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TIMCON unveils reuse position paper

The Timber Packaging & Pallet Confederation (TIMCON) has launched a white paper on the status of reuse in the UK wood pallet and packaging business.

The document highlights that reuse is high and has been increasing in sectors from fmCG, pharmaceuticals, and construction over the last 10 years.

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TIMCON is the acknowledged representative body of the UK and Republic of Ireland wooden pallet and packaging industry, encompassing manufacturers, the four major pallet pooling companies and most sawmills who supply the industry from UK and Ireland and suppliers to the industry such as kiln and composite block manufacturers.

The white paper points to a “change in mindset” among supply chain users of wooden pallets and packaging who are acting on the clear environmental and economic benefits of reuse. This is driving already high levels of reuse in supply chains up further.

“Every wooden pallet, no matter what type, dimension and colour, will continue to be a reusable asset,” says the paper.

“This essential document illustrates how far advanced the UK market is in the reuse of wooden pallets and

packaging,” said TIMCON President John Dye. “The sector and its customers have changed their mind set with regards to reusing in the supply chain, which makes perfect economic and environmental sense.”

The annual UK Wood Pallets & Packaging Market research reports prepared for TIMCON and Forest Research show that between 2015 and 2023 there has been a 40 per cent increase in pallets being repaired and then reused in the marketplace.

There are many thousands of pallets being reused daily throughout the UK, across all sectors. TIMCON estimates there are approximately 250 million pallets currently in circulation in the UK.

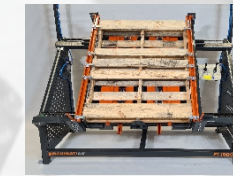
In 2023, the volume of repaired pallets, at 54.1 million, was 30 per cent greater than the number of new pallets manufactured.

You can read the full TIMCON white paper on reuse on page 8.



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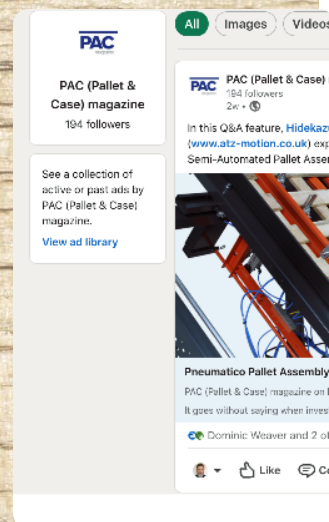
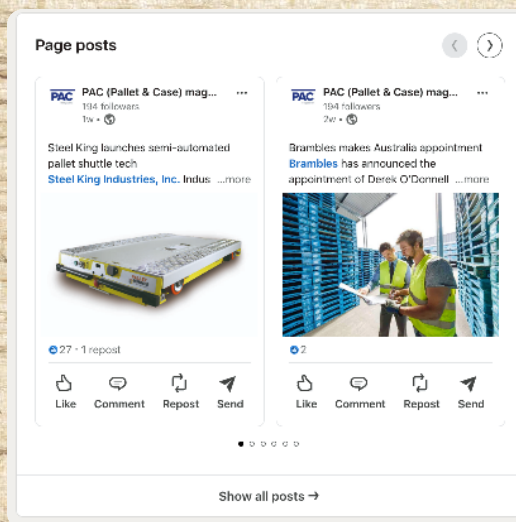
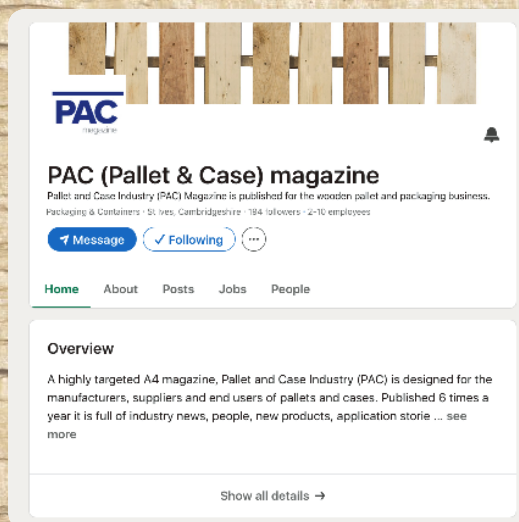
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Timbermark wins EPAL supplier accreditation

Timbermark's inkjet system for 4-way pallet production lines has been approved by EPAL for printing Europallets.

