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PNRS: SHARING RESPONSIBILITIES IS FUNDAMENTAL

Several productive sectors with related activities got together and prepared an agreement proposal, in which they assume a voluntary commitment to implement a reverse logistics system for packaging, that is, to provide an environmentally adequate destination for the product after its use.

The pulp and paper industry played an active role in the initiative, as a way of contributing to the federal government's National Solid Waste Plan (PNRS), also assuming its part in the shared responsibility for the product's lifecycle.

The goal of the federal government is to reduce by 22% the dry portion of urban solid waste disposed in landfills by 2015. The private sector is going to contribute to this goal by strengthening reverse logistics channels for all sorts of packaging and, also, by increasing the recovery rate and correct disposal of waste, for reuse, recycling and other environmentally adequate forms of disposal. Investments amount to more than R\$70 million in this voluntary project, which will reflect in a better quality of life for present and future generations.

Presented this way, everything seems very simple. However, there are matters that need to be equated in order to achieve the positive result desired. The shared responsibility for the lifecycle of products, instituted by Law #12,305/2010, is the crucial point, as it involves the entire chain, from manufacturers, importers, distributors and trade, to consumers and public cleaning service companies.

The proposal prepared by this group of associations, called Coalition, and coordinated by the Corporate Commitment to Recycling (CEMPRE), started out with the premise that each segment should do its part to achieve a common objective. It must mainly consider what is already being done by companies working in favor of the environment.

In this sense, the pulp and paper sector has a very positive reverse logistics track record, with strong investments in sustainable practices. Proof of this is the high recycling rate – of roughly 46% of all the paper that circulates in the country throughout the year.

Another advantage, which always needs to be reinforced, is that the raw material for producing all types of paper in Brazil stems from

renewable sources, i.e., planted pine and eucalyptus forests. Therefore, the recycling process already works with a sustainable base product.

Coalition

The 23 entities comprised by CEMPRE represent the food, beverage, plastic and pulp & paper sectors, among others. All of them have in common the concern towards the correct disposal of packaging after consumption.

It is important to point out that, according to the PNRS plan, Brazil will have to substitute open-air waste dumps for sanitary landfills by August 2014. These, in turn, will not be able to receive recyclable waste, under the penalty of infringing municipalities being fined.

The reverse logistics proposal created by the group and presented to the government foresees an increase in solid waste collection, the creation of more cooperatives for sorting/separating waste material, as well as Voluntary Delivery Points (PEVs) and more incentive towards recycling and socioenvironmental education. The control and management of programs will be the group's responsibility.

The pulp and paper industry, in turn, will adjust its installed capacity to absorb more solid waste and, consequently, increase production earmarked for the recycled products market.

Therefore, the federal government's participation will be fundamental in promoting socioenvironmental education as well as to encourage the strengthening and expansion of a structured market for recycled products.

The pulp and paper sector is ready to fulfill its part in the PNRS plan and is awaiting the government's approval of the Coalition's proposal. Additionally, it expects commitment of all links in the chain towards the Plan. Otherwise, we run the risk of accumulating large quantities of recyclable waste in the trash that could return to the production chain, clogging sanitary landfills unnecessarily.

In fact, in addition to promoting the recycling industry in different sectors and productive segments, shared responsibility will define how successful the National Solid Waste Plan will be. ■