

then to increase them by 1% each year to 2020, was supported by less than a third of respondents.

Although in general the industry accepted the new recycling targets, respondents made additional comments. They argued that the packaging waste recovery note (PRN) system needed an overhaul. They claimed the current system “does not address quality” and instead priorities volume.

There were also concerns about an imbalance between domestic and export

markets. For example, respondents said glass should not be exported for treatment because this would likely end up as “landfill by the back door”.

It was also recommended that glass reused as aggregate is classed as having been recycled and respondents stated that the plastics industry must be given more support to ensure less plastic ends up as refuse-derived fuel. ■

FURTHER INFORMATION

1. *Packaging targets summary of responses*

In terms of recovery, energy-from-waste met 92% of its obligation. But Andrew Letham, sales and marketing manager at t2e, says this was because of stricter efficiency requirements for reprocessing plants that started in early 2015.

Several other producers of packaging – aluminium, plastics and steel – would have missed their targets had the data been calculated minus ‘carry-in volumes’. These could be used either against the 2014 or 2015 targets.

DEFRA is now raising the recycling target for plastics. Although the target was cut by 3% for 2016, it will rise by 2% each year to 2020 (see p11).

A rising plastics recycling target may combine with lower carry-in volumes from 2015 to present an obstacle to meeting 2016 plastics recycling targets.

Carry-in volumes for plastics have fallen by about 30,000 tonnes due to market volatility in 2015 (endsreport.com/48768). But this may be offset if packagers continue to see high supply figures; data for the fourth quarter of 2015 showed a record 263,055t of plastic recycled.

“If these returns continue, plastics may easily achieve the 2016 target,” said Letham. “But it does not mean that every sector will meet their targets next year.” ■

FURTHER INFORMATION

1. *2015 packaging recycling and recovery data*
2. *Environment Exchange 2015 PRN breakdown*

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Producers meet packaging recycling targets for 2015

But data released by the Environment Agency also reveals that some sectors may find it tough to continue to meet their obligations

The packaging industry has met its 2015 recycling targets but may struggle to comply on some material types in the future.

Overall producer responsibility targets were exceeded by 19%, according to the latest figures published by the Environment Agency (EA) in March¹ (see table).

Paper, aluminium and plastic obligations for 2015 were surpassed by 42%, 11% and 4%, according to analysis of the data by packaging waste recovery note (PRN) market place provider the Environment Exchange (t2e).²

Wood and steel targets were topped by 57% and 6% respectively, and combined glass aggregate targets were also met.

Packaging recycling and recovery targets for 2015 largely met by producers

	Reprocessed in UK or exported		Obligation for 2015 (t)	Achievement less obligation	
	without carry in (t)	with carry in (t)		without carry in (t)	with carry in (t)
Paper	3,667,387	3,863,602	2,715,816	951,571	1,147,786
Glass remelt	1,075,650	1,145,296	1,035,167	40,483	110,129
Glass other	501,163	510,272	537,080	-35,917	-26,808
Aluminium	76,027	80,213	76,252	-225	3,961
Steel	363,887	387,835	364,477	-590	23,358
Plastic	891,141	956,585	916,451	-25,310	40,134
Wood	374,991	401,063	254,836	120,155	146,227
Energy from waste	476,238	518,562	564,504	-88,266	-45,942
General	1,050,167	1,050,167	1,022,729	27,438	27,438
Total	8,476,651	8,913,595	7,487,312	989,339	1,426,283

Source: The Environment Exchange