



Paardekooper

Sustainability Report 2024



Royal Dutch
Paardekooper
Group

97%

of total CO₂-impact
comes from
products

93%

Average return
of rented packaging

92%

Paper and cardboard
with FSC from outside
the EU

92%

BSCI coverage of
risk countries

41%

More sustainable range
according to the
range classification

18%

CO₂ reduction organisation
compared to 2023

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This **sustainability report** shows where we stand, what we have learned, and how we will continue to work towards a future-proof packaging industry.

Foreword

Lyanne Paardekooper, CMO



LYANNE PAARDEKOOPER
Chief Marketing Officer

‘We take the steps
towards a more **sustainable**
tomorrow together.’

For us, sustainability is not a trend; we see it as a necessity. Unfortunately, attention on sustainability in the political and social debate seems to be declining. This makes it all the more important for us to continue to adhere to our sustainability ambition.

We believe in the power of innovation and responsibility, and we are convinced that our knowledge and experience will help us make a difference.

Resilient organisation

The world is constantly changing, and we have adapted as an organisation several times. Whether this concerns economic challenges, changing legislation, or societal expectations, we have always demonstrated that we are flexible and resilient.

Even now, when financial pressures pose a challenge, we remain convinced that our adaptability will once again help us be successful.

Unique market position

Our history gives us a unique position in the market. We have built up a huge amount of knowledge and expertise. This helps us develop sustainable and innovative packaging solutions. By applying our knowledge and actively sharing it, we can strengthen our position in the sector.

Spreading the sustainability message

Sustainability is not just a matter of policy, but also of commitment. We inspire and motivate our employees to actively promote the sustainability message, both internally and externally. We can ensure sustainability lives in our organisation through knowledge sharing, internal campaigns and inspiring practical examples that show how sustainability is an integral part of our daily work.

I am proud to be working on more sustainable packaging solutions with a growing number of customers and suppliers. For example, we are taking collaborative steps towards a more sustainable future by making packaging recyclable, applying weight reduction, and setting up circular systems with our chain partners.

Learning and sharing knowledge are central

We have learned and shared our knowledge in various ways over the past year, as can be read in this report. For example, we organised successful internal workshops about legislation and our sustainability strategy. We also worked with external partners to shape our circular systems further. These learning experiences have contributed to our growth and development, and helped us stay ahead in the industry.

Adapting to changing circumstances

We have experienced more changes in recent years than ever before, and the coming years will bring even greater transitions. This has prompted us to decide to reorganise in order to make the organisation future-proof again. It will require a forward-thinking outlook and the courage to review and transform existing markets and current packaging solutions.

New business models must connect seamlessly with the challenges and opportunities of our time. We will not only remain relevant by embracing innovation and entrepreneurship, we will actively contribute to a sustainable future.



‘I am proud to be working on more **sustainable packaging solutions** with a **growing number of customers and suppliers.**’



On the road to sustainability with customers and partners



Sustainability in 2024

Paardekooper saw a significant increase in demand for more sustainable packaging solutions and alternatives in 2024, especially from companies that supply directly to consumers. We also saw a growing interest in sustainability outside this area. There are still some customers not yet actively involved in this. We are focusing our sustainable approach primarily on companies that want to take the steps with us. However, by ensuring all our packaging complies with relevant legislation and regulations, such as the recyclability required by the new packaging legislation (PPWR), all customers automatically become more sustainable.

We see it as our role to take the lead and share our sustainability knowledge and expertise. We support our customers in their journey towards sustainability by informing and inspiring them. We provide several examples of how we have shared our knowledge over the past year throughout this report.

Our goal is to offer a sustainable alternative for every standard product in our range. This commitment fits our broader vision of making a positive impact on the environment and helping our customers achieve their sustainability goals. We are continuously working on innovative and

sustainable solutions that contribute to a more sustainable future. We will proudly present several examples of this in this report.

In order to express the impact of our range and the steps we are taking to reduce it in figures, we have worked hard over the past year to calculate this impact in the chain. This so-called **scope 3 carbon footprint calculation** ensures we can focus our efforts on the things that matter most. Our products contribute 97% to our total impact, which is why making them more sustainable is so important to us.

‘At Paardekooper we see it as our role to take the lead and share our sustainability knowledge and expertise.’

In this report you can read about how we pursue our sustainability goals. Together we work on a sustainable future.

Our focus will be on the following themes in the coming years:

Sustainability of our range:

- Further roll-out of the assortment classification methodology within the organisation. Part of the Horti division has now implemented the new ERP system, which means their products can be classified automatically;
- Develop scope 3 reduction plans for and with the divisions and business units.

Further implementation of sustainability in the organisation:

- Further implementation of CSRD in the organisation and annual reporting (depending on Omnibus developments);

- Elaboration of the material themes for which there are currently no management KPIs, namely: circular chain partner, employee development, and business integrity and transparency;
- Further develop sustainability data dashboard.

In collaboration with our supply chains:

- Continue to increase insight into the risks in the supply chain;
- Increase ESG collaboration with our suppliers, reduce environmental impact together;
- Extend social compliance goals from high-risk countries to all suppliers.



