



Recycled Paperboard Technical Association®

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Statement on U.K. Food Standards Agency Testing (December 15, 2011)

Abbreviated Statement

Recycled paperboard is an important component of an environmentally responsible and sustainable future that can and should be used in a wide number of applications, including food packaging. The safety of recycled paperboard food packaging is of the utmost priority to the paperboard industry.

As part of an ongoing monitoring program, the United Kingdom Food Standards Agency recently tested hundreds of UK food items and their packaging to evaluate the potential migration of mineral oils and printing ink components to food. The Agency conducted a highly conservative risk assessment based on its findings and “did not identify any specific food safety concerns.” The FSA further concluded that the potential consumer exposure to mineral oils in cartonboard food packaging is not a risk to human health.

Statement

Recycled paperboard is an important component of an environmentally responsible and sustainable future that can and should be used in a wide number of applications, including food packaging. Over a decade ago, the Recycled Paperboard Technical Association (RPTA) developed a comprehensive program to ensure that recycled paperboard can be used safely in food packaging in full compliance with U.S. legal and scientific standards. The RPTA program includes regular, ongoing testing that looks for a broad range of potential impurities.

The United Kingdom Food Standards Agency (UK FSA) recently reported on the results of a comprehensive test program that the agency conducted on several hundred food products sold in the UK and their packaging. The UK FSA conducted a highly conservative risk assessment on the findings from the survey and did not identify any specific food safety concerns. The FSA stated that, “consumer’s exposure to mineral oils in cartonboard food packaging is not a risk to human health.” The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations permit the use of mineral oils in food processing and packaging applications, provided that any potential impurities are properly controlled.

The safety of recycled paperboard used in food packaging is of the utmost priority to the paperboard industry. As we have for more than a decade, we will evaluate scientific developments and the source stream to ensure that recycled paperboard can continue to be used safely in food packaging and other applications as an important component of an environmentally responsible and sustainable future.

The Recycled Paperboard Technical Association is a non-profit association that brings together the expertise of paper mills worldwide that manufacture products from at least 90 percent recovered fiber. RPTA is dedicated to the improvement of the recycled paperboard industry. For additional information, please contact Deborah White, Executive Director, at dwhite@rpta.org.