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Aluminium foil deliveries see steady growth in first quarter of 2021

The first three months of 2021 saw deliveries from European foil rollers reach 245.000 tonnes, up by 2,3% compared to 2020 (239.500t) led by very satisfactory performance in overseas markets, where growth of over 10% was achieved, according to figures released by the European Aluminium Foil Association (EAFA). Domestic demand also showed modest improvement, achieving 0,9% growth in the same period.

The first quarter is traditionally a strong one for the industry, as packaging converters and other customers re-stock after the festive holidays. But, with the disruption in demand caused by the pandemic, making predictions has become more difficult. The impact on deliveries was seen in the Q1 figures last year, which dropped compared to 2019, so a return to steady growth is welcomed by the sector.

Production of thinner gauges, used mainly for flexible packaging and household foils, was up by 4,2%, as demand from 'in home' use and packaging remained strong. Thicker gauges, used for semi-rigid containers, technical or other applications, closed 0,9% down.

Once again, the bright spot was in exports, which returned to double-digit growth once again, after a very mixed performance last year, with only one three-month period showing similar improvement. This indicates a return to expansion in many overseas economies as lockdowns ease.

Guido Aufdemkamp, Executive Director of EAFA commented, "The general recovery, post COVID-19, we predicted at the end of 2020 seems to be underway. However, this differs in many parts of the world, so it is difficult to predict a clear path to improved demand in all the markets served by European aluminium foil rollers."

"The packaging sector is certainly strong now and this major market for aluminium foil is forecasted to further increase this year. But supply chains continue to see disruptions either caused by limited raw material availability, global logistics or trade defence measures in place or expected.," he added.

"Overall, this is an encouraging first quarter result and something to build on, meaning the European foil rollers are looking cautiously optimistic into the next quarters.," stated Aufdemkamp.

The European Aluminium Foil Association (EAFA) is the main trade association, specifically representing companies engaged in the rolling and rewinding of aluminium foil and the manufacturing of semi-rigid alufoil containers and household foil in Europe. With its more than 40 members, the organisation represents the total aluminium foil rolling market in Europe. www.alufoil.org

Further information:

Patrick Altenstrasser, Manager Communications
communications@alufoil.org