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COLDPACK BRINGS REVOLUTIONARY AIRLINER INSULATION TO UK

Airliner, a pioneering insulating film material that enables cost-effective temperature-controlled transit packaging of a variety of products – at considerably lower weight and waste than existing alternatives – is being launched into the UK by Coldpack.

The effectiveness of Airliner as a thermal barrier is due to its unique patented construction. It comprises two layers of a special film manufactured using DuPont™ Surlyn resin, which are separated by an aluminised honeycomb structure. This combination of material and design, when filled with air, creates multiple compartments – known as 'baffles' – which block calorie transfer to minimise all three types of heat transfer, radiation, convection and conduction.

Airliner preserves the temperature inside the pack. The inclusion of coolants such as gel packs or dry ice inside the Airliner can therefore be used to implement an efficient and controlled cold-chain distribution. The Airliner maintains products in packs of up to 70 litres either at ambient temperatures, typical product temperatures (for example, between +2° to +8ºC for pharmaceutical products or from 0° to +4ºC for food products) or at -18 ºC temperatures for frozen products. Contents are protected depending on the thermal fluctuations anticipated during transit; this is usually a 48 hour shipment, but special extended cooling systems are also available to offer protection for up to 120 hours if required.

More follows…

Crucially, the volume of Airliner is primarily made up of the air or gas used to inflate it. This means that the pack can be supplied and stored flat, significantly reducing logistics and warehousing costs compared to rigid foam packaging. In addition, a Pira International life cycle assessment has found that the Airliner has 40% to 50% less impact on the environment than polystyrene.

When ready for use, the user simply inflates the Airliner using a variety of inflation devices. Air is suitable for most uses, although specialist inert gases are also available to improve insulation efficiencies by a further 20%, which can extend the protection time, reduce the amount of coolant required or increase the number of products in each pack. The Airliner also acts as a cushion to absorb physical impacts during handling; when placed inside a suitable cartonboard box, the overall solution therefore both preserves and protects the contents throughout transport, a real benefit for food products such as cakes that rely on excellent presentation upon delivery. Its lighter weight also reduces transportation costs and carbon emissions.

For certain applications, the Airliner can be re-used. After use, it is easy to deflate for disposal, and unlike many other insulating materials, does not require a specific waste treatment or disposal levies.

The Airliner has proved a popular choice for companies whose products require a consistent temperature during transit, especially vaccines, biological samples or perishable foodstuffs. Nonetheless, the versatility of the Airliner – which Coldpack can supply in many different sizes and dimensions – has ensured its successful use in transporting everything from flowers to tropical fish.

Coldpack has achieved considerable success with Airliner in France and the USA, and believes that the UK market will take to the new concept. “Britain has robust and forward-looking food and pharmaceutical industries, and we are already receiving enquiries from interested companies,” explains Arnaud Adam, Sales Director of Coldpack.

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“In addition, British consumers have proved to be early adopters of e-commerce and home delivery, making a convenient solution like Airliner particularly suitable for online retailers.”

Airliner was first manufactured in 2001 by U.S. company Cargo Technology. Coldpack acquired the patent to distribute Airliner in Europe in 2004 and subsequently purchased Cargotech in December 2005 to become sole owner of the technology. Today, Coldpack production facilities are located in San Diego and – in association with DuPont – at the Bischof & Klein factory in Münster, Germany. Coldpack is ISO 9001 accredited.

Coldpack is now working on new applications for its patented technology, which the company hopes to launch in 2010.

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