

Paper packaging packs a punch

Whether made from virgin or recovered fibre, paper packaging in particular is unique in its renewability and sustainability. In South Africa, trees are farmed for their fibre and are replanted within the same year of harvesting while pre- and post-consumer fibre recovery diverts a valuable raw material from landfill. Add to this recyclability and biodegradability, and paper packaging comes up trumps compared with other substrates.



Packaging also plays a vital link between farm and fork. Strength, high humidity performance and convertibility are some of the key attributes needed to ensure product freshness – from harvesting and cold storage, packaging and transportation, to final point-of-sale.

South Africa has been subject to some climatic extremes over the past few years – from severe drought to incessant rains. Producing a crop in these conditions is not the only challenge they face. Part of their challenge is to get their produce delivered fresh from the farm to the market or shelf.

“Farmers and converters want to ensure that fresh produce is delivered unscathed throughout the supply chain, but they also need packaging that is versatile, value-for-money, environmentally friendly and sustainable.” So says Richard Wells, sales and marketing director of Sappi’s Paper and Paper Packaging division in South Africa.

“We are as passionate about our paper packaging as farmers are about their produce,” says Wells. As such, the company has made it their business to understand farmers’ needs, as well as the rigorous demands on the vulnerability of fresh produce along the supply chain.



Sappi has recently reaffirmed the importance of the containerboard market segment to its business and future growth with packaging portfolio consisting of virgin liner, semi-chemical fluting and test liner.

Sappi’s linerboard and the fluting product – Ultraflute – count among its containerboard range manufactured to address the challenges of form, function and resilience. Ultraflute, for example, is used for high-end, heavy-duty agricultural and industrial packaging. As such, its high virgin fibre composition gives it superior strength, resulting in stronger boxes, with improved stacking strength and multiple yield advantages. High humidity performance ensures that produce sent to market via the cold chain – such as fruit, vegetables, frozen fish and meat - arrive at their destination fresh and undamaged. Ultraflute is excellent in withstanding changing cyclic humidity conditions and maintains this strength for long periods.

In terms of convertibility (which is influenced by paper properties and machine running speeds), Sappi’s products offer improved flexibility and tensile, stretch and tear properties. These factors allow for increased corrugator speeds and the optimum use of raw materials.

“Strength and performance are not the only requirements for sustainable, quality packaging. Manufacturing processes aimed at protecting our planet are equally important,” notes Wells.

“The fibre used in Sappi’s processes are derived solely from sustainably managed plantations; never from indigenous or rain forests,” assures Wells. The company’s plantations are certified in terms of internationally recognised environmental and quality standards (ISO 14001 and ISO 9001), and carry the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) stamp of approval.

Sappi’s containerboard products are also biodegradable and recyclable, making them an environmentally responsible choice for farmers, converters and retailers alike.