Sustainability anchored in our organisation

Over the past year we have been working on coupling the thematic guidelines (ESRSs) in preparation for the CSRD legislation for sustainability reporting. We will report on the approach, objectives and progress for each material theme in the future. We currently report quantitative targets and progress across three of the six themes: **reducing environmental impact in the supply chain, sustainable product range and fair working conditions**. We are working hard to develop and measure the other three themes.

In our 2023 Sustainability Report, we presented the six themes most relevant to us, based on a double materiality analysis. In determining this, we looked at Paardekooper's impact on the environment and society, as well as the sustainability risks and opportunities for our company. We worked with our stakeholders to identify the themes through desk research, interviews and workshops, and then explored the topics further. We have taken the most important effects, risks and opportunities into account from a sustainability and financial perspective.



Reduce environmental impact in the chain



Sustainable product assortment



Circular chain partner



Fair working conditions



Employee development



Business integrity and transparency

These six guiding themes are not only central to our sustainability reports, but above all help us focus our sustainability efforts on the aspects that matter most to our stakeholders.

In addition, the topics have been developed further this year compared to last year. We have been working on integrating the themes into our business operations and activities. This helps us embed sustainability into our organisation and our daily activities even more deeply.

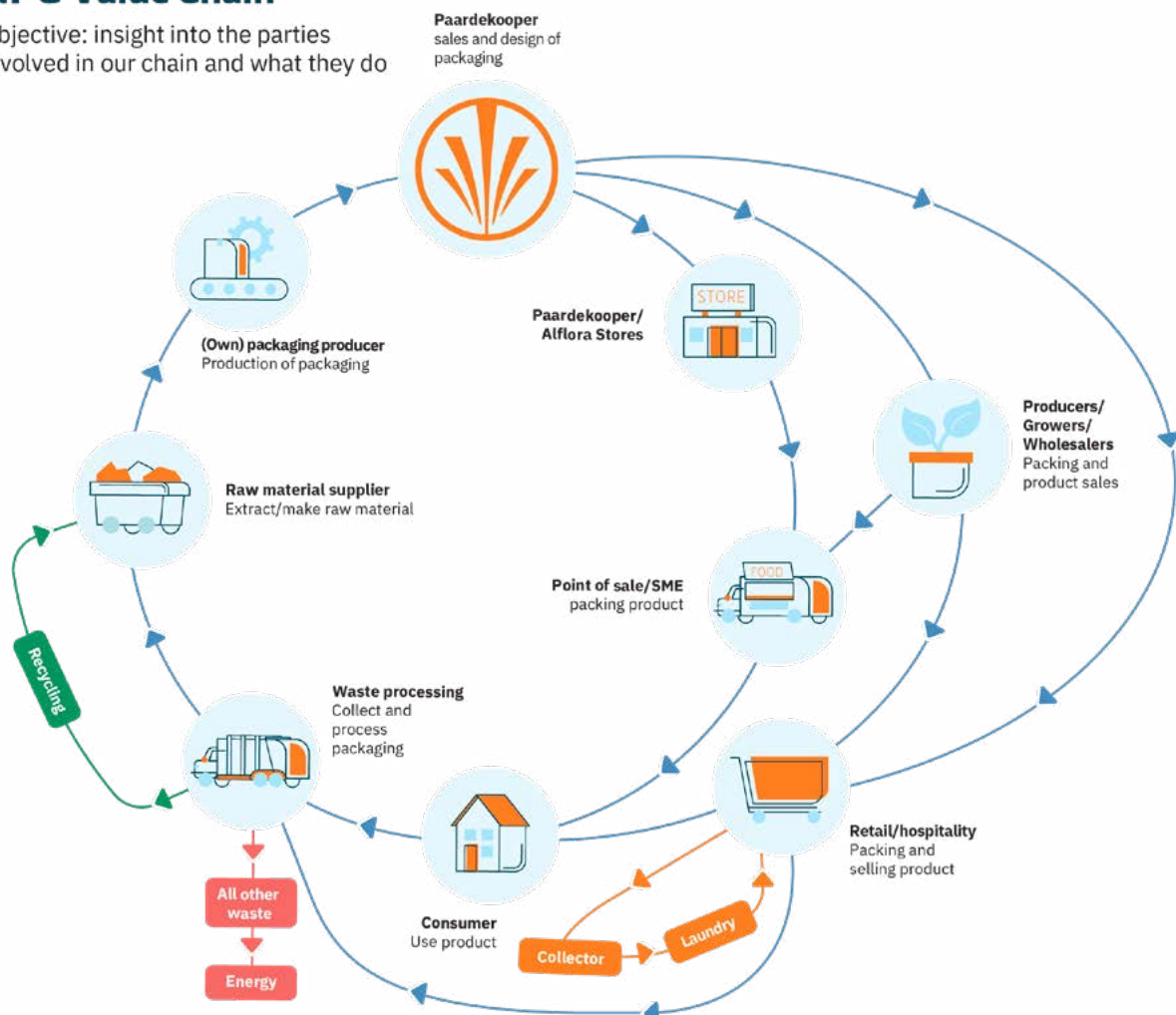


Over the past year, we have maintained intensive contact with our stakeholders to maintain a good relationship and work together on sustainable solutions. This has enabled us to gain valuable insights and to improve the alignment of our strategies with the needs of all parties involved.

