Svenska Retursystem

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Reusable crates reduced the food industry's carbon

Half of Sweden's fresh produce deliveries to the grocery retail trade use Svenska Retursystem's reusable crates. By using retusable crates instead of disposable packaging, the industry reduced its carbon dioxide emissions by 28,700 tonnes during 2016

"If the world is going to achieve its tough, ambitious climate goals, it is important that we all take decisive action here and now. We are therefore pleased to be doing our bit, together with producers, wholesalers, stores and restaurants, in continuing to reduce the industry's carbon dioxide emissions," says Anna Elgh, CEO of Svenska Retursystem.

During 2016, the carbon dioxide saving from the reusable crates was significantly greater than in previous years. This is due to a number of factors, including worn-out crates that can no longer be repaired now being ground down and reused in the manufacture of new crates. Greenhouse gas emissions have also fallen due to more transport by railway and the fact that more carriers are increasing the proportion of alternative fuel they use. The reusable system has also grown.

"The reusable crates are not just climate-smart; they also make a substantial contribution to reducing food waste due to their stable design and because they are ventilated and do not absorb moisture. You could say that the reusable crates are the true environmental heroes of the food industry," says Anna Elgh.

Three sustainability benefits of reusable crates:

- Climate-smart: A life cycle analysis* from 2016 reveals that reusable crates reduced CO2e emissions by 74 per cent, compared with equivalent disposable packaging.

- Reduces food waste: The reusable crate protects the primary packaging from impacts and is sturdy enough to cope with stacking and loading. The design of the reusable crate means that the amount of scrapping and waste is reduced.

- Reuse rather than recycling: Since the start, the returnable crates have replaced over 1.3 billion pieces of disposable packaging.

**The life cycle analysis for Svenska Retursystem's "whole crate" model was prepared on 29 August 2016. It was carried out by Master's students from the energy-environment-management engineering programme at Linköping University, and was revised and verified by RISE - Research Institutes of Sweden.*