

Aerosol recycling contributes to UK's sustainability effort

Fifteen years ago, sustainability and aerosols as a packaging format would have been unlikely to be seen, by those outside the industry, as a natural partnership. Now, however, a drive towards ever-greater sustainability is seen as being at the very core of this £3billion UK aerosol industry sector.

Aerosols not only provide an efficient method of dispensing product across some 200 different categories so preventing waste through spillage or excess dispensing; they avoid use of preservatives that would often be necessary with other forms of packaging; and aerosols are also a successful contributor to the waste recycling stream as they are readily recycled when empty and are made of high quality metal with a significant value.

The green credentials of the sector have changed dramatically. Fifteen years ago Local Authorities were recycling just over a quarter of household rubbish (27%) and yet fewer than 7 per cent of these included aerosols so were missing out on recycling many of the 600 million consumer aerosols that are now used in the UK each year.

The British Aerosol Manufacturers' Association (BAMA) took the lead and through a concerted, visionary campaign for change has achieved a dramatic result. Now in 2010, over 76 per cent of Local Authorities recycle aerosols; many have got behind the BAMA campaign to encourage more consumers to include empty aerosols in household recycling efforts.



BAMA's 'can do' approach has evolved further through the industry's most recent initiative: 'the Can Do Awards' which the Association has run for two years. The Can Do Awards offer an excellent example to other industries of just what can be achieved – and what can be achieved on a small budget. By creating campaigns, via retailers, the media, consumers and Local Authorities, BAMA is able to create a big ripple effect with relatively few resources.

So, in 2010 for the first time, visitors to Europe's most important and influential sustainability exhibition and conference were able to see BAMA's recycling campaign in action as the Association, together with media partner LAWR, held a seminar to explain just why aerosols can and should be recycled.

Why recycle aerosols?

Sue Rogers, BAMA's Director, says: "Almost 30,000 tonnes of reclaimable high grade metal are used in aerosols sold in the UK each year. This means empty aerosol recycling makes a valuable and much needed contribution to meeting Local Authorities' required reduction in landfill. Not just the Local Authorities who won but all those which were shortlisted by the Can Do Awards have shown just how effective good and well-targeted communication about aerosol recycling can be".



Next steps

The sector has made impressive strides but research shows that some consumers are still unaware that they can recycle aerosols; and those who are aware often recycle only household and kitchen aerosols, so the challenge is to encourage those used in the bathroom and elsewhere.

BAMA will be working to encourage the 24 per cent of Local Authorities who don't yet recycle empty aerosols, offering encouragement and support to ensure that they make the most of the tools and information BAMA has to offer. The Can Do Awards are moving into their third year and BAMA is also working on a range of other initiatives to help Local Authorities further improve recycling rates and raise still higher the number of councils choosing to recycle aerosols.

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Recycling Communication Best Practice

"The most effective recycling campaigns are those that carry out communication and promotion, prior to, during and after the introduction of a kerbside scheme."

So said Maxine Perella, Editor of LAWR magazine, speaking at a FutureSource seminar run by BAMA and LAWR magazine, in June 2010.



Delegates to FutureSource in London heard about best practice from LAWR magazine's Editor and also from (left) Edith Grooby and Tracey Thackray of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (2009 winners) and (right) Sue Rogers, Director of BAMA.

The Can Do awards recognise effective communication about aerosol recycling and highlight the importance of promoting the scheme, not only to residents but also to internal audiences within Local Authorities and Local Authority teams and providers.

Case studies

The winner of the 2009 Can Do Awards was Bradford Metropolitan District Council whose 'Did You Know?' campaign succeeded with its simple message of not overlooking recyclable items such as aerosols. It was very well executed and targeted different sectors of the community utilising a huge variety of communication routes. One of the keys to success was the fact that the campaign used detailed demographic research, concentrating resources on committed recyclers which meant that resources were effectively used only in areas where it was felt communication would make a real difference to behaviour.

The winner of the 2010 Can Do Awards was Trafford Council. This aerosol recycling communications programme had helped the Council achieve impressive kerbside recycling rates amongst its 96,000 homes with a well researched campaign that was clearly and visually executed through a wide variety of communication routes.

Trafford Council – a clear winner in 2010



Pictured, left to right: Angela Himus, LAWR; Sue Rogers, BAMA; Gail Ormston and Gary Taylor of Trafford Council, 2010 winners; Theresa Wilkins and Lorraine Neave of South Derbyshire District Council; and Maxine Perella of LAWR.