The announcement, made at this year's Fachpack trade show in Nuremberg, marks the culmination of a nine-month development for Timbermark, in partnership with the inkjet manufacturer, Yeacode. The result is a system that is easily installed on a branding conveyor and delivers a consistently dark print that is light-fast, indelible, and waterproof. The quality is fine enough to print machine-readable QR codes, enabling serialisation, using data supplied from EPAL.

According to Timbermark: "The Yeacode inkjet system is best-in-class. It features a 30 kHz print head and integral 500W UV-curing LED, activated from the printer controller. Additional features include heated print heads and ink system, meaning the system runs well in cold conditions.

"The Timbermark system has been designed to solve the traditional problems associated with inkjet, such as inconsistent pallet feed rates, and the variable positioning of the pallet in its guide.

"The system is controlled by a PC message switching app, so that printing each block is a separate cycle. Other inkjet systems treat the pallet as one product, meaning the print on the second or third blocks can be inconsistently positioned on the pallet block.

"The print heads and UV LEDs are positioned on a floating guide, so that the skid follows the contour of the pallet and gives a consistent



'throw distance' and so eliminates the possibility of fuzzy printing.

"These two features combined guarantee a flawless, high-quality print on each block, pallet after pallet. Printing the machine-readable code is a new specification from EPAL in 2024.

"Only high-resolution printers can deliver the definition to be able to reproduce these codes, and Timbermark's system with UV-cured ink means a scannable QR code can be printed on a wooden pallet block, even if the block is not entirely dry."

The accreditation opens up a new option for EPAL licensees, who are looking to meet the new specification criteria. For the future, Timbermark is developing software that can scan QR codes, validate the Europallet, and return the data to the EPAL server. The company says it is actively seeking customers who wish to work together to prove this part of the system.



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Rotom Group acquires Kingsbury Pallets



Rotom Group has further bolstered its position in the UK market with the acquisition of Kingsbury Pallets, a leading provider of sustainable pallet solutions. The latest move adds 76 employees and two UK sites with a total coverage of 34,000m², to the group.

Rotom is a provider of load carriers across 11 European countries. Over the last two years, Rotom has made a number of strategic acquisitions across Europe.

Founded by Jon Towers in 1995, Kingsbury Pallets processes 40,000 wooden pallets and packaging items weekly across two sites – its headquarters in Tamworth and a second site in Lichfield. The company supplies new and reconditioned wooden pallets and offers pallet recovery and recycling services. In total, Kingsbury Pallets recycles and re-uses 15,000 tonnes of wooden packaging per year.

Kingsbury Pallets' Tamworth facility incorporates a 100 kW solar installation, which powers an electric Untha XR shredder and recycling line, reducing carbon emissions by 22.3 tonnes annually. The company also holds multiple accreditations, including from the Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, and Wood Recyclers Association, emphasising its commitment to responsible operations. Rotom holds the Ecovadis silver certification.

As part of the acquisition, Jon Towers will continue in his current role as Managing Director, overseeing day-to-day operations and the transition of Kingsbury Pallets into Rotom. He said: "Over the last 30 years, we have worked incredibly hard to grow Kingsbury Pallets into one of the most sustainably-focused suppliers of wooden pallets across the UK. Now, by joining Rotom, we have the opportunity to expand our mission even further, backed by the resources and vision of a like-minded leader in sustainable solutions."

Arjan Kuiper, CEO of Rotom Group, stated: "We are thrilled to welcome the highly-skilled Kingsbury Pallets team. This acquisition strengthens our presence in the important UK wooden pallet market, with which we can better serve customers with an international scope. But it also brings together valuable expertise in sustainable practices."

