**Washington State Aseptic/Gable Top Carton Recycling Fact Sheet and Q&A**

**January 2020**

**What Are the Best Practices for Ensuring Cartons from Washington are Recycled?**

In order to ensure effective and sustainable recycling of cartons, Carton Council recommends cartons to be sorted in its own grade, known as PSI Grade 52. This will secure that the established end markets can properly consume them. Cartons represent one of the highest quality virgin fibers remaining in the recycling stream so demand exists for this commodity. However, its marketable value will fluctuate along with many of the same global factors that affect other fiber grades. The mills that are suited for and make highest/best use of cartons purchase them as grade (PSI Grade 52) Post Consumer Aseptic and Gable Top Cartons.

**Where are the Current and Emerging Markets/Consumers for PSI Grade 52 Cartons?**

Post-consumer cartons are recycled into tissue & toweling products, printing & writing paper, paper packaging and building products. The primary markets for sorted cartons from the West Coast are located in South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, Japan, and Mexico. Each mill has a unique procurement process with select brokers that they work through. Meaningful new demand for Grade 52 has developed from Mexico with the expectation for increased consumption volumes of West Coast material throughout 2020 and beyond. In addition, with the reduction in Sorted Office Paper (due to closure/reduction of offices) has mills seeking alternative replacement fiber, like Carton Grade 52. Carton Council continues to work with domestic end users to identify opportunities for consumption in the Western US, including the Norpac Mill in Longview and a recently announced facility in Colorado for building products from cartons.

**What Other Regions on the West Coast are Sorting and Marketing Grade 52?**

Sortation and marketing of Grade 52 has been a common practice in British Columbia for many years. A significant percentage of Southern California MRF operators have implemented positive sortation of cartons since 2011 (including Allan Company, Potential Industries, Athens Services, CR&R Services, EDCO, Burrtec, and the Titus Services secondary MRF in LA). In Northern CA, the City of San Francisco/Recology transitioned to positive sortation of cartons in 2016. Greenwaste in San Jose just installed the first robotic arm on the west coast to be used for carton sortation.

**What About Movement of Less-Than-Truckload Quantities?**

Carton Council has experience working with MRFs generating loads of post-consumer cartons to find solutions for less than truck load quantities. Each situation, however, is different and can be best solved by talking it through. If you are in a situation where you feel a solution for partial truckload shipments is needed, please contact the Carton Council representative so we can review different options.

**How Can We Improve Our School Milk Carton Recycling Programs?**

School food service programs are a significant source of additional recycled carton volume for regional MRFs, if well managed. The Carton Council has developed best practices, guides and tools to help school’s custodial and food service staff to implement and a successful carton recycling program. In addition, we have a dedicated School Recycling Coordinator on the West Coast who is available to assist school districts with guidance or an on-site review, at no cost. A grant program is available to assist school districts with funds for signage, bins, or other education related needs.

**What is the Effect of China on the Aseptic/ Gable top Carton Recycling Markets?**

In our mission to ensure sustainable carton recycling, Carton Council has always advocated for the positive sorting of cartons into their own grade for maximum value. We continue to encourage operators NOT to bale cartons with mixed paper, but rather, to sort them into grade 52. China has never been a market for post-consumer carton loads shipping from the US. The primary markets for sorted cartons from the West Coast are located in South Korea, Japan, Thailand, and Mexico. The consuming mills in these markets are active and in some cases are increasing their demand for cartons.

**For More Information and Broker Contacts:**

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