Can Do Top Tips for Local Authorities:

- Gain residents' views through market research on the doorstep, at public events or on-line.
- Consider targeting your campaign by considering your region's internal demographics. Remember that children are influential recyclers.
- Discuss with your contractor the implications of adding aerosols to the reprocessing infrastructure.
- Get elected Members on side.
- Communicate with and train your collection crews. Use them as champions.
- Keep it simple with clear messages and great graphics to gain higher 'buy-in' at every stage.
- Make the most of the guidance plus the free, downloadable materials from BAMA.

Around 55% of aerosols are made from tin-plated steel and 45% from high purity aluminium.

Shelf Talk

BAMA's successful campaign to get more people recycling empty aerosols as part of the Industry's drive towards greater sustainability has appealed to different audiences.

One of the techniques used over the period of this long-running campaign was BAMA's ability to work with retailers to reach consumers at point of purchase.

As a result of its long history of working with major retail groups, BAMA encouraged some major high street names – Halfords, John Lewis Partnership, M&S and Waitrose – to get behind the campaign. They included aerosol recycling messages in consumer communications and several provided shelf-talkers with a simple, clear message: "Recycle empty aerosols".

In addition, BAMA briefs member company customer care lines so that consumers contacting manufacturers about aerosol recycling receive accurate guidance from the in-house teams.

Consumers should not crush aerosols even when empty. Once collected it is safe to bale them but follow safety advice. See the BAMA website for guidance on safe recycling.

http://www.bama.co.uk/support_for_local_authorities/

Always remember to mix empty aerosols with other metal waste for recycling (as demonstrated by these members of the WI in association with BAMA) rather than segregating or concentrating them.



THE **CAN DO AWARDS**

Best Local Authority Aerosol Recycling Campaign

2011

BAMA

For information about the BAMA Can Do Awards 2011 for aerosol recycling communications, see www.bama.co.uk for news and updates or email enquiries@bama.co.uk with 'Can do' in the subject to be placed on the mailing list.



Pssst... what's next?

A new initiative, the Aerofoil Programme, is a joint initiative involving Alupro, BAMA and Unilever. This programme is designed to encourage still more Local Authorities to include foil and empty aerosols within their recycling mix via a series of direct approaches.



The campaign is being executed through face to face meetings with Local Authorities and waste management companies throughout the UK. Already, 31 more Local Authorities (around half of those contacted) have agreed to change their current practices in readiness to include collection of foil, aerosols or both.

In addition to the local authority appeal, Unilever will be spreading the word with a communications programme to reach consumers with aerosol recycling information.

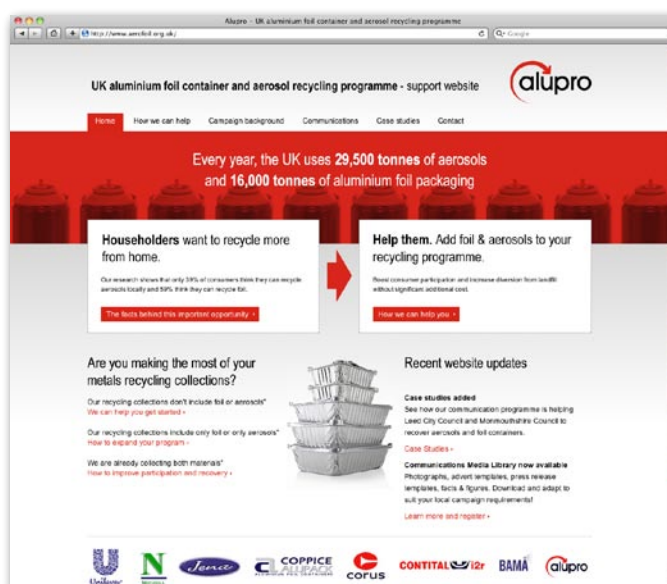
Aluminium recycling trade association, Alupro has revealed that 31 out of the 80 councils it has targeted under its campaign to get Local Authorities to begin collecting aerosols and foil at the kerbside have committed to add either one or both of the materials to their collections since the initiative launched in September 2009.

The Aerofoil campaign is timely and has gained impetus in light of the proposed packaging targets published for consultation in March 2010, which would require 70% of aluminium packaging to be collected for recycling by 2020.

The campaign is highly targeted and is concentrating on those Local Authorities whose recycling contracts are soon due for renewal. One important motivating factor for reviewing current arrangements and introducing collections of these materials, according to the Aerofoil campaign organisers, has been the pressure from householders wishing to be able to recycle more materials at the kerbside.

