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Nesquik® Makes Bottles Easier to Recycle for Consumers

Entire Nesquik® ready-to-drink portfolio to convert to new recyclable shrink sleeve label this summer, as Nestlé continues to drive progress on packaging ambitions.

Feedback

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Multi-Color v. Brook + Whittle
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Arlington, Va.

Nestlé is converting its Nesquik ready-to-drink portfolio to a new recyclable shrink sleeve label made with light-blocking print technology that is compatible with the U.S. recycling stream, helping make the bottle easier for consumers to recycle. The shrink sleeve—which is a product label that conforms to the bottle—will be available on all Nesquik ready-to-drink bottles this summer, making it Nestlé's first product on-shelf with a recyclable shrink sleeve that leverages light-blocking technology.

The new shrink sleeve is made with materials that allow the bottle and sleeve to be recycled together, with the ambition that the packaging material can be reincorporated with the plastic supply stream and made into another PET bottle, helping create a circular economy for packaging. With this sleeve, the entire Nesquik ready-to-drink bottle will be recyclable—meaning consumers can put the entire package, including cap, bottle and shrink sleeve into their recycling bin without needing to remove the sleeve.

All seven Nesquik ready-to-drink flavors are expected to convert to the new sleeve by June 2024. With this transition, an estimated 4,500 metric tons of PET plastic will be easier for consumers to recycle each year and more likely to be sorted accurately at recycling facilities.

Light-Blocking Attributes to Ensure Product Quality

Nestlé is working across its portfolio to make all of its packaging recyclable or reusable, yet the path to a circular economy for food and beverage packaging comes with unique considerations. Developing a recyclable solution for the brand's shrink sleeve posed a significant technical challenge, as ready-to-drink Nesquik requires its sleeves to be light-blocking. This is because some products—like a milk-based, ready-to-drink Nesquik beverage—have attributes that are susceptible to light, such as taste, color, and vitamin-level.

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When Nestlé first set out to transition its Nesquik bottles to a recyclable sleeve in 2019, there was no recyclable solution available in market yet that also leveraged the light-blocking features required for the product.

“Packaging protects food and beverages and helps ensure our products remain high-quality for our consumers,” said Chastity McLeod, VP Sustainability, Nestlé North America. “It was essential to find a solution that would maintain the quality and shelf life of the product, while also offering the benefit of making recycling the bottle easier for consumers. Our teams are constantly innovating to extend the use of packaging materials as a valuable resource that can be leveraged again—This innovation is a big step forward as we continue to drive progress on Nestlé’s packaging ambitions across our U.S. portfolio.”

Five Years of R&D to Bring the Solution to Life

The solution took nearly five years to bring to life and Nestlé began the process in late 2019 with conversations across multiple different packaging suppliers, exploring different materials, light transmittance, and aesthetics.

Multiple tests were conducted to ensure the technical viability across all seven Nesquik ready-to-drink flavors. This included light transmittance tests across more than 20 candidate materials, product shelf life studies, and the completion of plastics recyclability tests to ensure the new shrink sleeve and inks would remain compatible with the U.S. recycling system—these tests included ensuring the sleeved bottle would sort correctly when arriving at local recycling material recovery facilities (MRFs), and testing the sleeve inks to ensure they wash-off, so that the bottle and sleeve material have the ability to be turned into recycled plastic for future use.

Nestlé also conducted factory trials to ensure the new sleeve would run effectively on its factory production lines, making adjustments to optimize both the shrink sleeve and existing factory equipment throughout the process. The team also trialed multiple different iterations of shrink sleeve artwork and ink combinations to ensure the new sleeve maintained Nesquik’s authentic look and feel.

Driving the Industry Forward in More Sustainable Packaging

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Nesquik's new shrink sleeve enables Nestlé to continue driving packaging progress even further across the company's beverage portfolio, creating a recyclable sleeve solution for its beverage products that require light-blocking technology on packaging.

"Our beverage division continues to be a leader in delivering high-quality, innovative products for our consumers, while also driving progress on Nestlé's sustainability ambitions," said Daniel Jhung, President of Nestlé USA's beverage division. "It's exciting to see Nesquik at the forefront of this packaging innovation. Making our products easier to recycle is important to our customers and consumers, and a key step in helping chart a path to a circular economy for packaging."

Some Coffee mate® products will also be produced in this new shrink sleeve, and Nestlé Sensations flavored milk products are expected to convert to the new sleeve in early fall. Later this year, Nestlé plans to share more on its efforts and progress within its beverage portfolio to help promote a circular economy for packaging.

These efforts build on Nestlé's years of work and progress to help create a more sustainable future—From the ingredients it sources, to the packaging that keeps its products safe, to how it makes and transports products and supports local communities. For more information visit **nestleusa.com/sustainability. (https://www.nestleusa.com/sustainability)**

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