Combined with the value chain we established in 2023, we now have a clear view of our position and where we can make an impact. This close collaboration enables us to work collaboratively towards a more sustainable future and achieve our goals more effectively.

KPG Value Chain

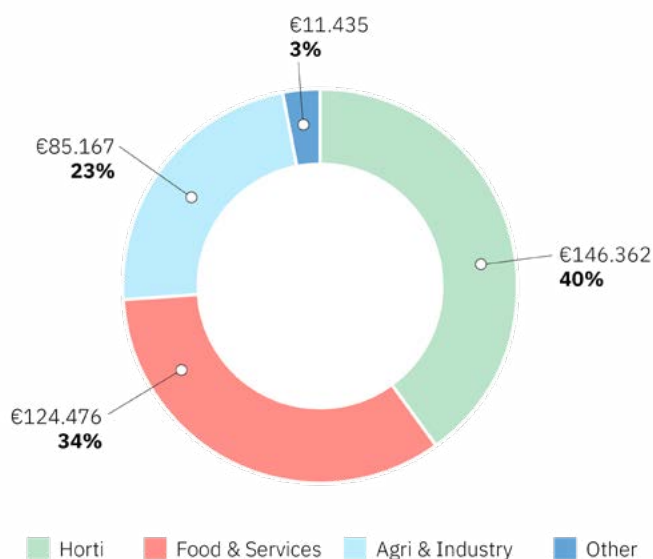
Objective: insight into the parties involved in our chain and what they do



2024, a challenging year

2024 saw a decline in turnover compared to the previous year. This was partly caused by economic conditions and fluctuating market demand. Although these setbacks have affected us, we remain determined to achieve our sustainability goals and strengthen our position in the market. This report also shows how resilient we are and how we can adapt to changing circumstances. We remain optimistic and are working hard towards recovery and growth in the coming year.

Total revenue KPG 2024
in euro x 1000



We do not shy away
from challenges:

**we think sustainably
and we act sustainably.**

FRANÇOIS OLSTHOORN

Division Director for Food, Retail, Industry & Services (FRIS)



‘We are active in an industry that is often seen as not being sustainable. However, the packaging industry certainly contributes to the sustainability of products, for example by extending shelf life and protecting products. This is precisely why it is so incredibly important to have a sustainability vision. It provides focus so we can reach our goal of providing sustainable packaging.’

These are the words of François Olsthoorn, Division Director for Food, Retail, Industry & Services (FRIS). This challenge and complexity is what particularly appeals to him about the organisation in which he has been working since June 2024.

Vooruitstrevend

If it is not sustainable, make it sustainable. This sounds like an impossible challenge. ‘**One** that we at Paardekooper are tackling with both hands,’ responds François. ‘I am proud to be part of such a progressive organisation, and I personally find it important to contribute to a more beautiful and better world.’

Proactively making things more sustainable

“Our priority is to actively help customers make their product range more sustainable, for example by using less material, switching to mono-material, introducing circular systems, or using innovative materials.

An example of this is our innovative approach to nano wrapping film, with which we have achieved material savings of 15-30 percent.’

‘We are active in an industry that is often seen as not being sustainable.
However, the packaging industry certainly contributes to the sustainability of products.’

Knowledge partner

‘We are not only a partner, but also a source of knowledge. We share valuable information across all our channels, from external messages to internal sessions. We participate in knowledge sessions, collaborate with chain partners, and sit down with clients to brainstorm the impact of new legislation with them. It’s great to be able to help our customers on their journey to more sustainable packaging.’

Balance

‘In everything we do, we always ask ourselves whether it can be more sustainable. We ensure we retain our knowledge so we can continue to lead the way as a proactive partner in sustainability. Sometimes we have to adjust our pace because we want to go fast, but that also involves risks. Our challenge is to find the right balance between environment, society and economy – that is true sustainability.’

Reduce environmental impact of products

According to François, knowledge is also an important asset for reducing the impact of packaging, or scope 3 emissions.

He explains: ‘Measuring and reporting emissions is complex, but Paardekooper has a significant head start thanks to our sustainability team and The LCA Centre. This independent research laboratory helps us gain insight into the real environmental impact of our products, and to compare options for lower carbon emissions. As a result, we can help customers achieve targeted reductions and prepare them for future legislation.’





RESPECT,

our course towards a more sustainable world

Our RESPECT sustainability strategy consists of 7 pillars. The pillars provide a direction for everything we do in terms of sustainability and for our most important goal: making our range more sustainable.

Rethink

We stimulate the transition from a linear to a circular economy. We follow the 3R approach: minimise the use of raw materials (Reduce), maximise the reuse of products and components (Reuse) and recycle raw materials to the highest possible quality (Recycle).

Environment

Our assortment classification is a tool that we use to measure how we make our range more sustainable. All our products are divided into five categories, from 'phasing out' (packaging that will no longer be permitted under legislation and regulations in the long term) to development and ultimately offering packaging in a circular system.

