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Study Shows Cleanliness of Corrugated Shipping Containers

One hundred percent of containers tested met acceptable sanitation levels.

ELK GROVE VILLAGE, IL (February 10, 2015) – Testing and analysis conducted by the University of California-Davis and toxicology experts Haley & Aldrich investigating the cleanliness of corrugated shipping containers confirmed that all corrugated containers tested met acceptable sanitation levels.

“One hundred percent of the samples evaluated were below the sanitation levels of 1000 colony forming units (CFU) per swab for the organisms tested,” said Maryann Sanders, senior toxicologist, microbiologist and regulatory compliance specialist at Haley & Aldrich.

The 1000 CFU per swab threshold used by the study was defined by Dr. Warriner from the University of Guelph, the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, and the New South Wales Food Authority. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration does not have guidelines for packaging bacterial levels.

The testing was conducted on 720 swab samples taken from containers from six different corrugated manufacturers in the Northwest, California and Florida. The corrugated container industry requested the third-party testing to confirm that corrugated containers provided for food packaging meet acceptable sanitation criteria at the point of use.

“The single-use approach for corrugated containers minimizes the potential for contamination. After they are used, corrugated containers are returned to the paper mill for recycling. The recycling process greatly reduces bacterial loading,” said Dennis Colley, executive director of the Corrugated Packaging Alliance.

Nearly 90 percent of corrugated shipping containers produced in the U.S. are recovered for recycling.

For more information on the corrugated industry, visit corrugated.org.

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The Corrugated Packaging Alliance (CPA) is a corrugated industry initiative, jointly sponsored by the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA), AICC – The Independent Packaging Association, the Fibre Box Association (FBA) and the Technical Association of the Pulp and Paper Industry (TAPPI). Its mission is to foster growth and profitability of corrugated in applications where it can be demonstrated, based on credible and persuasive evidence, that corrugated should be the packaging material of choice; and to provide a coordinated industry focus that effectively acts on industry matters that cannot be accomplished by individual members. CPA members include corrugated manufacturers and converters throughout North America.

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