

Press Release



For immediate release

Wednesday 7th May 2025

Groundbreaking innovation for liquid sachet packaging

In recent years, small sachet formats have received a lot of attention in the media for the environmental challenges that they present. These small plastic envelopes are widely used to dispense condiments, sauces, personal care creams and many other liquid products. While they are convenient for the consumers, they are often highlighted for the issues that they create at the end of their life.

Estimates* suggest that approximately 855 billion sachets were used globally in 2018. Most of these packs are produced with complex multi-layered packaging that can withstand the nature of the ingredients and preserve the products during the supply chain for their required shelf life. They are usually produced from 3-layer structures including layers of polyolefin, aluminium and often polyester, making the packs extremely difficult to recycle as the components of the laminate structure are incompatible for recycling and not easily separated. Their very small size and the fact that they often remain contaminated by foodstuff, further add to the difficulties in recycling.



Compostable film producer Futamura, flexible packaging converter Repaq and machine producer GK Sondermaschinenbau have worked together to produce a compostable solution for this market segment. This has been a difficult challenge to resolve, one that has been taken many attempts to perfect.

Today, they are delighted to launch a fully compostable solution based on NatureFlex™ technology for this application, capable of wrapping ingredients such as ketchup or mustard, cooking sauces or hand cream. The new compostable laminate includes a barrier cellulose film layer from Futamura as well as another biofilm to provide hermetic seals. The structures have been certified as compostable, both in an industrial and home settings.

The new compostable packaging structures have been proven to make effective sachet solutions, when produced on the newly designed GK Sondermaschinenbau machinery. The demonstration packs delivered have confirmed the required shelf life and protection for a range of sauces. The machineability of the new liquid sachet packs have been repeatedly proven, at scale, by the first brands implementing the compostable structure. There was no difference in efficiency when using this structure compared to a conventional one. That has been reported for all GKS machinery, whether small, medium or large size. The first commercial sachets will enter the market shortly.



Sven Seevers, Technology Manager at Repaq, confirmed: 'It was very important for us to replace this non-recyclable packaging, which can pollute the environment, with a compostable solution. We succeeded after two years of development work with our great co-operation partners. Our packaging offers excellent product protection and significant ecological benefits at the same packing speeds. For liquids packaging we achieve an OTR of 0.5 at standard conditions of OTR: 23°C, 50% r.h with a shelf life of up to 12 months. In the long term, it is the best end-of-life scenario for this packaging and many others.'

Nico Merkel, Sales Director at GK Sondermaschinenbau, added: 'We are very pleased that our machinery has been involved in this project and shown to contribute to the production of these unusual and progressive packaging solutions. It has been a pleasure to produce samples in our facilities and participate in the extensive testing of these little packs, proving that they can withstand large pressure over long term. The tests on our machinery have certainly shown that almost no adjustments were required to use the solution supplied by Repaq.'

Joachim Janz, Regional Sales Manager at Futamura stated: 'This home compostable liquids sachet packaging is indeed a really exciting launch. Ultimately, it means a perfect match to the request for offering a full portfolio of demanding food and non-food items to be packed in compostable packaging choices. Small-portion sachets have always been the tricky ones for recycling, so this success in compostability is good news to be shared.'

*Report from Future Market Insights

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Note to Editor

Background

Note to Editor: Futamura Chemicals Company Limited is a major producer of plastic and cellulose (NatureFlex™ & Cellophane™) films. Following the acquisition of Innovia Films cellulose business, Futamura has a global footprint with production sites in the UK, USA and Japan. It holds a leading global position in the markets for renewable and compostable packaging films and cellulose casings. Worldwide Futamura employs some 1500 people, with a focus on safety, high quality speciality products, R&D, customer service and ethical, sustainable partnerships.

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