

# A PALLETABLE FUTURE?

PLASTIC AND WOOD ARE GOING HEAD TO HEAD IN THE PALLET SECTOR. **HAMISH SMITH** QUIZZES BOTH SIDES ON THEIR VIABILITY

**I**f the human palate is the most valued instrument of the drinks industry, the load-bearing pallet is one of the most undervalued. These humble structures perform a crucial role – they allow us to move heavy loads of alcohol around the world. But with technology advancing in logistics, might the low-tech wooden pallet one day be replaced? We spoke to plastic pallet manufacturer Goplasticpallets, and the wooden pallet association, EPAL, to get the arguments for and against.

#### WHICH ARE SAFER?

**Goplasticpallets:** Plastic pallets have no nails or splinters.

**EPAL:** Our experience is the risk of breakage is higher with plastic pallets.

#### WHICH ARE BEST ENVIRONMENTALLY?

**Goplasticpallets:** Questions regarding the sustainability of forestry have encouraged many users to move away from traditional wooden pallets to plastic pallets manufactured from recycled materials which are recyclable.

**EPAL:** We use renewable resources of untreated wood. The reusability of EPAL pallets in the open pool (450m EPAL pallets worldwide) reduces logistics costs and CO<sub>2</sub>. EPAL pallets are readily recyclable.

#### WHICH IS THE MORE CONSISTENT?

**Goplasticpallets:** Plastic pallets are moulded under extreme pressure in

highly polished moulds, ensuring consistent dimensional accuracy and loading capacities. In contrast, wooden pallets do not have stated loading capacities.

**EPAL:** Our pallets have fixed dimensions and fixed load-bearing capacities. The load-bearing capacity of a plastic pallet is highly temperature dependent. They are only offered in a few standard measures as a mass product.

#### WHICH PALLET LAST LONGEST?

**Goplasticpallets:** A plastic pallet has a potential life span of up to, and often exceeding, 10 years. This could be up to 10 times longer than a wooden pallet.

**EPAL:** The EPAL pallet is easy to repair with low material and energy costs. Plastic pallets are usually not repairable.

#### CAN THEY BE CLEANED?

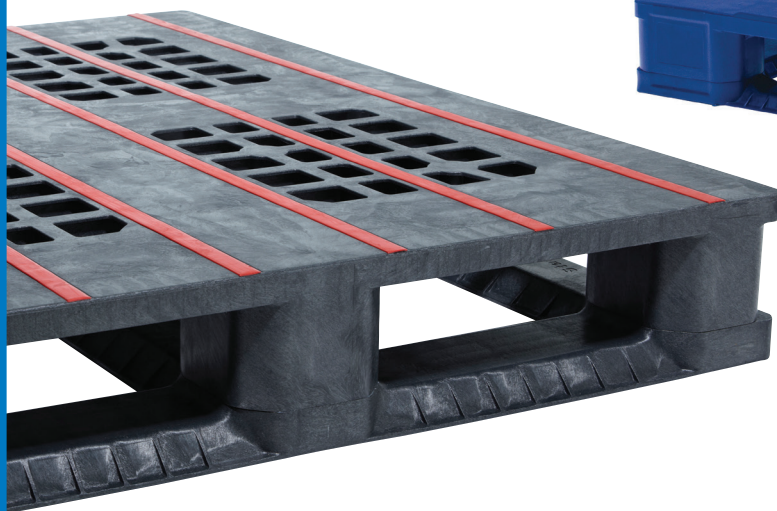
**Goplasticpallets:** Plastic pallets are inherently more hygienic than wooden ones as they can be easily cleaned without the risk of damaging the product.

**EPAL:** We have a prescribed drying process, which reduces mould and eliminates all kinds of insects. The viability of bacteria is higher on plastic (polyethylene) than wood. **DI**

## Long-Life Beverage Pallets

Our plastic pool and beverage pallets offer a more durable, safe and long-life solution for drinks handling and logistics, as well as an excellent ROI!

We offer expert advice, a solution catered to meet your needs and planned delivery.



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