

## BEVERAGE PRODUCERS EARN LOW GRADES FOR RECYCLING EFFORTS, INDUSTRY ACCOUNTABILITY

The numbers might fly in the face of reason, but a new study commissioned by Washington, DC-based trade group **Container Recycling**

**Institute (CRI)** showed beverage industry leaders falling short in efforts to improve recovery and recycling rates.

The study, titled "Waste and Opportunity: U.S. Beverage Container Recycling Scorecard and Report," evaluated the efforts of 12 major beverage companies to recover and recycle bottles in the waste stream.

The independent research group, San Francisco-based **As You Sow**, handed out C grades to **Coca-Cola Co.** and **PepsiCo**, both of whom use 10 percent recycled content in U.S.-produced CSD bottles. All other companies, including major bottled-water producers and **Starbucks**, garnered a failing grade of D or lower. "In truth, the two

biggest beverage companies are leading the way, but industry efforts are at a level that is really mediocre at best," said CRI Executive

Director Pat Franklin. "No one is setting the world on fire." Franklin has just been added to the **PET Strategies** conference, Nov. 28-30 in Atlanta, where she has agreed to discuss the study, its findings, and share future approaches to recycling -- a hot-button issue among that segment's converters and brand-owners.

The group hopes to use those figures as a

springboard to spur the **Beverage Packaging Environmental Council** to action. The industry coalition, which includes the aforementioned players along with **Coors**, **Nestle Waters**, and others, is considering setting recycling standards and finding means to drive forward industry initiatives. PS

Making The Grade?					
An independent study commissioned by the <b>Container Recycling Institute</b> evaluated the top 12 beverage brand owners for recycling initiatives and handed out scores.					
	Recycled Content	Recovery/ Recycling	Source Reduction	Overall Grade	Total GPA
Pepsi Co	B	C+	D+	C	2.3
Coca-Cola	D	C+	B	C	2.1
Miller Brewing	D	D-	D	D-	0.9
New Belgium Brewing	C	F	F	D-	0.7
Coors	D+	D-	F	D-	0.7
Anheuser-Busch	F	D	D	D-	0.7
Polar Beverages	F	D	F	F	0.6
Starbucks	D	F	F	F	0.3
Nestle Waters	F	F	F	F	0.1
Cadbury Schweppes	F	F	F	F	0.0
Cott	F	F	F	F	0.0
National Beverage	F	F	F	F	0.0

Source: Container Recycling Institute

## KRONES BECOMES A CONVERT TO RECYCLED PET FLAKE

Already a leader at exposing customers to total lifecycle system costs, **Krones** now wants to jump-start bottle recycling by offering a new process to produce recycled PET at bottlemaking facilities and funnel it directly to preform production.

The Neutraubling, Germany-based equipment supplier has been preaching the gospel of analyzing total system costs when making packaging decisions. The company revealed another step in that approach to *Packaging Strategies* by developing equipment that will put flake-conversion recycling operations directly into customers' plants. "We're doing this to drive home the urgency of using recycled PET in a production platform," said Michael Skroblin, director of blow molding technology for Krones Inc., Franklin, WI.

Krones has quietly started the program's rollout in Europe and is discussing the technology with several U.S. customers, Skroblin said. The Krones-built system grinds,

washes, and converts post-consumer PET to flake and returns the material to bottle production. The equipment can produce about 1,100 pounds per hour of rPET.

The system also lowers the cost of recycled PET in production and makes it more cost-competitive with virgin material, Skroblin said. Currently, rPET costs about 60 cents/lb, not dramatically lower than that for virgin material.

According to figures from the **Container Recycling Institute**, Washington, DC, the U.S. beverage container recycling rate has dropped from 52 percent in 1992 to 33 percent this year.

**Packaging Strategies' Perspective:** *In-house PET recycling operations have been attempted before by Amcor and others but not to the degree Krones is suggesting. A linchpin of the program would be the use of effective curbside recycling and distribution programs that would bring enough post-consumer bottles to converters' facilities.* PS