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Taking the development of pulp packaging to the next level

Kiefel equips University of Maine with new laboratory machine for natural fiber packaging

Portsmouth, New Hampshire/ Orono, Maine. The University of Maine can now drive the development of molded pulp products even further. On Monday they put into operation the brand-new laboratory machine NATUREFORMER KFT Lab from Kiefel, a market-leading specialist in thermoforming and joining technology, represented by Brueckner Group USA (BGU). On the machine, students can now explore the fiber thermoforming technology and conduct research on sustainable materials, using cellulose nanofiber (CNF) technology.

Fiber Thermoforming technology allows Kiefel machines to manufacture packaging from natural fibers such as cellulose, straw or annual plants. In certain fields of application, the packaging offers an alternative to conventional plastic packaging. Kiefel developed the associated NATUREFORMER machines for series production over the past three years - a large number is already in operation worldwide.

Strengthening innovative power through partnerships

“We’re happy to support the training of the next generation of engineers for the molded paper field with our machine”, says Matthias Sieverding, CEO of BGU, during the handover to the university. “Natural fibers hold huge potential for sustainable everyday applications. We see public private partnerships like this one as key to accelerating research activities in this important field – and to also educate the public about the possibilities.” Kiefel is therefore building up a network of material and research facilities worldwide for the molded pulp industry including customers and raw material suppliers.

Colleen C. Walker (Ph.D.), Director of the university’s Process Development Center, adds: “As we enjoy a first-class reputation when it comes to research and development, excellent equipment is important. Our students will be able to use the KFT Lab machine to produce small test batches and research various formulations including barrier properties of natural fiber products using our own CNF technology.”

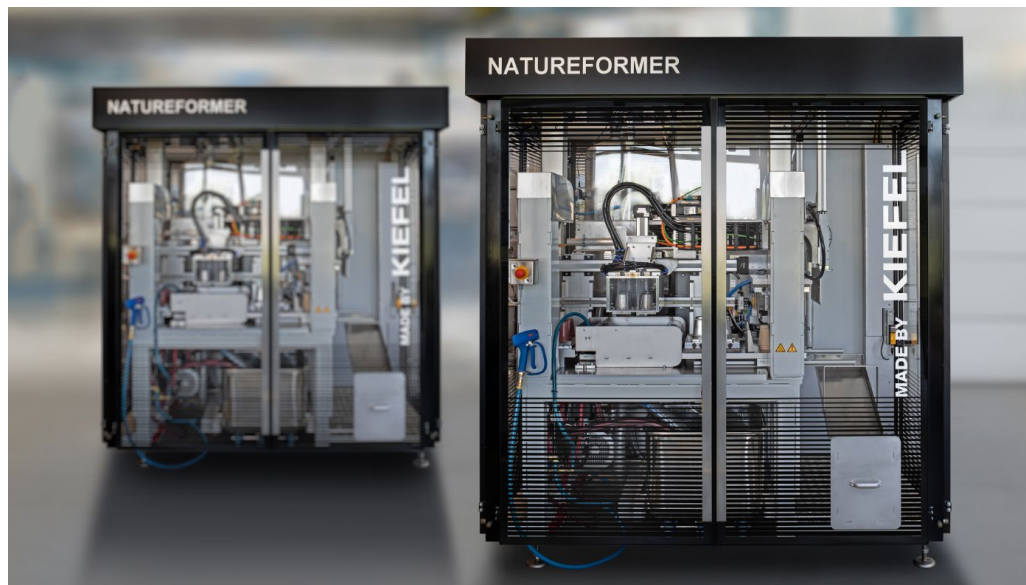
Fostering sustainable developments

Kiefel is committed to increasing sustainability on many levels and has integrated the sustainability aspect even further into corporate strategy. One result has been the expansion of materials processing expertise from polymers to natural fibers. The company also participates in various initiatives to improve the recyclability of plastics, such as HolyGrail and PrintCYC. In addition, Kiefel continuously optimizes activities related to products, technologies and companies.

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From left: Matthias Sieverding, CEO at BGU, PDC Director Colleen Walker, and Nicholas Palumbo, Fiber Engineer at BGU at the handover of the laboratory machine NATUREFORMER KFT Lab. Image: © University of Maine



Samples of fiber packaging can be produced on the NATUREFORMER KFT Lab test machine. They function in exactly the same way as the large series machines NATUREFORMER KFT 90 from Kiefel. © KIEFEL GmbH

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There are many possible applications for packaging made of natural fibers. © KIEFEL GmbH

About Kiefel and Brueckner Group USA

KIEFEL GmbH develops and produces high quality machines for processing plastics recycled and, bio-based materials and natural fibers. Kiefel's customers include well-known manufacturers from the medical engineering, refrigerator and packaging industries. With its own technology and material centers, the company offers turnkey solutions and provides support in partnership from product development through machines and tools to service.

Kiefel has a global presence thanks to our own sales and service teams in the USA, France, the Netherlands, Russia, China, and India, as well as our sales and service partners in more than 60 countries.

Kiefel owns the Dutch thermoform toolmaker Kiefel Packaging BV, as well as the Austrian company KIEFEL Packaging GmbH, a supplier of tools and automation solutions.

Kiefel and its subsidiaries employ around 1,000 staff. KIEFEL GmbH is a member of the Brueckner Group, based in Siegsdorf, which is a family owned group of medium-sized enterprises active in machinery and plant engineering with around 2,600 employees at 23 different locations worldwide.

Brueckner Group USA represents the Brueckner Group in the US, Canada and Mexico as sales, customer service and manufacturing support coordinator. It also acts as an independent sales partner for Kiefel. The headquarters is in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

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