



Press Release

First Oat Supreme: Lactose-free UHT drink and UHT cream

**Dairy-free alternatives are in demand:
First Foods together with Leckpatrick Foods
is now adding oat products to its extensive
product range, supplied in aseptic carton packs**

July 2007. World-wide, increasing numbers of consumers are turning away from products containing cow's milk. One reason for this is lactose intolerance. According to scientific studies, more than half of the world's population currently suffers from this complaint. In fact, the Association for Lactose Intolerance (Germany) suggests that around 75 per cent of people who live with the condition are unaware of it. Another factor is the growing number of vegans, who for ethical reasons refuse to consume animal milk. Finally, modern consumer tastes are persuading the international food industry to introduce alternatives to dairy products.

First Foods are responding to this trend and is expanding its product line with a range of products aimed at consumers with lactose intolerance conditions, as well as consumers in search of new taste experiences. The "First Oat Supreme" range has been developed by First Foods with these groups in mind. The line is a range of products manufactured from oat flakes. Jim Evans, Director at First Foods, says: "The market has seen increasing demand in the past few years for foods which are lactose-free and as far as possible also cholesterol-free. This is where the oat products come in."

The UHT oat drink and UHT oat cream are contract packed by Northern Ireland's Leckpatrick Foods, a member of the international Kerry Group PLC. In addition the First Oat Supreme product range also includes an oat ice cream, a chocolate oat ice

lolly with a dairy-free chocolate coating, and low-fat, sugar-free ice cream for diabetics. The “First Oat Supreme” UHT oat drink contains less than 1.4 per cent fat and is offered as an alternative to semi-skimmed milk. The cream substitute has 23 per cent fat.

When it comes to calorie content, the vegetable drinks score better than animal products. An oat drink contains about 30 to 50 kilocalories per 100 millilitres, while full cream milk weighs in at around 65 kilocalories. Oat products are free from animal proteins and contain no lactose.

A creamy sensation

The “First Oat Supreme” UHT oat drink is ultra-heat treated to give it long life. In this HTST (High Temperature/Short Time) process, the product is heated very rapidly to around 140 degrees Celsius and then very quickly cooled down again. The effects of the heat cause the remaining starch to develop a consistency that gives a creamy sensation in the mouth. The drinks can be used undiluted, and for the preparation of mueslis, desserts, pancakes, gratin dishes and sauces.

First Foods was able to rely on 25 years of experience in aseptic filling technology from their contract packer Leckpatrick Foods. Along its way to becoming a renowned specialist in UHT technology, the company began to work with SIG Combibloc. Ivan McMurray, General Manager of Leckpatrick Foods, says: “Aseptic carton packs from SIG Combibloc have proved to be suitable packaging for our products. This applies to our classics like UHT ice cream and milk shake mixes, desserts, flavoured milks and creams. The carton packs are lightweight and easy to transport. They are made from 75 per cent cardboard, which is obtained from sustainable wood resources. The cardboard portion can be recycled and the other components, polyethylene (21 per cent) and aluminium (4 per cent), can also be reused. This makes aseptic carton packaging ideally suited to highlight the naturalness of cereal products, and to communicate these to consumers“. The “First Oat Supreme” UHT oat drink from First Foods is packaged in combibloc *Standard* from SIG Combibloc and the UHT cream is packaged in combibloc *Small*.

A global success

Leckpatrick Foods, based in Northern Ireland, specialises in UHT products. The product line includes a wide range of aseptically-packaged foods for retail, HoReCa and the food-processing industry. The company is a member of the Kerry Group

PLC, a global company with more than 20,000 employees working at more than 150 sites world-wide. Current annual turnover is around EUR 4.2 billion.

Caption 1 (First Oat Supreme):

World-wide, increasing numbers of consumers are turning away from products containing cow's milk. Northern Ireland's Leckpatrick Foods, a division of the international Kerry Group PLC, has responded to this trend and expanded its product line with the "First Oat Supreme" range for First Foods, manufactured from oats. The "First Oat Supreme" UHT oat drink is packaged in combibloc *Standard* and the UHT cream in combibloc *Small* from SIG Combibloc.

Photo: SIG Combibloc

SIG Combibloc is one of the world's leading systems suppliers of carton packaging and filling machines for beverages and food. Employing approx. 3,890 people, the company recorded sales of EUR 1,210 million in 2006. SIG Combibloc is a division of SIG Holding AG, Switzerland. Since May 2007, SIG Holding AG is owned by the Rank Group, New Zealand.

Your contact:

Heike Thevis – Press Officer
SIG Combibloc GmbH
Rurstrasse 58, D-52441 Linnich, Germany
Tel: +49 2462 79 2608
Fax: +49 2462 79 17 2608
Email: heike.thevis@sig.biz