

Climate-smart plastic pallets for Coop fruit and vegetables

Everfresh, a Swedish fresh produce distributor, has exchanged its wooden pallets for reusable plastic pallets for shipments to and from Coop, a retail chain. From mid-April, all of the country's Coop stores will have their fruit and vegetables delivered on extremely durable Svenska Retursystem (SRS) pallets.

Coop plastic pallets

Every month, Everfresh delivers approximately 55,000 pallets of fruit and vegetables to Coop's 800 stores across the country. The change from wooden pallets to SRS plastic pallets generates an annual saving of approximately 50 tonnes of CO₂e. (See explanation at the bottom of the story.)

"The climate issue is one of the most important challenges of our time," said Dragisa Jovanovic, project manager at Everfresh. "For us, it is a matter of course to do everything we can to contribute to more sustainable food consumption. Switching to more climate-smart pallets is therefore a natural part of our strategy."

For drivers, the handling of SRS pallets also means a better working environment and also simplified handling. Wooden pallets are class qualified in various qualities that often lead to time-consuming discussions, which is now completely eliminated.

More accurate data transfer for Coop

"It is very positive that Everfresh is switching to using pallets that can be reused and entering a circular system," said Peter Rosendahl, transport manager at Coop Sweden. "In addition to reducing the use of this pallet, it reduces the climate impact, the ID marking on the pallets means earlier and more accurate data transfer that improves transport planning. The pallets also make the work environment healthier for drivers, terminal workers and store employees because SRS pallets do not emit dust and wood chips."

For Everfresh, the transition means better track management. SRS pallets are equipped with RFID tags and Everfresh will be the first to read the tags. That way, they always know where each pallet is and how many pallets are flowing in and out per day. Everfresh's intention is to increase the traceability of all fruit and vegetables loaded on the pallet in the future, which is valuable when the demand for traceability increases sharply.

"Many Swedish growers supply fruit and vegetables to Coop and this sends ripples throughout the industry," said Sigrid Helgason, Key Account Manager at Svenska Retursystem. "Several growers will now take the opportunity to expand their use of the much more sustainable pallets to the delight of both the climate and the users' working environment. We are of course proud to be involved and help reduce companies' climate impact."

The basis of the CO2 reduction for our Grey fullsize pallet is a life cycle analysis carried out by Master's students from the energy-environment-management engineering programme at Linköping University (2017). RISE – Research Institutes of Sweden, has reviewed and verified the analysis implementation and that the report corresponds to the ISO standard for LCA.

Depending on which method of life cycle analysis you choose, the results of the carbon dioxide reduction look a little different. This is because you can look at the combustion of wood raw material in different ways. We have chosen to be careful and calculate our carbon dioxide savings according to the traditional LCA method, which shows that our Grey fullsize pallet produces 10 percent lower carbon dioxide emissions compared to the corresponding wooden pallet.

- For each round that a Grey fullsize pallet does, the industry saves 74 grams of CO2.
- The pallets have a lifespan of 15 years and are used on average about 104 times.

About SRS pallets

The full size SRS pallet is standardized and adapted for automatic handling. It withstands high stress, is friction-proof and works well in a freezing environment. It weighs 10 kg less than a corresponding wooden pallet. The estimated lifespan of the pallet is 15 years. It does not emit dust or wood chips, which provides a healthier work environment for everyone who handles it throughout the flow.

About Everfresh

Everfresh is one of Sweden's leading fruit and vegetable companies. The company is part of Total Produce Nordic, (TPN), a group of fruit and vegetable companies. TPN is part of the Dole plc group. Everfresh has its main operations in Långeberga outside Helsingborg. Read more at www.everfresh.se

Article Notes from SRS, Rick LeBlanc

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