

# Fully-Recyclable, Sustainable Beverage Containers



## Summary

Based in Bridgend, South Wales, EcoKeg produces beverage containers which closely replicate steel kegs but are innovatively manufactured using recycled high-density polyethylene (HDPE). Their unique HDPE construction makes them the only fully-recyclable kegs on the market.

However, in order to effectively sustain production operations, EcoKeg needed to diversify and de-risk its suppliers to mitigate its reliance on a single source of recycled HDPE.

With WRAP Cymru's support, EcoKeg's operations were successfully safeguarded via the appointment of two additional suppliers that cost-effectively meet quantity and quality requirements.

Furthermore, WRAP Cymru embarked upon a targeted marketing campaign via social media and direct e-mail to help grow EcoKeg's existing customer base, ultimately increasing demand for their innovative product.

## Key Facts

- By using recycled HDPE, EcoKeg saves 2.6 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e compared to virgin HDPE.
- EcoKegs offer additional carbon footprint advantages due to 'lightweighting' loads, which also results in reduced transport costs.
- Lower costs and weight are achieved with no compromise to maintaining product freshness.
- Ease of use - with a removable valve system and the re-use of the units, this makes them particularly flexible and attractive to smaller breweries.

# Background

EcoKeg Europe is the trading name of New Keg Co Limited, which was established by Gavin Rees and Steve Tipples in May 2014. EcoKegs are produced using patented technology and consist of a virgin polyethylene terephthalate (PET) preform inner, pressure tested to 10bar, 32L capacity, allowing 2L



headspace heat expansion. They are built in AMOSORB™, a premium oxygen scavenger and UV barrier that meets EU and FDA food contact

legislation. Therefore, standard product freshness and shelf-life are guaranteed at nine months. EcoKegs also have stacking features moulded into their bases for stability.

Components are fully-recyclable and can be mechanically dis-assembled; plus EcoKeg offers a 'Returns / Recycling Service', which gives users access to discounts on subsequent orders:

- Returns - used kegs are reconditioned and all components are re-used or recycled.
- Recycled - used kegs are reconditioned and returned in ready-to-fill condition for re-use.

## WRAP Cymru Support

### Safeguarding Production

Prior to WRAP Cymru's involvement, EcoKeg was wholly reliant on a single source of recycled HDPE. In order to mitigate this risk, WRAP Cymru explored other feedstock sources, identifying and engaging with alternative suppliers. Several plastics reproducers were approached and sample batches were run through the extruder to assess their suitability. As a result, EcoKeg now has two further suppliers that are able to supply the colour, strength and integrity of material required for the

manufacturing process at a price commensurate with their existing supplier. A guaranteed, readily-available, cost-effective supply of 10 tonnes of recycled HDPE per month has safeguarded the production of EcoKegs and has ensured that supply can continue to meet demand.

### Growing the Customer Base

WRAP Cymru also helped promote EcoKegs to new and existing markets via a targeted, integrated marketing campaign, using a combination of social media and direct e-mail. Social media channels included Twitter and LinkedIn, whilst MailChimp and Mail Merge were utilised to issue e-mails across the hospitality sector. Targeted businesses included - but were not limited to - breweries, hotels, pubs and restaurants. This engagement exercise resulted in securing five new, regular customers for the product.

WRAP Cymru's guidance and support also extended to reviewing EcoKeg's ongoing website and social media methodology to outline a strategy to continually engage with their target market to help expand the product's reach, drive awareness and sustain this high-growth business.

"EcoKeg has grown quite significantly over the past two years. However, growth does not come without risk and we quickly realised that, in a world of volatile plastics markets, we ran the risk of solely relying on one material supplier. The support WRAP Cymru provided was invaluable in mitigating this risk and securing other sources of feedstock and also providing advice and support on low-cost and effective marketing of our products."

Lewis Jones, Business Development Manager, EcoKeg

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