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An important contribution for recyclability of food packaging: BERICAP 100% silicon-free valves

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Product development plays a key role within the strategies of leading companies worldwide. Besides aspects regarding the increase of efficiency within the manufacturing process, cost reduction and market expansion, product features that focus on consumer convenience and sustainability are in the center of interest. While most companies concentrate on not more than one or two of these aspects in order to safeguard that the product features are not overstrained, innovation leaders strive for reaching them all at the same time.

The family-owned company BERICAP constantly reviews how products can be refined to pay for efficiency, convenience *and* sustainability efforts. "We continuously find that seemingly small changes with no negative effect on the quality or durability of our products have great effects in terms of processing, convenience and sustainability," says Christoph Thünemann, Group Director Communications & Marketing at BERICAP. "And whenever we manage to identify the right changes for closures in product segments with still growing popularity, we have made a major contribution."

An important contribution to recyclability of food packaging and thus sustainability is the silicone-free BERICAPValve for ketchup, mayonnaises and spreadables. Most bottles are equipped with hinge-caps that are easy to reclose. About 40% of these closures have an additional valve that allows precise and convenient dosing. BERICAPValve takes over a leading position in this segment, since their convenience characteristics are unequalled.

Optimized recycling characteristics

The challenge: most valves currently in use for ketchup, mayonnaise and spreadables are made of silicone, which contaminates the PET and/or the HDPE/PP recycling stream. Thus, more and more countries take action to take silicon out of the recycling stream. The central packaging register in Germany, established in 2018 for monitoring the packaging stream, the recycling of packaging as well as evaluation of the sustainability of packaging, considers silicon a non-desired contaminant in the recycling stream. France has established an eco-tax on silicone which is not due for polyolefin based solutions like the BERICAPValve.

But recycling is a prerequisite within a closed-loop economy for plastic packaging, and the recycling of PET bottles as well as HDPE and PP, which are often used for closures, is very efficient and thus attractive for producers. Returned and collected

bottles are ground to pieces, the PET on the one side and the HDPE and PP on the other side are separated in a water bath. The PET sinks and can be reused for the manufacturing of bottles. The HDPE and PP as valuable raw materials remain floating on the water and can be reused for high value applications.

To avoid contamination, BERICAP offers BERICAPValve, a silicon-free advancement of the proven silicon valves. It possesses of the same characteristics, but is made of environmentally clean TPE, a polyolefin that recycles with the HDPE and PP recycling stream without contaminating it.

Suitable for a broad product range

The valve is suitable for sweet, sour and fatty products and of course tested and certified according to the Commission Regulation (EU) No 10/2011 of 14 January 2011 on plastic materials and articles intended to come into contact with food. It is available for standard as well as specific flip-top closures and necks and applicable to all squeezable products. BERICAPValve is in use for the packaging of Ketchup, Mayonnaise, chocolate sauce, honey and many other food products.

"With the development of our silicon-free valves, one of the most important products within the ketchup, mayonnaises and spreadables segment, we increase the efficiency within the recycling process and make an important contribution to environmental protection", states Alexander Knipp, BERICAP Business Segment Leader ketchup, mayonnaises and spreadables. "This also provides our customers with real added value for their products, since consumers are increasingly critical towards the sustainability of their everyday products. It is not surprising, that these positive characteristics of our products are convincing a growing number of customers to choose BERICAP closure solutions."

About BERICAP

BERICAP is one of the leading global manufacturers of plastic closures, with 24 factories serving customers in over 100 countries across the world. With four central R&D centers, an own mold shop and several satellite R&D offices in its main operations, BERICAP is particularly committed to developing innovative plastic closures to support its customers' success.

The company puts a strong emphasis on quality. Best manufacturing practice in the BERICAP Group is centrally coordinated and implemented at each plant to ensure superior quality and will be continuously leveraged to raise the quality level further. All BERICAP plants are ISO 9000 and BRC-IOP or ISO 22000-certified.

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