









Recent Program Changes



Cartons		While cartons are a defined commodity by the ISRI Specification circular, they are a laminated product that needs to be kept separate from other commodities otherwise they become a contamination issue. Because of the shape shifting ability (2D vs 3D) this makes them hard to separate even with the latest optical technology. Markets are not stable, price is low while handling costs are high. The material yield is approximately 58% as the plastic and aluminum layers are typically not recycled. The end product is downcycled into disposable paper products like paper napkins and toilet paper.
	Recommendation	Buy product packaged in readily recyclable products and/or use refillable containers for lunches to reduce overall waste generated.
Aluminum Foil Products, Food Cans, and Aerosols		Aluminum cans are the most valuable commodity in the blue box program but the associated aluminum products such as foil, pie plates, food cans, and aerosols are not desired in the commodity. Foil disintegrates in the smelter, food cans add impurities, and aerosols cause fires. In the past when aluminum was sorted by hand it may have been feasible to separate. Today, most facilities rely on an eddy current to recover the aluminum and the machine cannot tell the difference between foil and cans.
	Recommendation	Dispose of foil products and aluminum food cans (cat food) in waste bin. Consider other cooking methodologies or alternative packaging.
Aerosol Containers		Some programs have accepted steel aerosol containers despite being classified as hazardous waste under regulation 347. They contribute to hundreds of fires in processing facilities every year, each jeopardizing the safety of the workers and they cause significant risks to the processing facility. Fires are the number one cause of loss of processing capacity in our industry.
	Recommendation	Dispose of these containers with your hazardous waste. Consider manual pumps over the use of propellants.
Paint Cans		Empty paint cans are readily acceptable with the steel cans collected. The problem here is the industry is converting to plastic paint cans with a metal top which are not recyclable. The new containers are not easy for the consumer to tell apart from the old steel container.
	Recommendation	Buy your paint in metal paint cans otherwise return the cans to a hazardous waste depot.
Beverage Cups		Beverage cups have never been part of our program but because the word got out that we were testing them for a while people assumed they were recyclable. Beverage cups are a laminated product much like cartons and they are even more difficult to separate from the rest of the materials and recycle in the end in part because of the ink used on the outside of the cups.
	Recommendation	Use a refillable mug. If you need the convenience, then place your old cup in the waste bin.
Small Items		This is a new problem for us. In the 1990's everything was large and club pack sized. Today, everything is becoming individualized in small sizes of greater variety. The bottom line is we are essentially trying to sort out confettis and it is nearly impossible. Now that quality matters (markets want 99.5% pure material) anything below a certain size has to be screened out to purify the rest of the materials.
	Recommendation	Anything smaller than 3 inches will contaminate our glass or they will be screened out and disposed of instead of being recycled. Use reusable containers instead.