

Each carton features a mini gable-top cardboard design with an attached straw and can be sold individually or in multipacks.

For its part, Fiji Water launched Mini & Mobile, a new six-pack of 330-milliliter bottles ideal for lunchboxes, parties, hikes, bike riding and other on-the-go activities. In addition, Fiji joined 1% for the Planet, a global alliance of companies that donate at least 1% of their sales toward improving sustainability, according to a company press release.

While some bottles are shrinking in size, others are diminishing in weight.

“Bottled water containers in PET resin have undergone a serious lightweighting in the past eight years, reducing their weight by 32%. This is the equivalent to eliminating one out of three bottles. Caps, labels and even shipping cartons have been reduced,” says Tom Lauria, vice president of International Bottled Water Association, Alexandria, Va. “In recycling, bottled water containers now sit on top of the recycling charts at 30.9%.”

Even tea makers are getting into the action by transforming their current lines into more earth-friendly applications.



Inko's White Tea, for instance, opts for placing its products in 12-ounce aluminum cans, says Andy Schamisso, founder and president of the New York-based company.

“We chose aluminum cans predominantly because they are the least expensive portable beverage container, they lend themselves perfectly to the many varieties of vending machines and [contain] positive environmental aspects regarding weight and recycling,” he says.

Packaging for the future

Overall, dairy processors maintain the same goals in packaging as their counterparts in other industry segments, Yuska says. “Improving sustainability – without sacrificing product protection – is top of mind,” he adds.

That's why several processors continue to revamp their packaging applications while planning for a greener future.

“The economy and the environment are both playing a greater role in packaging decisions than they have historically,” says Gary Hemphill, managing director for Beverage

Beyond the package

Packaging is critical to milk marketing. It not only protects milk from contamination and preserves product quality, but also conveys the processor's marketing message and product nutritional information. It also must be in sync with changes in consumer lifestyle and satisfy current environmental concerns and legislation – all while being cost efficient for the processor.

New, improved and more sustainable packaging formats can offer long-term cost reductions, mainly from material and energy savings. Sustainable packaging also provides an opportunity for dairy industry innovation by expanding the diversity of packaging alternatives in the dairy case. These innovations will attract retailers as well as the increasing number of consumers who are conscious of the environmental impact of their purchases.

The environmental impact of packaged milk is about more than just the container. It includes the complete dairy delivery system, spanning the production of the packaging material through processing to product con-

sumption and disposal of the package by the consumer.

As part of the U.S. Dairy Sustainability Commitment, the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy is conducting a life-cycle assessment of greenhouse gas emissions for white and value-added milks and coffee creamers across usage occasions (in-home and on-the-go), pack sizes (gallon configurations to single-serve) and methods of distribution (chilled and ambient).

This LCA will be complete in 2011. The data will equip milk processors, packaging

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material manufacturers and retailers with science-based information that will help them make informed decisions with regard to innovation and alternatives to reducing GHG emissions in milk processing and packaging.

For more information on the U.S. Dairy Sustainability Commitment, visit www.us-dairy.com/sustainability.

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