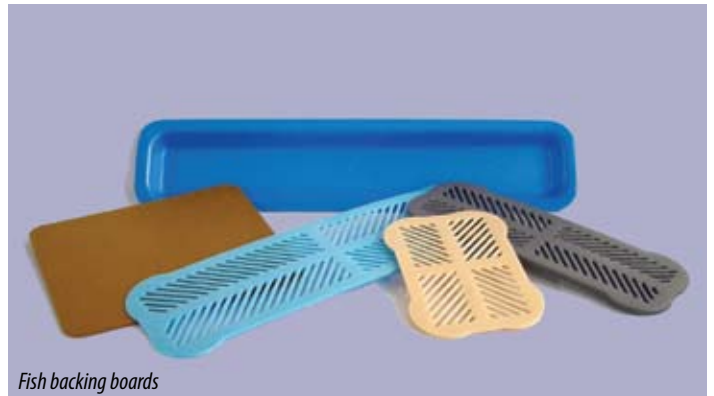




Medical applications



Fish backing boards



Wine packaging



Combi-tray

Commitment to diversity

RENOWNED FOR ITS FOOD PACKAGING SOLUTIONS,
DEPRON IS ADVANCING INTO MANY OTHER INDUSTRIES



Head office



Thermo forming

Founded in 1971, Depron is a former division of German multinational company Hoechst, active in the development of polystyrene foam products, of which it boasts some 600 models. "The company's history of developing foam for trays used within the food industry dates back to its foundation 40 years ago," explains Peter Pleunis, managing director of Depron. "Two decades of experience within this field ultimately led to the production of the dry tray, a Depron patented design made of polystyrene that can absorb the moisture that emanates from the product that is being packed through its internal foam."

Around ten years ago Depron introduced MAP packaging solutions, a move that prompted a shift in the company's operation focus: "In the past decade the company has slowly migrated away from meat packaging and towards the fish industry," Peter states. "Today Depron is very well settled at various fish packing ports where it has introduced a polystyrene product, based on its patented dry tray concept, that is replacing the use of cardboard packing."

"This move offers a series of advantages, for one it acts as an ideal absorber of fish oils. Another benefit is that while cardboard shipped from China comes with a cost advantage it often contains a lot of bacteria, whereas Depron's products are totally clean. Moving into the fish market has proven to be very important to the company as it is an industry that is very large now and continues to grow."

Depron's customers are made up of large retailers and large industrial meat and fish packaging companies across Europe that purchase the company's trays in bulk before packing the goods on a mass scale shipping them on to supermarkets and other retailers. From its base in Holland it serves clients in France, Germany, Belgium, the UK, Poland, Scandinavia and Latvia.

The diversifying of Depron is also occurring outside of the food industry, as Peter continues: "Depron is increasingly stepping out of the food business and now has a series of medical applications and even a wine bottle package. If you look at the product advantages, two of the key selling points are that the foam can absorb shock and can also retain hot or

cold temperatures.”

Aside from application benefits, Depron's products also promote a greater level of environmental friendliness: "This feature of the products cannot be promoted enough in our eyes. Using foam products means an immediate reduction of 30 per cent in raw materials and the next logical step for the company is the development of completely biodegradable packaging. It will not be too difficult for the company to achieve this as it already has a range of PLA products available, the one obstacle it faces at this time is the fact that the retailer is not accepting the slightly higher price of this product," Peter says.

"To try to overcome this problem Depron is currently working very closely with raw material suppliers to highlight potential cost reductions," Peter reveals. "At the same time it is working towards launching more pilot schemes in the hope of showcasing the products to end users while trying to influence local and national regulators and governments to achieve some form of regulation or subsidisation."

At the heart of Depron's technical progress exists a dedicated research and development team. This division of the company is supported by continual investment with Depron putting five per cent of its annual turnover back into its operations every year. Among the more important tasks the team are currently working on include the development of PLA, fish packaging products and ways to expand the company's reach into the medicine business.

With the packaging market currently experiencing levels of overcapacity in mainland Europe, the fight for market positioning is becoming increasingly fierce. As Peter concludes, in order for Depron to avoid encountering the struggles faced by some of its competitors it must continue on a path of innovation, expansion and maintaining its hold over established fields: "Depron without doubt are a market leader in the polystyrene packing of fish products in Europe and the principle focus today has to be to continue finding new outlets for its products in the industry."

"Over the next few years the company will look to increase its footprint in the fish packing market, where it has just begun penetrating the vacuum



Fish backing board Norwegian Fjord



Bio-degradable trays

packing sector, while also introducing a larger range of biodegradable goods. For the future Depron will actively look to expand its operations further into non-food areas, taking advantage of the quality products it has at its disposal." □

Depron BV
www.depron.nl

Employees 118

Products Develop and manufacture trays for food packaging



Depron trays