Science

Every sustainability demand is different. Being able to measure is therefore an important condition for us. The total environmental impact leads us in the choices we make. We analyse materials for composition and environmental impact in The LCA Centre. We base our choices on facts and not gut feeling or perception.

People

In addition to making products more sustainable, we also work on good and fair working conditions throughout the entire supply chain. This means we work on all aspects of sustainability.

Education

We closely monitor all relevant laws and regulations so we can develop alternatives and advise clients on the impact of the laws and regulations and offer more sustainable alternatives.

Collaboration

Change is not something you do alone; the entire supply chain needs to work together to become more sustainable. Paardekooper has full insight into the complete supply chain, from raw material to the eventual recycling by the consumer. By entering into discussions with all parties, we take concrete steps towards sustainability throughout every link of the supply chain.

Transparency

We communicate honestly about the impact of products, and only make claims about a lower environmental impact if we can substantiate the claims with data

Vezet reduction plan;

‘A clear story towards more sustainable packaging’

Paardekooper developed a reduction plan for Koninklijke Vezet by providing the company with a practical and realistic roadmap for making its packaging range more sustainable. The plan includes various savings options, including the ratio between CO₂ impact and effort in costs and complexity. One of the short-term initiatives is the switch from composite PET/PE film to a recyclable film made from a single material, also known as mono-film.

Koninklijke Vezet is the largest company in Europe for convenience vegetables, cut fruit, salads and chilled meals. The company is obliged to publish a sustainability report in accordance with the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). As a supplier, we help Vezet gain insight into the impact of our products as part of scope 3 (the impact in the value chain) and we work together to find ways to reduce carbon emissions.

Paardekooper and Vezet: 50% less carbon emissions in 2030.

Joline Zandbergen has been working at Vezet for 14 years, and has been the Sustainability Manager since May 2024. She says with a laugh: ‘We are all actually sustainability managers. Sustainability is embedded into everyone’s work. Just like many of our customers. As a fresh produce partner for Albert Heijn, we must report and reduce our scope 1-2-3 emissions annually. The law prescribes a carbon reduction of 50% in 2030, but Albert Heijn asked us what would be required to achieve 70%. A huge challenge, but one that we took on without restrictions. Paardekooper helps us map and reduce the environmental impact of our packaging.’

Years of collaboration

Paardekooper and Vezet have been working together for more than 30 years. ‘My predecessor worked with Paardekooper before I got here,’ says Sander van der Veen, Packaging Materials Buyer at Vezet. ‘We were already looking at ways to save on kilos of packaging material thirteen years ago. At that time we didn’t call it ‘sustainability’, we called it saving costs. And we have learned a great deal in this area. We used 25 percent less material for various products between 2018 – 2023 by choosing thinner film. Other successes include the switch from a thicker composite (PET/PE) film to thin recyclable PE film for pizzas, while for carrot film we switched from a composite film to a single material film.’





LEO VAN DER MEER

Key Account Manager

Reduction plan

Paardekooper drew up a reduction plan before the end of 2024. Leo van der Meer, Key Account Manager at Paardekooper, explains: 'As a first draft, we calculated the current carbon footprint. The greatest impact of the range concerns the material and production phase (61%), followed by the waste phase (36%), because not all products are recyclable yet. In the search for savings opportunities, the focus is therefore on alternative materials and recyclability. We propose various initiatives in our plan that can reduce scope 3 emissions.'

Kansrijke initiatieven

'As mentioned before, we were not guided by any restrictions,' Joline emphasises again. We started high level. Now we need to translate this into concrete processes. The plan contains several promising initiatives for the short and long term. We simply can't do everything at once, no matter how much we would like to.'

One of the short-term initiatives is the switch from PET/PE composite film to a single-material recyclable film. Leo explains: 'We are currently testing these in the Vezet production kitchen in Purmerend. But we can analyse materials and packaging ourselves in The LCA Centre as well. We always take the requirements of the packaging and the product into account in terms of processability, quality, food safety, appearance and cost efficiency.'

'We didn't let any restrictions guide us.'

The future

'The plan also includes initiatives for which the impact lies beyond our sphere of influence,' Leo continues. 'Take legislation and regulations, the use of recycled material in food packaging, and the degree of recyclability of materials. One of the areas for improvement is PP film because it is not yet recycled on a large scale. There are, however, various initiatives underway to recycle PP film, so the expectation is that it can be regarded as easily recyclable in the future. As an organisation, we maintain close contact with Verpact and other relevant industry organisations in order to always remain aware of any developments and be able to prepare our customers for them.'



Clarity

‘A clear story’, says Sander. ‘The plan gives us concrete insight into where we can save money. Paardekooper has visualised this in a matrix that shows the relationship between the carbon impact and the required costs and complexity per initiative. We know exactly what we need to work on and what actions we need to take. For example, there are still plenty of gains to be found in thickness reduction with PP and PET, but we are now reaching the limits in terms of processability on our lines. This is why we will focus even more on recyclability and the use of recycled materials. It is essential that we closely monitor developments in the recycling industry, as they will determine how we can make our packaging more sustainable. Testing remains crucial, but fortunately we have a strong partner in Paardekooper, who, with their network and expertise, always provides a complete overview of the possibilities.’





