

Sonoco Introduces a New Protection System for Shipping Bottles and Cans

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FirmaCap(TM) protects pallet loads with a close-fitting cap that securely holds products in place during transit

HARTSVILLE, S.C., Sep 15, 2011 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Sonoco (NYSE: SON), one of the largest diversified global packaging and services companies, has developed a new protection system for bottles and cans during shipment. The FirmaCap (TM) pallet cap fits tightly over loaded pallets and securely holds products in place during shipping and warehousing.

Designed to work with all 44" x 56" pallets used for shipping bottles and cans, patent-pending FirmaCap pallet caps provide an alternative to the heavier wood boards currently used in the industry. FirmaCap components, when combined with FirmaCore^(R) or FirmaDeck^(R) corrugated pallets, create a lightweight package protection system that reduces transit costs and generates revenue through recycling. Compared to 44" x 56" wood pallets capped with standard wood caps, Sonoco's Firma brand corrugated pallet protection systems offer an 87 percent reduction in weight in an average truckload. Additionally, the entire corrugated packaging solution can be recycled with other corrugated materials, generating up to \$33 in revenue per truckload.

Sonoco recently began producing corrugated and plastic pallets in 44" x 56" sizes so that it could better serve the market for bottles and cans. "When we evaluated the market for palletizing bottles and cans, we realized that options were very limited for customers. For the most part, the only option available was the heavier and more costly wood pallet," said James Harrell, division vice president and general manager, Industrial Carriers - North America. "By offering corrugated pallets for one-way shipping and plastic pallets for closed-loop shipping, along with our new FirmaCap protector, we're giving customers options that will better fit their needs."

Made from recycled materials, Firma brand pallets were developed to offer the packaging marketplace an environmentally sustainable and sanitary alternative to conventional pallets. Firma brand pallets are also exempt from costly ISPM-15 regulation requirements.

Corrugated pallets for one-way shipping

Recyclable corrugated pallets are ideal for customers whose shipments travel long distances or whose shipping patterns otherwise prevent the return of pallets through a closed-loop system. Both the FirmaCore corrugated 44" x 56" pallet and the FirmaDeck corrugated 44" x 56" pallet are made for the one-way shipment of lightweight cans.

Recycled plastic pallets for closed-loop shipping

The FirmaMax recycled plastic 44" x 56" pallet is a strong, reusable pallet ideal for repeated use. Can market customers operating closed loop systems can benefit from a returnable pallet program, and the FirmaMax plastic pallet now provides a more sustainable and cost-effective solution than other plastic pallets in the market. Sonoco has recycling capabilities throughout North America, and can use recycled plastics to offer a plastic pallet that is cost effective yet meets the criteria of the can segment.

Unit load protection from the top down

The patent-pending FirmaCap corrugated 44" x 56" unit load protector is a close-fitting top cap that stabilizes cans, preventing them from falling when the load is in transit. The FirmaCap component will better protect cans as compared to the wooden boards currently used in the industry.

Sonoco will display its full line of Firma brand pallets, including the new FirmaCap and other pallets designed for packaging unit loads of cans, bottles and canisters, in booth 5607 at Pack Expo Las Vegas, Sept. 26 - 28.

About Sonoco

Founded in 1899, Sonoco is a \$4.1 billion global manufacturer of industrial and consumer products and provider of packaging services, with more than 300 operations in 34 countries, serving customers in some 85 nations. Sonoco is a proud member of the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index. For more information on the Company, visit our website at <http://www.sonoco.com>.

SOURCE: Sonoco

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