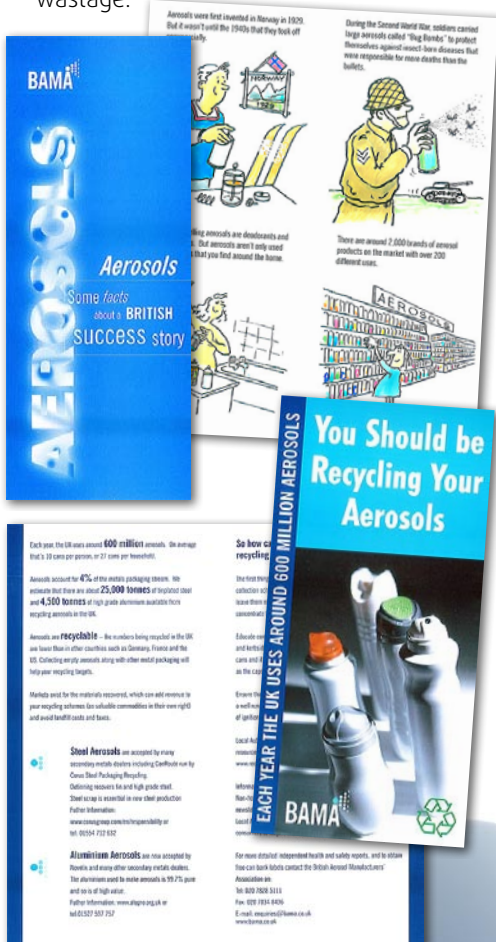
Aerosol recycling is benefiting strongly from the programme as, of the 31 councils that are signed up to the project so far, 21 are adding empty aerosols to their kerbside collections whilst eight are adding both empty aerosols and aluminium foil cartons.

More information can be found in the dedicated website www.aerofoil.org.uk



Facts about UK aerosols

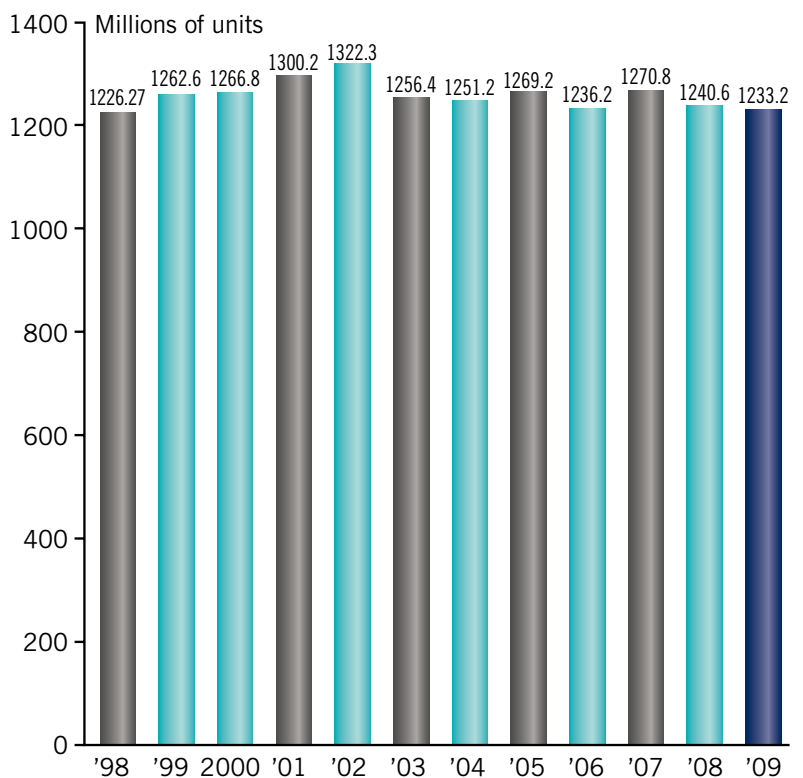
- Aerosols were invented in 1929
- Deodorants and body sprays, first made in 1954, are the most popular aerosols
- The first aerosols sold were insecticides and air fresheners (1942)
- CFCs were voluntarily removed by the Industry in 1989
- There are 2000 different aerosol brands in the UK alone
- In the UK we use 29,500 tonnes of recyclable metal aerosols each year
- Aerosols meet 200+ different uses
- Aerosols dispense product efficiently and effectively so are practical and avoid wastage.



UK aerosol market remains stable

The UK aerosol filling market has remained stable for the past two years, in the face of the recent economic down-turn. The UK aerosol sector, now over 50 years old, experienced a decline of only around half of one per cent (-0.6 per cent). In those categories where there has been a marked year-on-year change this is a reflection of the multinational focus of the manufacturing sector, with geographic movement in production capability occurring across Europe and beyond. The overall situation shows that the UK aerosol sector stood at 1233.2 million units at the close of 2009 – close to the 2008 figure of 1240.6 million units.

UK Aerosol Production 1998-2009



Help is a click away...

For information, guidance, recycling art-work and literature for use by Local Authorities contact:

British Aerosol Manufacturers' Association (BAMA)

E: enquiries@bama.co.uk

W: www.bama.co.uk

Tel: 020 7828 5111



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