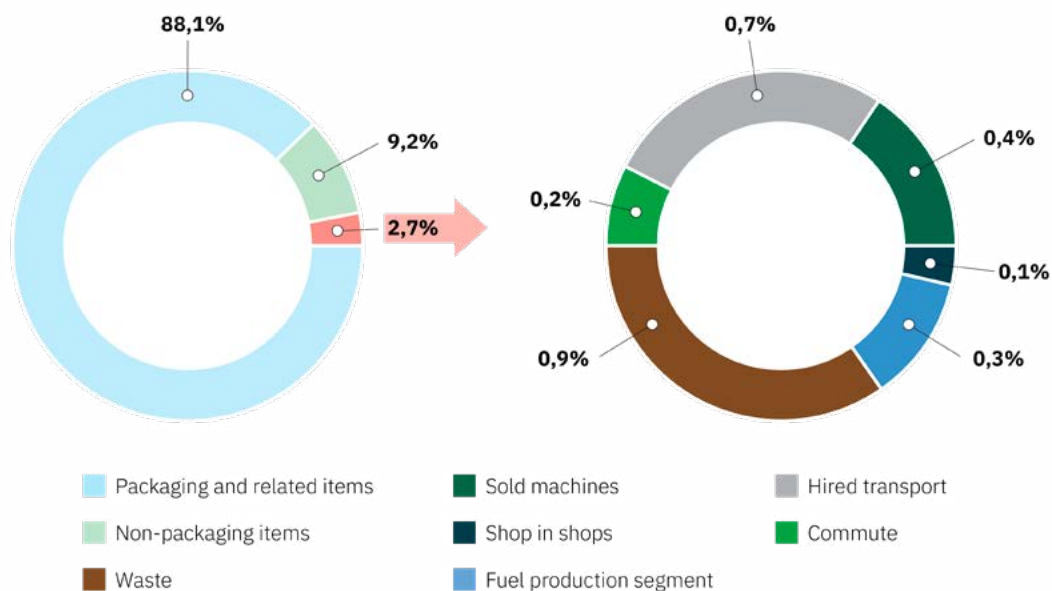
Environment

Our carbon footprint

Total Scope 3 emissions calculated

We calculated our total Scope 3 emissions based on 2023 data by following the guidelines of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHG Protocol). These guidelines help companies consistently map and report all their emission sources. By calculating all the categories, we obtained a complete picture of our carbon footprint. It is now clear that our scope 1 and 2 emissions are only 1% of our total footprint. However, even though this figure is small, we remain directly responsible for our scope 1 and 2 emissions and we continue to seek to reduce them.

Total Scope 3 Carbon footprint Paardekooper 2023



Our products are responsible for as much as 97% of our total scope 3 emissions. 88% of this is our packaging and related products. In addition, 9% comes from non-packaging products, which form a wide range of floristry and retail items for example. The remaining 2.7% comes from, for example, hired transport, waste, commuting and air travel.

It is clear that the majority of our emissions come from the material, production, transport and waste phase of the products we purchase. This insight makes it clear that the sustainability of our range, which we have been working on for years of course, remains as important as ever.

What are Scope 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions?

Scope 1: Direct emissions by the company, such as emissions from vehicles and trucks.

Scope 2: Indirect emissions from purchased energy, such as electricity.

Scope 3: Emissions in the value chain, such as purchased products, employee commuting, transportation in the supply chain, waste processing, and air travel.

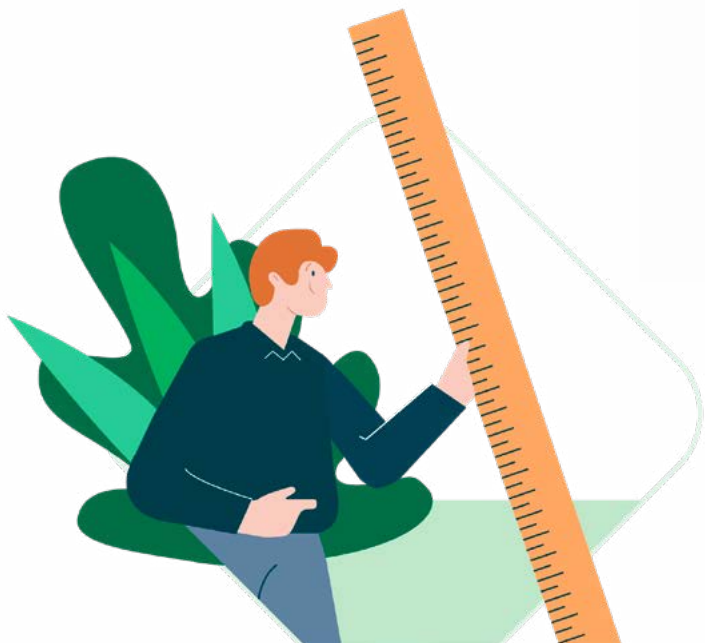
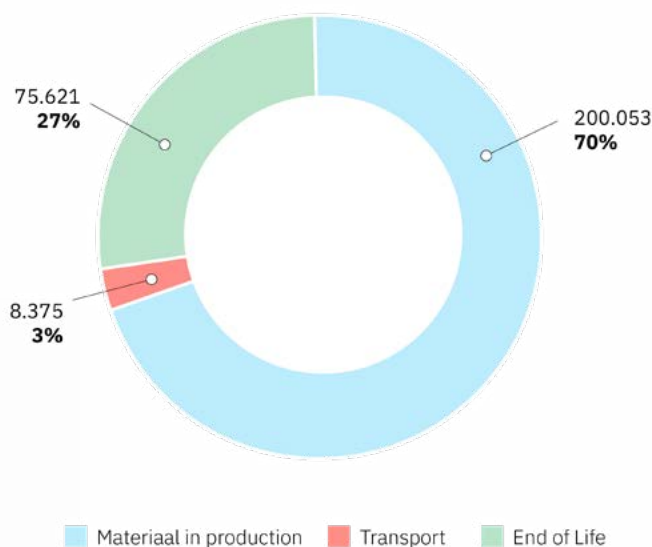


