

Milk and Juice Cartons

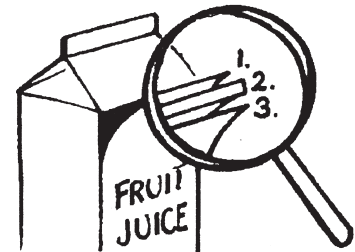
Did you know?

- The recycling rate for liquidpaperboard cartons for Australia is approximately 14% (ALC, 2001).
- A 7% reduction in weight per carton has been achieved since 1990. (ALC, 2001).
- About 5 sheets of office paper can be made from 1 recycled milk carton. (Planet Ark, 2001).
- In 2000, 120 million milk and juice cartons were recycled into high quality office paper and cardboard.

About drink cartons

Milk and juice cartons are made of liquidpaperboard and have been used for more than forty years. Cartons are now being used to package a wide range of foods including: cream, custard, flavoured milks, sauces, detergents, soups, wine, oil and cereal grains. Western Australians recycle more than one quarter of their liquidpaperboard cartons in kerbside recycling services.

There are two basic types of cartons: gable top and aseptic bricks. Gable top cartons are your typical milk cartons while aseptic bricks are used in tetra packs and long life (UHT) milk cartons.



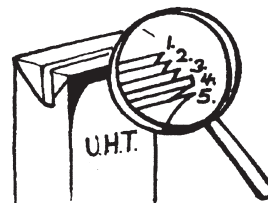
1. Polyethylene
2. Cardboard
3. Polyethylene

Gable top cartons

These are made from a layer of cardboard sandwiched between two layers of very thin plastic. Some fruit juice cartons also have a layer of foil and a third layer of plastic to improve shelf life and retain flavours.

Aseptic Bricks

Also called UHT or Long Life packs, these are a newer type of carton made from five layers: three of plastic and one of foil and one of board. The products in these cartons are sterilized before packaging and as the cartons fully seal the contents, they do not need to be refrigerated during transport or storage before opening.



1. Polyethylene
2. Alufoil
3. Polyethylene
4. Cardboard
5. Polyethylene



Being waste wise with drink cartons

Milk and juice cartons are made from paper and plastic. To conserve energy, the trees that make paper, the petroleum that makes plastic and to reduce waste to landfill, it is important to be waste wise when it comes to drink cartons. There are three steps to follow:

Reduce

Selecting the appropriate size container for individual or family needs can reduce carton waste. Milk cartons come in sizes from 250 millilitres – 1.5 litres. Select a larger carton rather than multiple small ones where possible. UHT packaged material is handy for times you might run out of milk and need some extra, or if you are going away and can't transport refrigerated goods.



Reuse

Milk cartons can be reused for:

- growing seedlings
- tree guards
- making building blocks or rattles
- a bird feeder – by cutting – of a side panel off
- pencil holders (try decorating with stickers or wrapping paper)
- storing waste cooking fat in the freezer until rubbish collection day

Recycle

Before recycling cartons should be:

- 1. Rinsed and flattened and**
- 2. Placed flattened inside an open carton.**

You should be able to insert at least six 1-litre cartons inside an open one, even more if you top and tail them.

Cartons collected from kerbside recycling collection services in WA are taken to a material recovery facility (MRF) where they are sorted and separated from other recyclables. The cartons are then baled and taken to a processing plant in New South Wales, where they are recycled into paper.

Check with your local council for details of carton recycling in your own area.

According to Association of Liquidpaperboard Carton (ALC) Manufacturers, cartons can be placed in compost bins. Under ideal conditions, the cardboard in the cartons should break down in 3 months. The plastic, being very thin and unstabilised, breaks up into small pieces.

The recycling process

1. Cartons collected by a kerbside recycling program are taken to a materials recovery facility where they are sorted from other recyclable materials.
2. At the processing plant, cartons are de-baled, checked for contamination and placed with water in a machine called a hydropulper (like a giant blender).
3. In the hydropulper, the cartons are broken up and the plastic and foil separates from the paper fibres.
4. The former cartons, which are now paper pulp, are fed into a giant papermaking machine.
5. As the rotating drum slopes downwards, the plastic and foil continues to move along the drum until it falls into a pit, where it is collected, baled and finally discarded. The water is recovered and reused.
6. The end result is a top quality range of paper products, including a high quality photocopy paper.

