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Climate review may aid UK pack firms...

by Tess Raine

The packaging industry is in a strong position to benefit from the increased focus on environmental issues prompted by a landmark report on the economics of climate change, according to industry leaders.

Incpen director Jane Bickerstaffe said the industry should see the Stern Review, published at the end of October, as a chance to develop packaging that could keep food fresher for longer periods during transport (see Long Life Solutions story, page 2).

This would help to cut greenhouse gas emissions because many goods could be sent around the globe using 'greener' forms of transport, such as ships, instead of by air-freight and lorries.

The Stern Review, carried out by former World Bank chief economist Sir Nicholas Stern on behalf of the government, said climate change was "the greatest market failure the world has seen".

To counter this, it made three main policy recommendations, including the need for carbon pricing through taxation, regulation or emissions trading (see box).



CARBON TRADING: WHAT IT MEANS FOR THE INDUSTRY

- The government has set annual limits on emissions of greenhouse gases, which include CO₂, for UK industries
- It has implemented a permit-based system to regulate the amount of carbon produced
- Firms that have signed up for greenhouse gas emission

permits are covered by the EU Emissions Trading Scheme
■ Firms can sell carbon emission permits they do not use, but companies that produce more CO₂ than permitted have to buy permits from other firms
For more information, visit www.defra.gov.uk

Bickerstaffe said: "I do think the industry is innovative and is ahead of many others as far as the environment is concerned. But it doesn't tend to think about energy consumption. Now it will."

Packaging Federation chief executive Ian Dent said the review might make people view packaging "as an essential part of food preservation".

Stern Review is available at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk

Sun unveils new tactile lacquers

Sun Chemical has created a range of tactile lacquers and is working with new customers to develop coatings with touchy feels suitable to their individual needs.

UK Packaging Division business development manager Barry Ferne said Sun had developed a lacquer to make plastic bread packets feel smooth and soft, which had been taken up by Hovis for its crustless bread packaging. The fine-particle lacquer can be flexo overprinted on to a wide variety of substrates and can be mixed with specialist pigments to add visual impact to the tactile feel.

Sun Chemical has also developed a coarse-feeling lacquer which produces an easy grip finish when printed on a patterned gravure cylinder. The firm has been working with the Keating Group to develop a unique printing forme to enable this range of tactile lacquers to be printed on a standard cylinder.

"We've also developed a lacquer that, when printed on to cartonboard, makes it look embossed," said Ferne.

He said that printing a raised effect onto a plain surface could allow brand owners to differentiate their products seasonally without having to spend on new base packs. This might allow manufacturers to print braille on to packs.

... and new PF head will make green issues a priority

The new head of the Packaging Federation will make green issues and rising energy costs his main priorities when he takes up the role in January.

Dick Searle, speaking to *Packaging News* the day after the Stern Review (see above) was published, said he aimed to put packaging's role in society "into context" against the backdrop of climate change.



Searle: packaging aids society

"Packaging is clearly of a huge benefit to society despite some of the bad press it gets," said Searle, who will take over from Ian Dent as the federation's chief executive.

Searle also said that energy prices in the UK were too high and were acting against the best interests of industry.

He admitted that there was a "slight paradox" in calling

for lower energy prices when green issues were high on the agenda, but added: "We still have a huge dependency on manufacturing and it's clearly being undermined by non-senses in energy pricing."

Searle was executive chairman of Britton Group from 2000-2004. For the past two years he has headed his family owned property business.