metric tons and provide the following benefits:

- Shipment by weight with corrugated paper pallets can save companies over 80 percent of the cost of a pallet.
- Corrugated paper pallets are less expensive than wood or plastic pallets.
- Due to a light-weight design, corrugated paper pallets reduce the risk of personal injury and claims.

Corrugated paper pallets are 100-percent recyclable, made from corrugate with post-consumer content and "repulpable" corrugated and FDA-approved adhesive. Many landfills are no longer accepting wood pallets. Odd and custom sized wood pallets are becoming more and more difficult to dispose of and are harmful to your workforce and environment.

Bob Moore, Chairman and CEO, iGPS

Intelligent Global Pooling Systems (iGPS) has created a paradigm shift in the way goods are shipped and stored throughout the supply chain. Its 100 percent recyclable all-plastic pallet with embedded RFID tags is lighter, stronger, safer and greener than platforms made of wood and has been adopted by many of the world’s leading brands.

Our customers enjoy immediate benefits that address the most important challenges facing supply chain managers and consumers alike, including:

Product Safety — The all-plastic pallet represents a real breakthrough in safety for fast moving consumer goods, including foods and medicines. iGPS pallets never require fumigation or toxic treatments, as insects cannot penetrate the pallet's polymer material. In addition, independent testing has shown that, unlike wood, our pallets present virtually no risk of contamination with pathogens such as Listeria, E.coli and Salmonella. With four embedded radio frequency identification (RFID) tags, it is easy to track and trace products moving throughout the supply chain.

Environmental Responsibility — An independent life cycle analysis conducted by Environmental Resources Management comparing the "cradle to grave" environmental impact of iGPS' pallet versus wood alternatives has confirmed that we are redefining the entire industry for the better. The analysis found that an iGPS' pallet has dramatically less environmental impact than wood platforms on every measured dimension, including global warming (65% less), ozone layer depletion (91% less) and ecotoxicity (75% less).

Fire Safety — The all-plastic pallet provides a critical benefit with respect to fire safety with high flash points and low combustibility. By key fire safety measures, the iGPS pallet is the platform of choice for manufacturers, retailers, distributors and others concerned about fire risk and the firefighters who put their lives on the line to prevent it.

Worker Safety — The all-plastic pallet also provides an added layer of safety for the men and women who handle pallets. No splinters. No rusty nails. No chemicals that give off gas and accumulate to create dangerous workplace conditions. Ideal for automated systems on account of its sturdy construction, the iGPS pallet does not break or jam equipment, preventing stoppages and dangerous repairs. Weighing less than 50 pounds and built with ergonomic handles, the plastic pallet is easier and safer to handle.

The iGPS plastic pallet represents the safest, most innovative solution for the supply chain industry. It is the pallet of choice for businesses that place a premium on environmental stewardship, product and workplace safety.

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