

Correctly adapting the closing system to the product for optimal conservation



Carrefour Belgium offers a growing number of food products in reclosable packaging. The goal is to make life easier for consumers and to help them avoid wasting food. The company always chooses the opening/closing system that best suits the product and the packaging.

prevent pack

About **90 references** with reclosable packaging

Carrefour is the world's second-largest distributor of food and non-food products. In Belgium, the company markets about 90 references in reclosable packaging, in addition to the traditionally reclosable packages such as jam pots (see also Feature). These references primarily include sliced cold meat and

cheese sold in packaging with self-adhesive closures. They also include prepared salads, diced cheese, as well as nuts and dried fruits in little dishes with a seal and a cover. All of these food-stuffs are provided in packaging of various sizes.

Easy **to open** and **close again**

'Reclosable packages enable us to offer new services to consumers. They can leave the food product in the original packaging once it has been opened,' says Guido Brosius, Packaging Manager at Carrefour Belgium. 'This type of packaging also offers easier opening and closing. In addition, they enable us to offer a broader choice of products in store.'

The food products are selected based on the added value provided by the reclosable packaging, also taking into account

what is already available on the market. 'It is important to select appropriate products when considering a reclosable packaging,' observes Brosius. 'The reclosable aspect of a packaging, as well as its ease of opening, should reduce the risk of product waste, offer time savings for consumers, and encourage them to repeat their purchase. It is essential to optimize the way the packaging is opened: it should not open too easily (to avoid wasting product), nor with too much difficulty (to avoid discouraging consumers).'

Slight production **cost increase, reduced food waste**

Marketing a food product in a reclosable packaging requires several adaptations to the production process. In most cases, the basic plastic packaging is the same, but a special machine is required to apply the self-adhesive systems. 'These amendments make the process slightly more complex and entail a cost premium estimated at about 5% of the cost of a normal pack-

aging,' explains Brosius. 'On the other hand, we expect greater customer satisfaction, primarily because food waste is reduced. In the case of delicatessen, for instance, the product will be less prone to decolouration on the sides. This will prevent consumers from throwing away partly used products unnecessarily.'

good to remember

A reclosable packaging enables to optimize the conservation of partly used products, thus **reducing the risk of waste.**

Carrefour Belgium provides a **reclosable packaging** when it is likely to make **life easier for consumers.**

Tests are carried out with manufacturers and consumer panels in order **to ensure convenience.**

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How Carrefour develops **reclosable packaging**

Step 1: **Select the most suitable closure**

After selecting the product and weights to market in a reclosable packaging, Carrefour Belgium tests various types of reclosable packaging with the manufacturer. Is the system easy to open and reclose? Does the self-adhesive still perform properly after several openings? Does the opening and closing system resist tearing?

Step 2: **Consumer panel tests**

A prototype of the packaging is then produced and submitted to a consumer panel. These consumers test the ease of use of the packaging. Such tests enable the accurate assessment of whether the plastic packaging, the product, and the opening/closing system smoothly integrate to provide genuine added value.

Step 3: **Display in store**

Consumers must immediately recognize that the packaging is reclosable. This can be indicated by a label that is carefully designed to this effect and perhaps highlighted by small show cards. The packaging must also clearly indicate how the opening and closing mechanism works.

Guido Brosius, Packaging Manager,
Carrefour Belgium

'In order to provide genuine convenience to consumers, the product, the packaging and the closing system must form a perfectly integrated whole.'

Carrefour and the environment

Carrefour is committed to systematically use as little packaging as possible while minimizing energy consumption and CO₂ emissions. The distributor thus implements various programs aimed at:

- Reducing the quantity of raw materials at the source;
- Maximizing the use of recycled materials;
- Fostering easier sorting and recycling;
- Using renewable materials.

www.carrefour.eu