



## Mineral Oil Issue Paper

The recycled paperboard industry believes that the safety of paper-based food packaging is the highest priority for the industry. Our packaging complies with U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations for safe food packaging which establish the levels of suitable purity applicable to food packaging applications in the United States.

Indeed, over a decade ago, members of the Recycled Paperboard Technical Association developed a comprehensive program to ensure that recycled paperboard can be safely used in food packaging in full compliance with U.S. legal and scientific standards. This program includes regular, ongoing testing that looks for a broad range of potential impurities. It also requires implementation of Good Manufacturing Practices and careful sourcing of recovered fiber to enable manufacturers to assure recycled paperboard is suitably pure.

In early 2011, Dr. Konrad Grob, a Swiss analytical chemist, reported that his team of researchers concluded that the levels of mineral oil found in recycled paper materials and food raise health and safety concerns. They further asserted that offset printing inks and recycled paperboard are the likely primary sources of mineral oil contamination in food, and they questioned the suitability of the use of these inks and recycled paper in food packaging applications.

Dr. Grob's work focused on two types of Mineral Oil: Mineral Oil Saturated Hydrocarbons ("MOSH") and Mineral Oil Aromatic Hydrocarbons ("MOAH"). These substances are found in ink, in recycled paper; print on surfaces of primary and secondary packaging; papermaking process additives; adhesives; food and food manufacturing. Despite the fact that a number of additional studies have been undertaken since then, none has answered the questions regarding the many assumptions made by the researchers or about their findings, particularly that recycled paperboard was the primary source of MOSH or MOAH.

Governments have responded in several ways, but neither the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) nor the United Kingdom Food Standards Agency has seen it necessary to make changes to current rigorous standards for food-contact recycled paperboard. The European Union is studying the issue. Only the Germans have proposed regulation, which have yet to be made final.

Paperboard is an important component of an environmentally responsible and sustainable future that can and should be used in many applications, including food packaging.

June 2016