

**Polystyrene recycling**  
**Manufacturers of fresh dairy products are committed to incorporating recycled “ PS ” into their packaging to create favorable conditions for building a circular economy in France .**

**In line with the objectives of the anti-waste law for a circular economy, manufacturers of fresh dairy products are continuing their efforts in favor of the creation of a polystyrene recycling industry in France, with the ambition of providing answers to expectations of fellow citizens in terms of the environment and purchasing power.**

71% of plastic yoghurt pots are made from lightweight polystyrene . For more than 10 years, manufacturers of fresh dairy products have been working on the eco-design of their packaging and have already significantly reduced the quantities of plastics used per pot, making the PS yoghurt pot the one that requires the least amount of plastic.

At the same time, they were strongly mobilized to support the development of the recycling process of the PS , with a special requirement: to return to a packaging suitable for food contact. Through the Recyqualipso project [\[1\]](#) being finalized and the work launched by Citeo as part as the PS25 consortium [\[2\]](#) , numerous lessons learned and meetings with players in the recycling industry mean that the emergence of an industrial recycling industry in France can be confidently envisaged before the end of the year.

**The manufacturers of fresh dairy products collectively commit to using up to 100% of the PS from the French recycling and collection chain . This is a major commitment aimed at ensuring economic viability for all players in the sector.**

The entire value chain of the circular economy is currently being put in place to collect and recycle the 65,000 tonnes of the deposit PS yoghurt pots and assimilated. With the extension of the sorting deposit to the entire territory , the majority of consumers can now direct packaging to the “ yellow bin ” . At the same time, the sorting centers are getting organized to manage these new incoming flows . Starting in 2023 , polystyrene pots will be able to go to recycling rather than incineration or landfill.

The new advanced recycling technologies in the final development phase, all aim today at an infinite loop of return to food contact. Trials are underway at the European and French level to formally validate the circularity of polystyrene , that is to say the use of PS from yoghurt pots to manufacture new yoghurt pots.

In order to ensure the economic viability of the future PS recycling industry in France, the manufacturers of fresh dairy products are collectively committing to using rPS (recycled polystyrene) in their jars and thus “ close the loop ” .

## **PS , an optimized material**

PS is the main material for the packaging of fresh dairy products and has so many advantages. PS packaging is the lightest, it is suitable for hot filling and consumer use. They present all the guarantees for sanitary safety.

It is for these reasons that the manufacturers of fresh dairy products are today reaffirming the need to create a circular economy of the PS. They warn of the impacts of a substitution of the PS in the short term, that would be detrimental both from an environmental and economic point of view. This substitution would lead in particular to an increase in the weight of the packaging and, consequently, its environmental impact. It should not be forgotten that the materials under consideration do not currently have operational recycling processes allowing a return to food contact.

*“ We are warning about the false good idea which would consist in hastily condemning the PS in favor of other resins. From an environmental standpoint, such a decision would shift the market towards resins which do not have operational closed-loop recycling channels in France. A few more months will allow us to finalize the trials currently underway to validate industrial scale switch to PS recycling . »* Specifies Muriel Casé, General Delegate of Syndifrais

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### **About Syndifrais**

*Syndifrais is the professional organization of manufacturers of fresh dairy products since 1978. It aims to promote the category and support its members on the French market. It brings together today, 22 companies, SME and multinationals, manufacturers of yogurt and fermented milk, cottage cheese and chipped milk, fresh dairy desserts and fresh cream.*

*In 2019, French production stood at 3.087 million tonnes for a value of around 5 billion euros.*

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[1] **Recyqualipso** is an R&D project launched in 2019 by Syndifrais and Valorplast and supported by Citeo . It aims to optimize mechanical and chemical recycling technologies to improve the recycling of polystyrene (PS) plastics.

[2] **Consortium PS25** created in July 2020 by Citeo , Syndifrais , Valorplast and several companies using polystyrene packaging (in particular: Agromousquetaires ; Groupe Bigard; Cooperl Arc Atlantique; Eurial UF; Lactalis ; Groupe LDC; Triballat Noyal ; Yeo Frais; Yoplait). It is dedicated to the establishment in France of a polystyrene (PS) recycling channel suitable for food contact.