Packaging emissions are by far the largest

Now that it has become clear that our greatest impact is in our packaging and related products, this emission deserves some further explanation. Our scope 3 emissions calculation for packaging looks at the material type, production process, country of origin and waste stage. We calculated the carbon emissions of these phases for each product, which means we now have insight into how these emissions are distributed and what the most important steps are to reduce them.

The graph below shows the carbon footprint of our packaging for 2023. It can be seen that the greatest impact is in the production and material phase. We can have a major influence on this by making conscious choices in materials and design, such as adding recycled plastic. In 2025, we will work with the divisions on a concrete action plan to develop the reduction steps. More information about how we make our products more sustainable can be found in the assortment classification paragraph.

Packaging carbon footprint per phase (in tons CO₂)

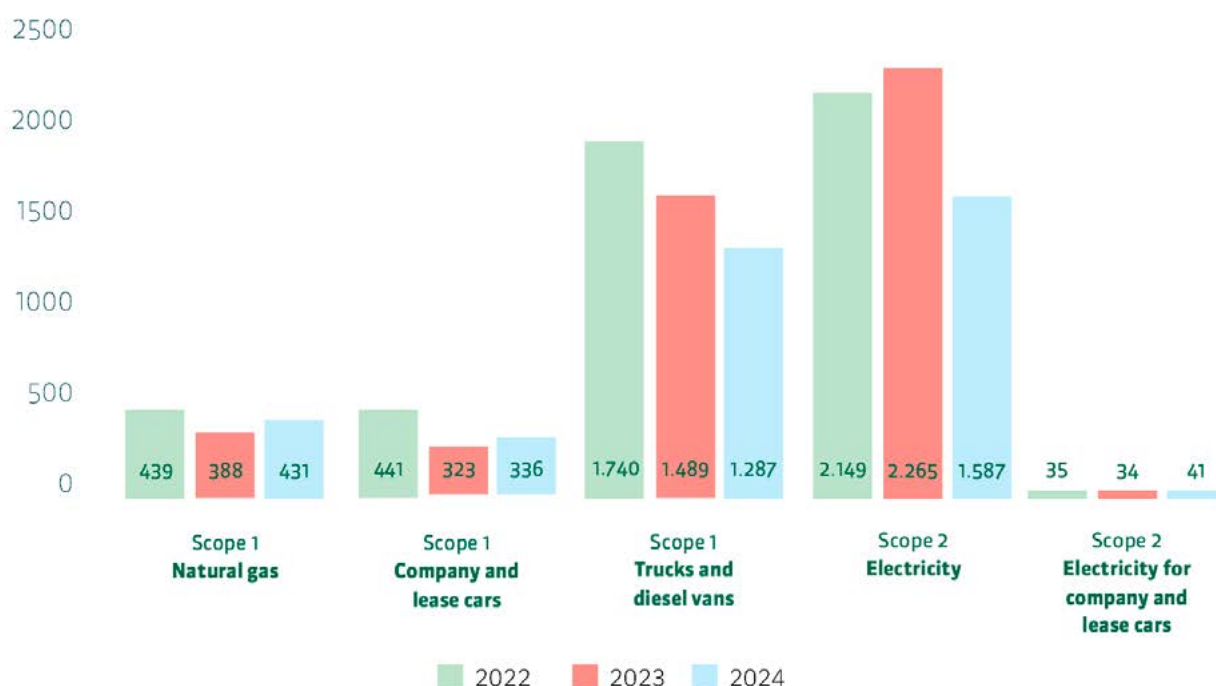


Organisation carbon footprint (scope 1 and 2)

As in previous years, we have determined our organisation's carbon footprint based on our electricity and fuel consumption . We achieved an **18% reduction in 2024** compared to 2023. This can largely be explained by the purchase of green electricity from nuclear energy for some of our buildings, which has resulted in a total reduction of 30% in electricity emissions. And just like previous years, we see the share of electric cars in our fleet increasing, affecting these emissions to increase by 20% compared to 2023.

When we look at our reduction target of 50% in 2030 compared to 2022, we see a nice downward trend. In 2024, our scope 1 and 2 footprint was 23% lower than 2022.

