

According to the Australian Institute of Packaging, local packaging requirements include the following:

- multi-head computerized weighers linked to form-fill-seal equipment;
- all forms of ink-jet printing on products and outer packs;
- laminated tube lines;
- high-speed equipment for packing of tablets into blister platforms;
- cartoning and case packing machines;
- aseptic lines for dairy and citrus products;
- high-speed filling lines for beer bottles and cans in particular;
- stretch-blow moulders for soft drink bottles;
- all forms of "bubble" and "blister" packing machinery; and
- stretch and shrink film packing machinery.

Developments in tamper-proof packaging equipment are becoming increasingly important in Australia for content protection, proof against interference, and child protection.

Recent Canadian Market Activity

The Post maintains a wide contact with both users and agents (and potential agents) in the packaging and labelling industry to assess future opportunities and to ensure current acceptability of Canadian equipment. New agents have been identified in conjunction with visiting company representatives; Canadian company literature was made available in cases where Canadian company personnel have been unable to visit Australia.

Press items of interest in Australian packaging activities (e.g., company mergers and takeovers, the dates of a particular exhibition) have been sent to Canadian companies for their information and future action.

Market Considerations

It has been the experience of Canadian packaging equipment manufacturers that little needs to be done, in the technical sense, to comply with Australian requirements such as wiring to Australian industrial standards (415 volt 3-phase), fitting of metric threads where required, and adherence to safety regulations.

Canadian companies have found that a considerable degree of trade advertising and personal representation is necessary, together with presentation of their products at suitable exhibitions and agricultural shows.

Marketing — Buyers of packaging equipment advise that competition in all machinery areas is fierce and only very sophisticated equipment presented to form a complete system or to replace units in such a system will be successful. The major considerations are quality, landed price, cost to operate and labour necessary to operate.

Bar Coding — is now in use. By and large the packaging industry is ready, but the supermarket chains are reluctant to invest in electronic equipment for fear it could be superseded by newer technology almost before it is installed. Printers and designers are still making mistakes with their colour contrasts. It is now possible to have bar codes diagnosed so that individual

lines and spaces of the code can be verified. Pressure-sensitive labels carrying bar codes are still in demand.

Distribution — Marketing of imported packaging machinery is usually through local agents representing overseas manufacturers. These agents have tended to confine their activities to one area of the industry (e.g., shrink packaging, sealing, labelling) and thus limit the range offered to the end user. It is apparent that this method is changing. Eventually the agent will handle a complete range of packaging equipment requirements in order to offer the user a "one buy" package embracing a complete system.

Canadian packaging machinery manufacturers who wish to enter the Australian market would be well advised to consider offering complete systems, capable of performing all of the required functions of the clients' packaging, sealing and labelling needs.

Servicing — Packaging machinery does not require a heavy servicing program. What is required is usually undertaken by the agent who carries spare parts and has one or more trained mechanics to send into the field.

Metrification — Australian packaging engineering is now in metric measurements, and this is specified in orders to Canada. A conversion program has been carried out on some older machines with both locally manufactured parts and parts from Canada.

Regulatory — Each Australian state controls packaging laws. A committee of the Weights and Measures Authority in each state works to standardize state laws and the laws of deceptive packaging.

At the time of writing, South Australia was the only state to have legislation for a deposit on beverage cans and bottles. In New South Wales, a "voluntary" levy system has operated for some years and is now in its second three-year period. The money collected from the canners and can manufacturers is earmarked for an educational program and a pollution control TV campaign entitled "Do the Right Thing". The results have been dramatic. The Government of Victoria is examining the merits of a unique South Australian system.

All plastic forms are made in Australia, but products such as film plastic supermarket bags are mostly imported from Southeast Asia because of cheap labour and low tariffs on these items. Food packing is subject to strict government control, and protective coatings are required on some food plastic packs. Some 40 to 50 per cent of aluminium drink cans are recycled, and the machinery for filling is imported from the United States and West Germany.

The Australian industry is confronted with almost 1,000 separate regulations affecting packaging and labelling in some way. The purchaser should be aware of the need to comply with various state and territorial regulations.

Tariff — While the duty rates imposed by the Australian government on packaging machinery range from 2 to 20 per cent, 90 per cent of imported equipment items incur a duty of 15 per cent with no preference for