



Our Commitment

- By 2020 we will reduce by 10% the average unit weight of our product packaging materials
- By 2020 we will ensure that 40% of our product packaging will be made from recycled materials
- By 2020 we will ensure that all our product packaging will be reusable or recyclable
- By 2020 we will send no packaging waste from our packaging operations to landfill

High quality packaging supports brand image and integrity in the international market place. It is essential for brand recognition, acceptability to customers, and protection from breakage or tampering.

Reducing packaging material weight

Over the last decade, distillers have worked hard to reduce glass bottle weights, investing in new lightweight technologies. Glass requires large amounts of energy to make and transport, with WRAP estimating that the UK spirits industry uses around 500,000 tonnes of glass a year. A small reduction in glass content - minimising raw material and energy used - can therefore add up to a significant amount of glass saved.

Lightweight glass is widely used, with bottles now becoming available at under the 300 gram weight barrier. The Co-op's own label Scotch Whisky is, for example, now being retailed in a 70cl bottle that weighs only 298 grams. This is the result of an industry-wide project under the WRAP 'Container Lite' scheme. WRAP's project manager, Nicola Jenkin, said at the time that: *'The new bottle is a real landmark in packaging design. A sub-300 gram spirits bottle has set a new 'best in class' standard for the sector, so the achievement is very welcome news. The new design proves that it is possible for packaging to be resource-efficient, without compromising performance or consumer appeal.'*

An illustration of this sort of investment in the industry is Chivas Brothers' 100 Pipers brand. This is a popular Blended Scotch Whisky in export markets. Since July 2008, the company has been able to lightweight bottles by 20g, saving 400 tonnes of glass a year, as well as 300 tonnes of CO₂.

Eliminating packaging to landfill

Diageo's Leven global packaging plant is the biggest UK spirits packaging site and can package up to 3 million cases of spirit a month at peak times. Over 97% of used materials on site are sent for recycling, with the amount of waste sent to landfill down by 54% since 2005.

A strong recycling culture amongst staff has been developed, encouraged by the use of team incentives and an in-house 'Waste Watchers' magazine. Materials are separated out into labelled bins and are transferred to a separate skip area, prior to transportation. Bottles which have been opened for torque testing are all returned to the bottling line and re-used using a stelcap remover. This prototype removes the closure that enables the bottles to be re-used rather than recycled.

The Leven plant also has an arrangement for cardboard layer pads from pallets to be sent to a recycling company to be re-used and made into boxes. Over 48,000 vending cups per month from thirsty workers are recycled using the Save-a-Cup scheme. Barrel char, and used spirit filter sheets, paper hand towels and restaurant food waste are all transported to the TEG composting plant near Perth and are converted to a quality assured product for use in horticulture.

Packaging from recycled materials

Glass can be recycled indefinitely as its structure does not deteriorate when reprocessed. In the case of bottles and jars, up to 85% of the total mixture can be made from reclaimed scrap glass, called "cullet".

Utilising recycled glass in bottles reduces the amount of energy required to make new glass, also reduces the amount of carbon dioxide emissions and the amount of raw materials which need to be quarried.

The recycled content of the three main glass colour types - amber, green and flint (clear) - varies considerably, with green glass containing the highest level of recycled content (up to 85%) and clear glass the lowest (up to 25%). This presents challenges for the Scotch Whisky industry as the majority, but by no means all, of our glass is clear.

Some companies are also considering using recycled cardboard, but any new 'board' specification would have to continue to provide the level of strength currently achieved. Increased levels of recycled cardboard may also result in more board being used, so the overall environmental impact would need to be considered prior to any significant changes.

