

New environmentally friendly migration barrier from Xylophane stops leaching of hazardous substances from recycled cardboard

Swedish materials company Xylophane has developed a solution to the problem of mineral oils and other harmful substances leaching into foods that are packed in cardboard made from recycled fibres. Tests conducted by the German institute ISEGA show that migration can be reduced by more than 90 per cent.

The tests have shown that mineral oils and other harmful substances from printing inks can migrate from recycled fibre cardboard and paper into foods. One study carried out by a government-run laboratory in Switzerland found quantities of mineral oils that far exceeded the permitted limits in dry products like breakfast cereals, pasta and rice packaged in recycled cardboard. These substances are volatile and can permeate through layers or inner bags of plastic. According to toxicologists, mineral oils in foods can be linked to inflammation of internal organs and, in some cases, cancer.

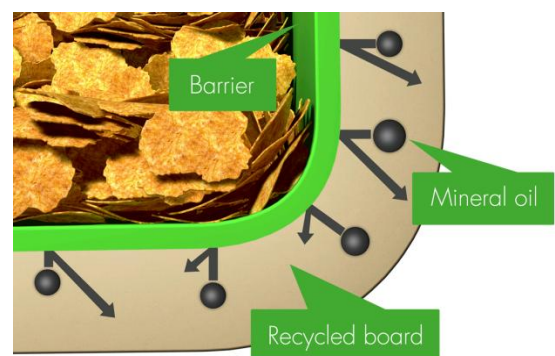
“This problem has been much debated over the last two years. There have even been discussions on prohibiting the use of recycled cardboard for the packaging of certain foods”, says Håkan Grubb, CEO of Xylophane AB.

The barrier materials that Xylophane has developed are able to efficiently stop the migration of harmful substances from recycled cardboard and paper. The migration of mineral oils can also be drastically reduced.

“This is a major step forward for food safety and also for environmentally friendly packaging solutions”, continues Håkan. “With our solution, food manufacturers can continue to use recycled cardboard and paper, achieving green packaging without endangering the consumer’s health and safety.”

The new barrier layer can be applied using conventional technology, which involves dispersion coating during the paper and cardboard manufacturing process. The materials are renewable, biodegradable and do not affect the recyclability of the cardboard or paper.

“Today Xylophane has a pilot plant for the manufacture of the raw material xylan. The plant is used for the optimization of the production process and the manufacturing of materials for customer trials. Our products have patents pending. We have started work on large-scale production and are planning commercial sales in about one and a half to two years. There is a big demand for migration barriers, which is estimated to become a market in excess of one hundred million euros in the future”, explains Håkan Grubb.



Xylophane has previously developed a renewable grease and oxygen barrier for food packaging. Common to both barrier materials is that they are based on the natural carbohydrate xylan, which is isolated from seed hulls and husks, which are agricultural by-products. This makes it an environmentally friendly solution comparable with the aluminium foil and oil-based plastics currently used to achieve these functions.

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The logo for Xylophane features the company name in a black, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a green circular graphic element consisting of two concentric arcs, one slightly offset from the other, creating a partial ring effect.

Xylophane

***Xylophane AB**, founded in 2004, has developed unique and patented barrier materials for packaging used, for example, for foods. Development of the products is carried out in cooperation with customers in the packaging industry. Today the company is owned by SEB Venture Capital, Capricorn Venture Partners, KTH Chalmers Capital, Chalmers Innovation, Innovationsbron, private investors and the founders. The materials are a sustainable alternative to barrier materials that currently dominate the market, such as aluminium or oil-based plastics. www.xylophane.com*