Development of carbon footprint scope 1 and 2 2022-2024



We achieved an **18% reduction in 2024** compared to 2023

Establishment of Science Based Targets

To contribute to global climate goals, we have set our targets using Science Based Targets (SBT). Science Based Targets are emission reduction goals that are aligned with what climate science says is required to limit global warming. As a result, we can be sure that our objectives contribute sufficiently to the world's overall efforts.

We already decided our target for scope 1 and 2 in 2023, namely to achieve a 50% reduction in 2030 compared to 2022. With total insight into our scope 3 emissions, we were also able to set a target for this.

Our goal is to reduce the impact of our packaging by 42% in 2030 compared to 2023.

These targets are currently being reviewed by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi), and we expect to receive their response in the course of 2025.



SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING POWERED BY SCIENCE



The LCA Centre: our indispensable link with science

At the beginning of this century, Paardekooper noticed increasing concerns being raised about the impact of packaging on the environment. Many companies at the time opted for 'green' alternatives, but Paardekooper soon discovered that choosing a different material did not always reduce the environmental impact of the packaging. And because it is important to be able to measure the environmental impact, Paardekooper decided, together with the Dutch organisation Natuur & Milieu, to develop an LCA method specifically for measuring the environmental impact of packaging. This is how The LCA Centre was created, an

independent part of Koninklijke Paardekooper Group, which provides packaging-related advice to governments, NGOs, academic institutions and the packaging industry.

The LCA Centre's primary tasks are to conduct packaging LCA studies, material and technical research, providing packaging advice and gaining insight into future legislation and regulations, both for Paardekooper itself and for external parties. We would like to provide some more insight into these four services and their added value for Paardekooper and other organisations.

Life cycle assessment of packaging

The LCA Centre specialises in conducting LCAs for packaging, especially food packaging. But more and more companies in the cosmetics and pharmaceutical industries are also using these studies.

When performing a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) of packaging, it is important to collect all the necessary data. The LCA Centre has a laboratory with all the instruments required to examine packaging and materials, thus supplementing missing information. Because LCAs are complex and require a lot of technical knowledge, The LCA Centre employs experts with the necessary qualifications who know exactly how to analyse packaging and materials.



OUR UNIQUE EXPERTISE





Merel de Vries Sustainability Advisor Horti

‘The LCA Centre has helped our team by creating impact calculations for flower sleeves, allowing us to now share accurate and reliable data with our customers. Based on this, The LCA Centre has developed a practical tool that allows us to visualise the impact of different sizes of the same flower sleeve. In addition, The LCA Centre also supports our team by analysing the material composition of products that, for example, claim to be plastic-free. This allows us to determine whether these claims are correct before we communicate them.’

Packaging advice

The LCA Centre advises companies on how to improve their packaging. For example, by adapting designs to make packaging more functional and sustainable. More and more companies are also using their own LCA tools and are receiving various LCA studies from suppliers. Our experts are therefore increasingly helping interpret multiple LCA studies for the same type of packaging. There will never be a single LCA methodology for packaging, so we teach packaging decision makers how to address this.



Gerard de Niet Senior Trader Agri

‘The pallet corner protectors market is very competitive and quality often varies. Pallet corner protectors are usually sold based on weight or thickness despite the actual quality of a pallet corner protector being measured by the breaking force expressed in Newtons. Working closely with The LCA Centre, we have designed a protocol to test the breaking strength. Our customers are very happy with this insight. The LCA Centre also offers this test to our competitors to ensure there is a level playing field and customers can have insight into the quality of the pallet corner protectors they purchase.’

Material and technical research

The LCA Centre ensures customers understand the composition of the packaging they offer and what claims they can make about it. To this end, The LCA Centre has a forensic laboratory managed by a team of highly trained packaging engineers and chemists and equipped with advanced instruments (such as FTIR, XRF, DSC and Raman) to perform various practical tests.

For future-proof packaging, it is essential to understand the composition, processing and functionality of packaging based on new materials and/or systems. When packaging performs incorrectly on the packing line, these instruments provide insight into the cause.





René Klaassen Strategic Buyer

‘For me in my role, The LCA Centre is of great importance to suppliers. When I introduce a supplier to them, it immediately focuses their mind, as they see the depth of analysis and knowledge we have available, this acts to keep them on their toes. We demonstrate the instrumentation we have available to determine, for example, content or deviations in the material. This means we can offer the customer a guarantee that the product meets their requirements.’

Jacco van Dijk Purchasing Director

adds:

‘In a specific case from a supplier, we were confronted with ‘component costing’. By carrying out research in The LCA Centre, we discovered cheap fillers were being used in a product. This allowed us to provide a better estimate of the true costs of the product and to enter into negotiations with the supplier from a strong position. In a competitive packaging market, such insights are essential.’



