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U.S. Department of Commerce Study Cites Delkor Systems, Inc. for the Ability of its Equipment to Reduce Energy Use and GHG Emissions



MINNEAPOLIS MN - A recent white paper released by the United States Department of Commerce as part of its Sustainable Manufacturing Initiative Sector Focus Study Series identified packaging machinery manufacturer Delkor System, Inc. of Minneapolis, MN as an innovation leader in designing its machinery to substantially reduce energy use and the production of greenhouse gas emissions for its customers. The report, entitled “Packaging Machinery: Sustainability and Competitiveness,” cites Delkor as an OEM (original equipment manufacturer) that makes reducing customers’ consumption of packaging materials and energy a primary objective of its packaging machinery, and that has incorporated sustainability into its core business strategy.

Copies of the full report can be downloaded from the U.S. Department of Commerce by going to the Department’s web site: http://trade.gov/competitiveness/sustainablemanufacturing/sector_focus_studies.asp

The report emphasizes that OEMs such as Delkor that operate globally face an increased demand for sustainability. Retailers, in particular, though they are not direct purchasers of equipment, are placing increasing demands on players throughout the entire supply chain to produce more sustainable packaging. The report also stresses the advantage that producing sustainable equipment offers to manufacturers themselves, since reduced material and energy costs for end-users shortens payback periods for new equipment, giving the manufacturer an added competitive advantage.

Delkor Systems, Inc. manufactures automated end-of-line, secondary packaging equipment. The company’s products include case and tray packers; top-load carton formers, loaders, and closers; shrink bundlers; and robotic systems. As early as the late 1990s, Delkor’s management began investing in the development of new packaging technologies to reduce the use of corrugated board in packaging. According to Delkor president Dale Andersen, the company realized that there was a “tremendous opportunity to reduce the corrugated that goes into packaging.” Delkor has since been awarded seven U.S. patents for new packaging machinery designs that provide greater efficiency in using corrugated board to transport product to market.

The most notable is a pad-shrink packaging system, Delkor’s Spot-Pak® package, an alternative to the traditional corrugated box or regular slotted container (RSC) case. This system is now widely used for consumer-packaged food products in a variety of package formats such as tapered cups, bottles, paperboard cartons, and other containers.

Spot-Pak® uses a temporary bonding adhesive to stabilize containers positioned on a flat corrugated pad. Containers can be stacked several layers high, according to the end user's requirements, with a corrugated pad between each layer. The final assembly is then shrink-wrapped in polyethylene film into a single bundle for shipping.

To document the environmental impact of Spot-Pak®, Delkor commissioned Allied Development Corp., a specialized consulting firm, to conduct an LCA (Life Cycle Analysis) study. According to the results of that study, which was made public by Delkor and its customer Smart Balance, a manufacturer of buttery spread, use of the company's pad-shrink technology could reduce the amount of packaging waste (by weight) to be recycled or deposited in a landfill by 61 percent, compared with standard corrugated RSCs. Reduced raw material input and material handling, in turn, could cut the use of process energy by 49 percent, largely through reduced transportation costs for polyethylene film compared with transportation costs for the corrugated board being replaced.

GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions were calculated to be 44 percent lower because of reduced energy consumption during transportation and material processing and from reduced use of raw materials. Finally, energy consumption from transporting packaged goods to the point of sale was reduced because 5 percent fewer truckloads are required for retail distribution as a result of an 11 percent increase in pallet density made possible by the more compact pad shrink bundle.

Copies of this study can be downloaded from the Delkor Systems web site at www.delkorsystems.com. Or, for more information about Delkor Systems, Inc. and its products, contact Ken Sullivan, Director of Marketing at ksullivan@delkorsystems.com or call him at 763-746-1886. Visit the Delkor web site at www.delkorsystems.com.

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