"Kingsbury Pallets' values align seamlessly with our own, and together, we're excited to foster a future focused on innovation, growth, and sustainability. We look forward to working closely with the new team to drive shared success."

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The Timber Packaging & Pallet Confederation (TIMCON) has published a position paper that looks at the status of reuse in the UK wood pallet and packaging business. It highlights the high and increasing level of reuse in sectors from fmCG, pharmaceuticals, and construction over the last 10 years. Here is the white paper in full.

The status of wooden packaging & pallet reuse in the United Kingdom 2024

A white paper by UK Wooden Packaging & Pallet Confederation (TIMCON)

TIMCON advises that the pallet sector ceased recognising the terms “single-use” and “limited-use” for pallets, over a decade ago.

In the period from 2015 to 2023, the annual UK Wood Pallets & Packaging Market research reports prepared for TIMCON and Forest Research show there has been a 40 per cent increase in pallets being repaired and then reused in the marketplace. Over and above this there are many thousands of pallets being reused daily throughout the UK (in all sectors), which have been passed as being reusable following inspection by trained operators. TIMCON estimates that there are approximately 250 million pallets currently in circulation in the UK.

In 2023, the volume of repaired pallets, at 54.1 million, was 30 per cent greater than the number of new pallets manufactured.

The wooden pallet sector is inherently designed for reuse, with numerous repairer facilities available around the UK and Ireland.

A change in mindset

TIMCON are not alone in believing the sector and its customers have changed their mind set with regards to reusing pallets.

Brent McClendon, the President and CEO of the National Wooden Pallet & Container Association, the largest international wood pallet association with members in forty countries recently made the following comment about wood pallet recovery and refurbishment.

“We know that all wooden pallets are reusable and ultimately recyclable. A third-party research study in the USA, for example, identified that fewer than

5 per cent of all wood pallets in the USA end up in a landfill. A better recovery, reuse, and recycle rate than any other packaging product in the supply chain. The inherent value in wood means that the terms ‘single-use’ and ‘one-way’ do not apply to wood pallets in 2024.”

Such a high recycle rate is a significant achievement for the US industry. This shows clearly what can be achieved with the right incentives in place. The vast majority of wooden pallets can be repaired and reused multiple times, before reaching their end of service life cycle. Then, they can be chipped and recycled into products such as man-made board materials (the stored CO2 remaining captured) or, as a last resort, used for energy.

The recently published European Federation of Wooden Pallet and Packaging Manufacturers (FEFPEB) statistics report for 2023 clearly show that the UK is leading the way re the use of multiple trip pallets and other EU countries are following suit. The report states that since 2013 there has been a steady increase in the use of multiple trip pallets.

The belief that millions of pallets end up in landfill sites is completely wrong. This is true regardless of the specification, dimensions, colour, or the sector the pallets are being used in.

