

Protecting Our Environment

What Others Are Doing, How You Can Help

(NAPSA)—The next time you open a food or beverage carton you could be opening the way to a better world, if you recycle it when the contents are gone. Recycled food and beverage cartons contain valuable material and can be turned into tissues, paper towels, stationery and even sustainable building materials.

The Benefits of Cartons

In fact, food and beverage cartons are one of the most sustainable packages available. They're made mainly from paper, a renewable resource from well-managed forests. As a lightweight packaging option, cartons have a low carbon footprint as well as a low package-to-product ratio at 94 percent product and just 6 percent packaging.

There are two basic types of cartons:

1. Shelf-stable are comprised of paper and thin layers of plastic and aluminum. They are found on grocery store shelves and are used for soups, water, milk, juice, beans, wine and nutritional shakes.

2. Refrigerated (or gable-top) contain paper and a thin layer of plastic. They are found in the chilled section of the grocery store and are used to package milk, juice, cream and other beverages.

There are a few ways cartons are recycled after going into a recycling container. At paper mills, the fiber is extracted and separated in a machine called a hydropulper, which resembles a giant kitchen blender. It then goes on to make a variety of common paper products.

Another type of recycler uses the entire carton to make environmentally friendly building materials such as interior wallboards, roof cover board, ceil-



Cartons are a sustainable packaging option but their life cycle ends if they end up in a landfill. So, it's important to recycle them.

ing tiles, exterior sheathing and floor underlayment.

What Robots Can Do

Clever engineers have created carton-plucking robots that can be used at recycling centers to separate food and beverage cartons from other recycled materials. These robots can grab 60 cartons a minute, learning as they go through artificial intelligence. Industry leaders consider the robots a cost-effective, long-term way to further expand carton recycling nationwide.

What You Can Do

Consumers should put empty food and beverage cartons in recycling containers instead of trash containers. With every carton you recycle, you are helping keep our environment greener.

Learn More

For more facts on recycling cartons, visit the Carton Council of North America at www.recyclecartons.com.