

PRESS RELEASE

GLASS SAFEST PACKAGING FOR FOOD NEW RESEARCH SAYS

Brussels, 2nd June 2022

International research, published in the journal *Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition* (1), found that nearly 3000 chemicals can potentially leak from packaging into food, making human exposure to these chemicals highly probable. Most of these chemicals (65%) were unknown in that they have not been recorded in any regulatory or industry list to date. Of the almost 3.000 chemicals detected that can potentially leak into food, more than two thirds were identified in plastics.

By contrast, glass & ceramic are by far the safest food contact materials, which is in line with the low chemical complexity of these materials.

“The study shows that glass is safest among the packaging materials as it has virtually no detected chemicals and therefore is the safest for human health,” says Adeline Farrelly, Secretary General of FEVE the EU federation of container glass producers.

The study states that 2881 Food Contact Chemicals (FCCs) have been detected, in a total of six Food Contact Material (FCMs) groups. More than two thirds of the FCCs (1975) were identified in Plastic FCMs, followed by paper & board (887), Other FCMs (760), and multi-materials (614). The fewest FCCs were detected in metal (251) and glass & ceramic (47).

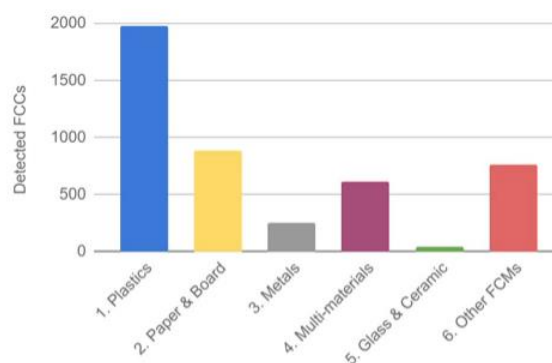


Figure 6. Absolute number of detected food contact chemicals per FCM group.

Source: Geueke et al published in *Food Science and Nutrition*. “Systematic evidence on migrating and extractable food contact chemicals: Most chemicals detected in Food contact materials are not listed for use.”

“This research shows the potential risks linked to migration of chemical substances into the food chain and by consequence into the environment”, says Adeline Farrelly. “There is a considerable knowledge gap to fill on food contact legislation. But also, Life Cycle Assessment methodologies on packaging must and should take into account chemicals including hazardous chemicals used in food contact packaging materials that can potentially also leak into the environment”.

ENDS

(1) <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10408398.2022.2067828>

About FEVE – The European Container Glass Federation

FEVE is the Federation of European manufacturers of glass containers. Its members produce over 20 million tonnes of glass per year. The association has some 60 corporate members belonging to approximately 20 independent groups. Manufacturing plants are located across 23 European States and include global blue chip and major companies working for the world’s biggest consumer brands. The Container Glass sector in Europe, makes a significant contribution to the EU Economy and supports essential sectors. More than 125,000 people work in the glass packaging value chain across Europe. It guarantees resilient local supply chains, with a proximity of service to its suppliers and clients. Every year €610 million is invested in upgrading plants for better energy efficiency and reduced CO₂ emissions (a significant 10% of the operational and maintenance costs). The sector exports around €1.2 billion (empty bottles and jars) and if we take account of items almost always or often packed in glass, glass is an enabler of extra EU exports of around €250 billion (data 2019).

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