Sources:

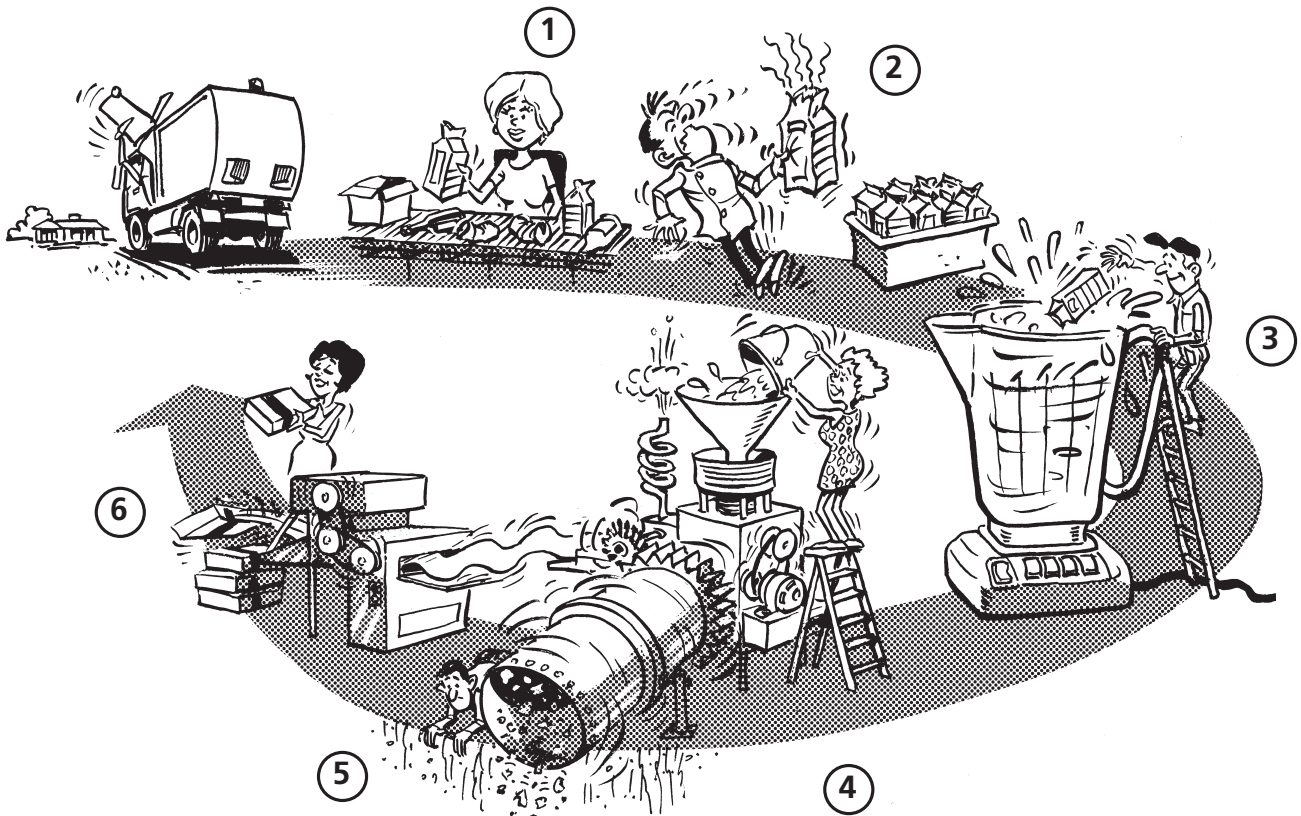
Association of Liquidpaperboard Carton Manufacturers. 2001

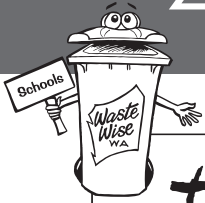
Useful websites:

www.planetark.org/cartons

www.visy.com.au

www.alc.asn.au





The Waste Wise Schools Program

The following program elements are funded by the Waste Management and Recycling Fund from money collected as a Waste Levy when waste is delivered to landfill. The Waste Wise Schools Program is helping to work towards Zero Waste in WA.



Waste Wise Schools Program

This program empowers schools to minimise their waste outputs and incorporate waste issues into the curriculum. The program provides teacher workshops, the Waste Wise Schools Kit, a network of Support Schools, Accreditation and Awards programs and ongoing support.

Waste Wise Schools Mobile Display

The Waste Wise Schools interactive Mobile Display about waste and recycling is available for *Participating* Waste Wise Schools, community groups, expos and shows. A Waste Education Coordinator will staff the display to conduct presentations, school waste audits and set up composting and worm farming systems upon request.

Waste Wise Schools Grants

These grants provide opportunities for *Participating* Waste Wise Schools and their related communities to undertake waste minimisation projects in their school. Grants are available, with applications assessed monthly.

Waste Wise Schools Website: www.wastewise.wa.gov.au

This website is your on-line link to the Waste Wise Schools Program. You will also find information on how to 'Shop Smart', recycle organic waste at home and recycle a variety of different waste items through the RecycleIT directory. The complete series of fact sheets are also available to download.

For further information on issues relating to waste minimisation in WA, visit www.zerowastewa.com.au

Contact

For further information, contact the Waste Wise Schools program at the Department of Environment and Conservation.

Phone: (08) 6467 5133 or (08) 6467 5141.

Email: wastewise@dec.wa.gov.au

