**Rabobank Report: Consumer trends driving new trends in packaging**

**In recent years, the global packaging industry has seen strong growth. In its report, *‘Consumer trends define packaging hot spots’* Rabobank finds that much of this growth is being driven by five key consumer trends; premiumisation, convenience, online retailing, shelf-life extension and recyclability. Each of these trends have benefits for both packaging material and equipment makers.**

“Food & beverages packaging is at the forefront of the consumer experience and is significantly impacted by stronger emotional and material values placed on high quality food and drink,” argues Rabobank FAR analyst Clara van der Elst.

Changing consumer preferences reflect the value attached to good food and drink, versus cheap food and drink, particularly in developed regions. Rabobank believes that key consumer trends are driving growth in packaging, particularly in developing regions across fresh produce, beverages, and meat & seafood.

These trends each have specific effects on the type of packaging and the type of material used to make it; the standard five being: flexible or rigid plastic, glass, paper, metal, or the combinations of paper, metal and film used in liquid cartons.

Macro-economics and demographics are driving strong unit growth in developing regions, driven by a catch-up in consumer preferences fuelled by the rise of the middle class and urbanisation. In developed markets, these trends drive mostly value and some unit growth.

In the convenience trend, processed fresh food & beverages and ready-made food and meals require more, or a higher value type of packaging e.g. resealable cans. This not only drives packaging value, but also affects material choices. Plastics stand to gain the most in this category.

Meanwhile, packaging remains a key element of differentiation for premium products. This is driving growth particularly in glass, metal, caps and closures, and upmarket labelling/printing.

“The relationship is two-way with current trends affecting growth in certain food & beverages categories driving both the increase in packaging per unit (particularly seen in convenience) as well as the growth in intensity of packaging of products, for example in premium fresh fruit and vegetables, which would previously have bought loose and not wrapped,” concludes van der Elst.

**For information please contact the report’s author:**

Clara van der Elst, [clara.van.der.elst@rabobank.com](mailto:clara.van.der.elst@rabobank.com) +31 (0)30 71 24507

**For other information, please contact Rabobank press office:**

Madelon Kaspers, [Madelon.kaspers@rabobanki.com](mailto:Madelon.kaspers@rabobanki.com) +31 (0) 610 887 244

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