

Euro Pool System improves sustainability  
**“Filtering water makes the washing process more efficient”**

**Euro Pool System’s multi-way plastic trays are proven to be more sustainable than other types of packaging. A study shows that convincingly (see box). It is only logical for an organisation that manages sustainable packaging to make its own processes more sustainable. Like the tray washing process, for example.**

The savings can be as high as 35% in water, soap and gas consumption and up to 2,5 hours extra runtime per washing facility per day. Customers can count on (at the very least) the same degree of cleanness as usual. This is the effect of the water filtration unit that Euro Pool System will start using in 2011.

#### **On the look-out for innovation**

The idea came from Tom Delfos, project manager at the headquarters in Rijswijk, the Netherlands. “Our department Engineering & Development supports technical operations in the service centres and is at the same time constantly looking for innovative solutions that can make processes more efficient and sustainable. Considering we have 42 service centres in Europe with each one to five washing facilities, optimisation is most meaningful. Optimising can mean pushing back consumption of soap, water, electricity and gas, increasing the output per machine or reducing investment costs. The good thing about the filtration unit is that it reduces consumption and increases output.”

#### **24 hours a day**

Delfos explains how the washing facilities, that run 24 hours a day, work. “Each tray follows a washing line of four to six washing sections that wash away dirt and rests of fruits and vegetables. A washing temperature of 60°C ensures elimination of any present bacteria and viruses. Every eight hours, we renew the water and soap in all washing sections and we remove any dirt and waste left in the washing facility. It takes about an hour per cleaning cycle. We also need for the new water to reach the required washing temperature,” explains Delfos.

#### **Simple and often used**

How does the filtration unit work exactly? Delfos: “The filtration unit is a separate unit that is placed next to the washing facility. The unit pumps out dirty water from each washing section, filters it and pumps clean water back into the washing sections. The filtration process starts with flocculation. The so-called flocculants form flocs (flakes) of dirt and these remain suspended thanks to the air bubbles in the unit’s water from where it is easy to remove the clumps of dirt. Turbid water becomes completely clear water again thanks to this process. It is a very simple, safe and often used method to purify water. Technically speaking, it is very simple and solid. This kind of purifying facilities have been in use for more than twenty years.”

### **A smash hit**

The result is a higher output and a lower consumption of water, soap and gas. A significant experiment of some weeks in one of the service centres confirmed the expectations and also showed that there is still room for further optimisation. Water doesn't actually need to be replaced three times a day, but merely once every two days. "Although water replacement doesn't represent the biggest source of water, soap and gas consumption, the new process allows for savings of up to 35% in the total consumption figures. And the icing on the cake is the 5 hours extra runtime the machine gains every two days," figures Delfos.

### **Efficient and sustainable**

Delfos cannot see any real disadvantage: "I cleaned the washing facility myself after two days. It wasn't dirtier than after a 'normal' 8-hour run." The objective now is to have the first water filtration unit running by early 2011 and we expect many more to follow. Delfos: "Euro Pool System keeps working at efficient and sustainable processes."

### **Multi-way packaging by far the most sustainable**

**Multi-way plastic trays are the best solution for fresh products retailers and packaging companies striving for sustainability. The Department Life Cycle Engineering of the University of Stuttgart showed that five years ago already.**

The University of Stuttgart conducted a study commissioned by the German organisation 'Stiftung Initiative Mehrweg'. This Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) analysed and compared the environment impact of three common types of packaging systems for fruit and vegetables in Europe. It reviewed the five most important fruit and vegetable producing countries (Spain, Italy, France, the Netherlands and Germany) and four of the biggest consumer markets (France, the Netherlands, Great Britain and Germany).

### **Sustainable, safe and inexpensive**

The most important conclusion of the study are that multi-way packaging are by far the most favourable for the environment, particularly thanks to its long life cycle and 100% recyclability. Moreover, the production of multi-way plastic packaging is the safest for the concerned employees. And, multi-way plastic packaging is significantly cheaper than other types of packaging, even in the most conservative scenario with a 10-year lifespan. In practice, plastic packaging often lasts much longer.

*Euro Pool System International B.V. is Europe's biggest provider of logistic services in the area of multi-way packaging for fresh products. In cooperation with the European retailer sector, Euro Pool System focuses more and more on providing optimal logistic solutions.*