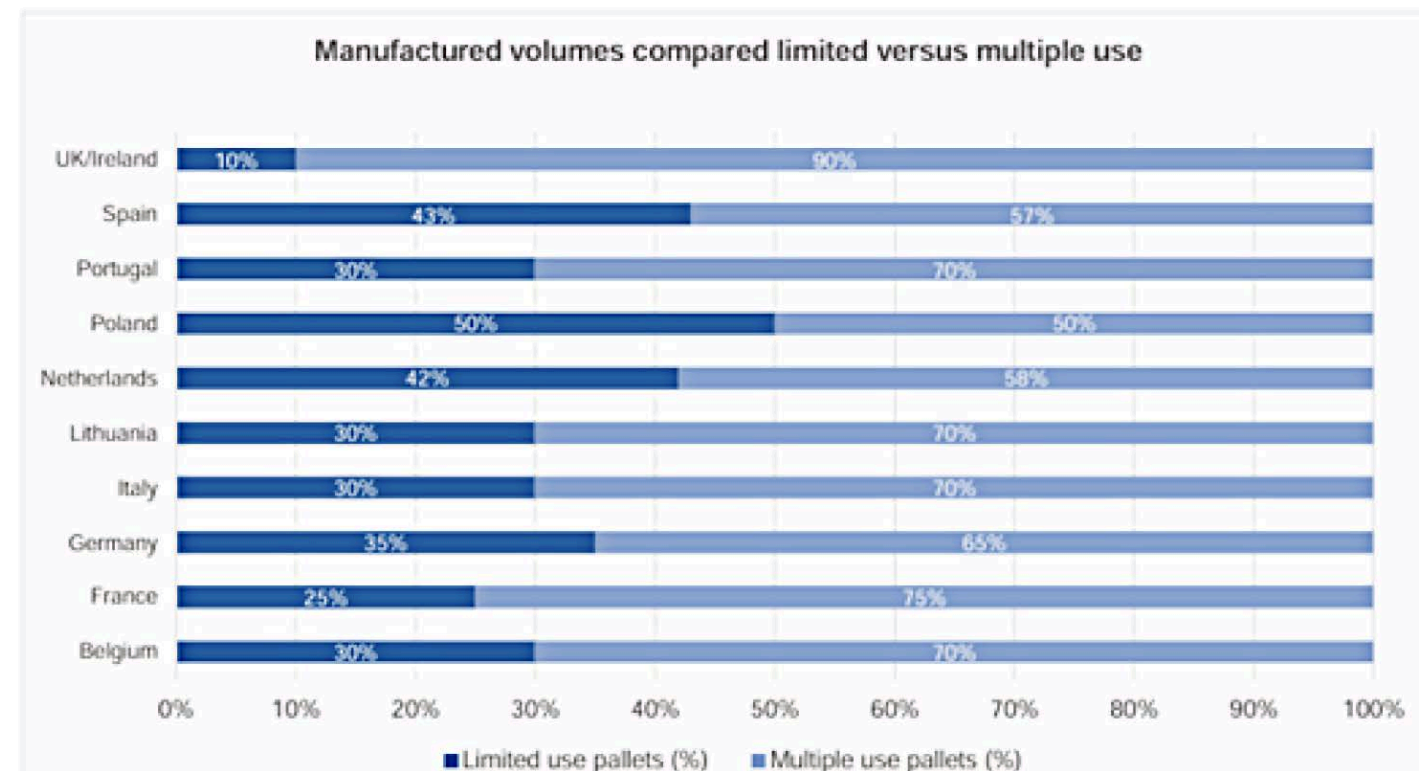
Why?

Of course, we know that sending wooden pallets to landfill as scrap/waste wood is wrong from an environmental point of view; however, it also it makes no commercial sense, either.

Wood is a highly valuable, sought after commodity. In the UK, the reuse of wooden

MANUFACTURED VOLUMES COMPARED LIMITED VERSUS MULTIPLE USE

Of the reporting members, we review the limited use, or multiple use of pallets. It's worth mentioning that all pallets are reusable, unless it concerns packaging that is intended to be deployed only once before it enters the waste phase. We notice a significant increase of what is reported as multiple use in the European market. Since 2013 there has been a constant increase in multiple use volumes.



pallets has been exceptionally high in the fmCG sector for many years now, standing at more than 95 per cent. Even pallets that find their way to landfills are many times removed from the waste stream and sold back to pallet companies for refurbishment and reuse.

More recently, the sector is seeing large increases in the amount of reuse activity in other sectors including construction, chemical and insulation; there has been significant growth in private pallet pooling, too as companies look to reuse their company's “assets” multiple times.

Clearly, businesses are being motivated to review their wooden pallet and packaging working practices and take advantage of the hugely important commercial benefits this brings. Ultimately, this helps them and the UK meet their environmental targets, too.

Wood underpins reuse

Wood is the material of choice for manufacturing pallets, accounting for an estimated 90% of the world's requirements. Compared with alternative materials, wood is endlessly renewable, highly repairable, reusable, and recyclable. The wood in a

pallet has absorbed approximately 27.5 kg of CO from the atmosphere - which it continues to store until the end of its useful life.

In the UK, the wood for manufacturing and repairing pallets is produced by the sawmills as a by-product from cutting larger pieces of wood for other sectors, predominately the construction and house building sectors.

