

**In brief**

● Sales at Ardagh group were slightly down in the third quarter at € 1.99 billion (US\$2.33bn) compared with the same period in 2016. The decline was mostly from its glass packaging operations. In its metal packaging segment, sales were € 1.24bn (\$1.47bn) in the quarter, the first three months in which year-to-year comparisons can be made following Ardagh's € 2.7bn (\$3.4bn) acquisition in 2016 of a number of beverage can plants from Ball. In the third quarter of 2016 sales were € 1.24bn (\$1.46bn). Sales in Ardagh's Metal Packaging Europe segment were € 809 million (\$949m), up 1.6 percent, while sales in the Metal Packaging Americas segment were € 440m (\$516m), down 1.8 percent. Ardagh said that in Europe, its metal packaging business reflected 3 percent organic growth, partly offset by the effects of € 9 million in currency translation. Adjusted EBITDA increased by 10 percent to € 155 million (\$182m), compared with the same period last year. Ardagh is converting its Rugby beverage can plant in the UK from steel to aluminium. In the Americas segment, Ardagh said the lower sales were a result of currency translation of € 26m (\$30.5m), partly offset by 4 percent organic growth as a result of favourable volume/mix and the pass through of higher input costs.

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**Dramatic growth in canned craft beers**

There has been a dramatic recent increase in the use of cans for craft beers in the UK, according to Nielsen.

Cans are now used for a quarter of craft beers sold in the UK, following a 327 percent increase in sales from January to August this year.

The research includes data from grocery multiples and off-licences. Canned craft beers sold in grocery multiples grew by 349 per cent while those sold through off-licences grew by 140 percent rise.

Part of this rise in popularity is said by Nielsen to be attributed to consumers' changing attitudes. According to UK beverage can industry group The Can Makers: "Consumers, particularly millennials, are increasingly looking for packaging that fits in with their own lifestyle and image: standout design, lightweight, easily recyclable; as well as a great quality product kept in perfect condition."

Additionally, brands are now able to choose the canning option best suited their needs. The recent introduction of lower volume contract filling lines in the UK, as well as a wide choice of mobile lines for hire and lines for purchase, has contributed to the growth.

Martin Constable, chairman of The Can Makers, says: "The growth of the canned craft beer market over the past year has

**End design meets need**

An easy-open beverage end that meets the needs of consumers who have concerns about the hygiene of the conventional stay-on tab is ready for sample testing by brand owners.

The Open Clean end has been under development by International Patents and Brands Corporation with support from Simon Jennings of Nomis Consultancy, a former Rexam executive and a director of companies making beverage cans in Africa and Pakistan.

Key feature of the patented Open Clean end is that after it is opened, the opening panel is peeled back so that it does not dip into the drink. Consumers in some markets don't like the stay-on tab (SOT) which may become contaminated during shipping. It is for this reason that ring-pull ends, in which the tab is separated from the



end, are still popular in markets such as China.

The Open Clean end meets this need while satisfying the requirement for keeping the tab with the can for recycling. It can also be produced using current end-making systems.

"The project came up a while back in 2010," says Jennings, "when an investor, who does not wish to be named, told me that he didn't like the idea of an SOT getting into the

exceeded expectations and has paved the way for other craft drinks' makers to enter the market. We are beginning to see a trend of adult soft drinks and cocktails looking to achieve similar success.

"Craft brewers have understood that choosing the can is the best packaging option for retaining the product's quality and authenticity, delivering those complex tastes that consumers love. It has inspired other drinks and majors to take a fresh look at their packaging."

**Can-Pack opens Dutch plant**

Can-Pack's new canmaking plant in the Netherlands is the most sustainable and energy efficient in Europe, general manager Marco Snoeren told The Canmaker last month, adding that the location of the operation will enable a reduction of 4,500 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions to be made each year because of fewer truck movements.

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# for better hygiene



After the end is opened, the opening panel is peeled back so that it does not dip into the drink

drink. This is the basis of the philosophy of the end.

"I said to him that you may not like it, but what do people think? So we carried out research in Italy where the SOT is well embedded. Using a major market researcher, and hand-made samples to test the concept, we found that some people didn't like the SOT. A quarter of users would switch to cans if they didn't have SOTs."

Next step was to have a higher volume of samples made that met the 90psi burst pressure requirement, but could only reach 85psi.

"So we went to Dayton Systems Group (DSG) in Ohio

who made a number of variants that met and exceeded the 90psi requirement."

The Open Clean end design uses standard shells and tabs, so the cost increase is relatively low, says Jennings, who adds that it will run without changes in seaming machines and there is no change for the customer. "The score tool is the major change," he says, "and the end can be made in a range of sizes, 200, 202 or 206."

Jennings says he'd rather not reveal how much has been invested in the Open Clean end's development. Samples are available in their thousands for testing.

He was speaking at the official opening of the plant located in the city of Helmond near Eindhoven, which has been producing cans since April. The €100 million (\$116m) investment includes two D&I production lines with capacity to produce two billion beverage cans annually.

"85 percent of the cans produced here will be distributed to within 150km of the plant, which will allow us to save substantially on transport costs. Previously, the cans we sent out to the Benelux region

came from our facilities in the UK or Poland," said Snoeren.

\* *More on Can-Pack Netherlands on page 20.*

## Ball wins Aerosol Packaging award

Ball Corporation won the Aerosol Packaging award for its Tactile Can at the 2017 Forum of the British Aerosol Manufacturers' Association (BAMA), held in Leeds in October.



Ball's Tactile Can features an ink that provides texture on the can for a unique consumer interaction with the package. Ball is able to apply the ink around 360 degrees of the can.

Winner in the Sustainability category was Unilever UK together with Moravia Cans for their D&I aluminium aerosol can which compared to monobloc aerosol cans is 20 percent lighter.

Aerosol of the Year award went to Swallowfield plc & PZ Cussons for their Sanctuary Spa Shower Burst, which was praised for its "superior functionality, subtle design and innovative colour matching between the gel and the can decoration."

Tom Gilmour, aerosol chemist at Precision Valve UK, was also recognised by BAMA for his outstanding contribution to the aerosol industry and presented with the Special Achievement Award 2017.

## In brief

● Poor weather in the western US fruit and vegetable growing regions had an impact on pack volumes at Silgan in its third-quarter results. Metal can unit volumes were down five percent, with sales of US\$772.4 million, down 3.1 percent year-on-year. Overall sales, which includes Silgan's plastics containers and global closure businesses, were up by 11.2 percent at \$1.27 billion, compared with the same period in 2016. The increase was the result of higher sales in the closures business due to the acquisition of Dispensing Systems in April 2017 as well as in the plastic container business. Operational income improved in the third quarter to \$138.6 million from \$122.4m last year, and net profit was up marginally at \$72.4m. Tony Allott, chief executive of Silgan, said: "Our metal container business experienced volume declines as compared to the prior year primarily as a result of lower pack volumes which were unfavourably impacted by inclement weather in the western US growing regions and lower soup volumes. Our closures business was negatively impacted by cooler weather conditions throughout the summer which resulted in lower single-serve beverage volumes as compared to record volumes in the prior year period. Additionally, we were negatively impacted by hurricanes in the quarter as each of our businesses experienced temporary plant shutdowns and logistical disruptions."

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