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New study demonstrates canned food is a sustainable top performer

A new study, carried out by respected Dutch environment and food institute TNO, has revealed that food packaged in steel cans is highly eco-efficient and has a high sustainability performance when compared with other packaging options.

The study, which analysed the performance of packaged vegetables in terms of environmental impact, cost for the consumer and nutritional value, sought to provide information on the overall value of differently-packaged food to society.

In terms of environmental performance, it found that steel cans had a lower than average environmental impact across six criteria when compared with other packaging options.

Commenting on the conclusions of the study Toon Ansems, project leader at TNO said “In today’s open market where the supply of food is secured throughout the year, among the systems analysed in our study, the canned food packaging system is a top performer in terms of eco-efficiency.”

When combining economic and environmental aspects, vegetables sold in a steel food can, frozen in a plastic bag or fresh peeled performed well, having comparable above-average eco-efficiency, while vegetables in a food pouch, laminate carton or frozen in a carton performed less well.

“As a part of our ongoing commitment to sustainability we were interested in getting a more detailed insight into the eco-efficient performance of canned food systems in comparison with other packaging options,” explained Philippe Wolper, director general of APEAL, the European Association of Producers of Steel for Packaging. “We now have substantiated, independent evidence of the value that canned food brings to society at an environmental, economic and nutritional level.”

The TNO study assessed the cost and environmental efficiency of seven packaged food systems from food crop to food consumption, including storage and food preparation and taking into account various packaging forms including fresh, frozen and preserved. They were then assessed on the basis of the six environmental indicators which included global warming potential, ozone depletion potential and a range of human and eco-toxicity potentials.

For full details of the study please visit our website: www.apeal.org

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