Trees are predominately harvested to produce the likes of carcassing timbers that are used in the house building (a sector where the use of wood is planned to expand in the coming years in the UK). The pallet and packaging sector use the produced ‘falling boards’ that are created from the sawing breakdown process to manufacture and repair their products. Around 30 per cent of the total annual production of UK sawmills is used by the pallet and packaging industry.

Could the sector use more UK and Irish timber if the sawmills were to increase their production? Absolutely! Currently there are still significant volumes of sawn pallet & packaging wood being imported from the Baltic states, Scandinavia etc.

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This highly efficient 'cascade system' maximises the yield of every harvested tree, even sawdust and wood chips can not be classified as waste as these by products are used in manufacture of other products. The use of wood sourced from certified managed forests, boosts the sustainability of the pallet and packaging business even further.

Increasing the use of wood as a manufacturing material has huge benefits for the environment, including carbon reduction. It is extremely important that the sawmills continue to have a strong pallet and packaging sector (both in manufacturing and repair) to help keep the best possible yields from every harvested tree.

In the UK, timber use is forecast to rise by 78 per cent by 2050, driven by increasing demand for sustainable raw materials. Therefore the lobbying by bodies such as the Confederation of Forest Industries (UK) Ltd (Confor) for increased tree planting throughout the UK is extremely important for the whole of the Forest sector

With the help of technology including the well-established Pallet Design System software PDS (recognised as the market's global leading software), the pallet industry optimises the

use of timber to maximise load capacity, its all-round strength, and expected service life to support reuse. In the coming months PDS users will not only be able to provide their customers with the loading analysis, etc but they will also be able to provide a customised Carbon Impact Declaration – showing the carbon footprint of the designed pallet.

Incentivising reuse

TIMCON has worked with other wood industry associations – including NAPD, WPIF, and WRA - to table a workable reuse framework for wooden pallet and packaging reuse. DEFRA has given extremely positive feedback on the potential for the Wood Reuse Incentive Scheme, which will increase circularity of in UK supply chains by raising reuse rates further and in a shorter time scale.

A well-implemented reuse scheme can play a major part in helping the UK achieve its 2050 net zero targets.

It will highlight further the fact that every wooden pallet, no matter what type, dimension and colour, will continue to be a reusable asset.



CHEP makes Europe CEO appointments

International supply chain solutions and equipment pooling company CHEP, has announced the appointment of Helen Lane as the new CEO of its European business, effective from 11 November. Helen succeeds David Cuenca, who recently assumed the role of CEO for CHEP North America.

Lane joined Brambles in 2003, holding leadership roles across finance, commercial, logistics and asset productivity before becoming Vice President, CHEP Northern Europe in 2016. As part of this role, she led Brambles' UK and Ireland businesses until 2021 when she was appointed Chief Data and Digital Officer, adding Group Strategy to her portfolio in FY24.

"I am thrilled to be leading the Europe business and will be focusing on working closely with our partners to build the supply chains of the future through innovation, collaboration and passion to drive customer value", said Lane.

Graham Chipchase, CEO of Brambles, commented, "Helen has been instrumental in our customer-focused, digitally driven transformation that has delivered significant value by improving every aspect of our

business. Her extensive experience across so many areas of Brambles combined with her exceptional commercial and leadership skills make her the natural choice to drive CHEP Europe through its next phase of growth."



Meanwhile, CHEP's parent company Brambles has announced the sale of its CHEP India business to Indian returnable packaging services provider LEAP India Private Limited, for US\$85 million. The deal is expected to be completed by the end of the first quarter of 2025.

Chipchase said: "Brambles entered the Indian market more than a decade ago and has made good progress in establishing many of the fundamental elements that support both customer and shareholder value creation from pooling in the future. However, creating meaningful value from further investment in CHEP India, requires a long-term timeframe. The consolidation of CHEP India into LEAP's existing equipment pooling operations provides opportunities for efficiencies and a strengthened customer offering in this market over the long term."



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