‘At the beginning of this century, Paardekooper noticed increasing concerns being raised about the **impact of packaging on the environment.**’



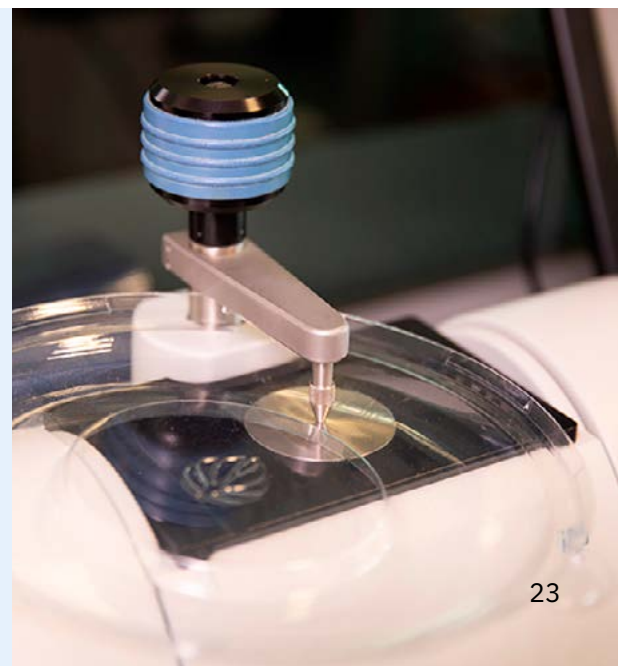
Dr. Alan Campbell Technical Director of The LCA Centre

‘We are often asked to share our knowledge. Last year, for example, we gave presentations to trade associations, such as Food Packaging Association, Verskenners, Metal Packaging Association, International Fresh Produce Association, IAPRI and KIDV and retailers, such as Tesco, Lidl USA, Edeka, Morrisons, AH, Waitrose, Marks & Spencer, Asda, Lidl Germany and Albertsons. We also like to share our knowledge with the next generation of specialists; for example, we have given guest lectures at the Universities of Utrecht, Ghent and Nijmegen.’

Preparing for future legislation

Packaging regulations change constantly. Packaging must not only comply with current legislation, but must also be future-proof. In order to be informed of developments as early as possible, The LCA Centre is closely involved in decision-making in the EU, and is an active member of the International Association of Packaging Research Institutes (IAPRI).

By proactively sharing this knowledge with customers and Paardekooper, they gain the necessary insights to prepare for these changes. And by including this information in the LCA studies, we also help in the investment decision process.





Sustainable product range

This year we have once again committed ourselves to further improving the sustainability of our range. For example, we introduced a flower and plant sleeve within the Horti division that offers an increased percentage of recycled material and even a reusable tulip sleeve. In addition, our employees are fully committed to developing reusable packaging for other applications.



Plea to make the chain more sustainable together at GS1 congress

At the annual conference of GS1 Netherlands (the organisation behind the barcode), our Group Manager Sustainability, Susan van Kruijsbergen, shared how we make our range more sustainable and how we work on circular supply chains. She gave an enthusiastic presentation about the opportunities and challenges, and the reactions from the audience showed that this was recognised by many.

It was an interesting afternoon in which it became clear how important sharing product data already is and will become in the future. Susan concluded her presentation by emphatically stating that we can only make packaging supply chains more sustainable if we work together. 'There are enough customers in the room to take up the challenge.'

Assortment classification

We continued to use the assortment classification in 2024 to provide customers with insight into the sustainability of their packaging. Using the assortment classification, we have developed a common language when we talk about a more sustainable or more conscious product, for example. Our customers largely determine our range, and therefore also its degree of sustainability. We take our responsibility to provide our customers with the best possible information about the impact and sustainability of our products, including by using the assortment classification. In doing so, we are committed to reducing the impact of our range.

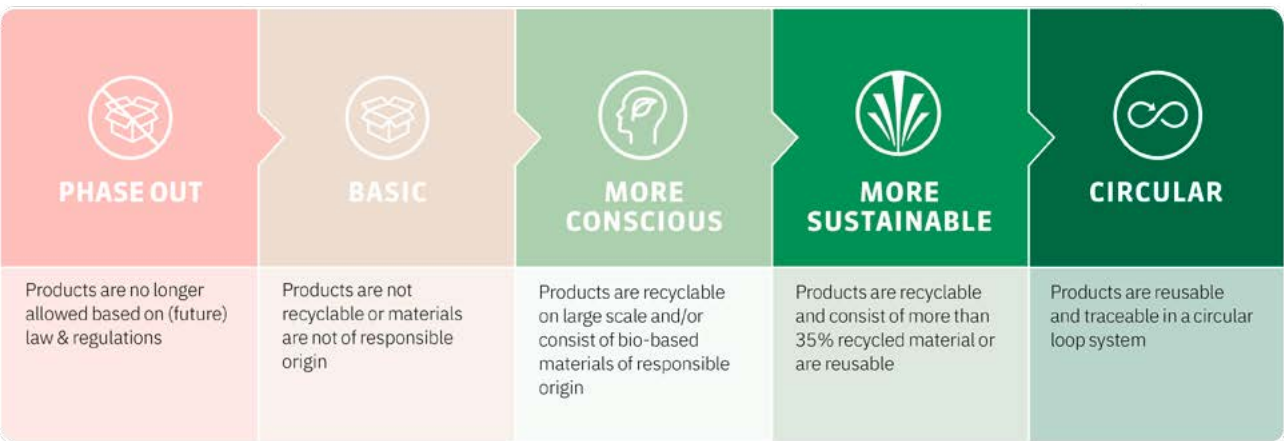
‘41% of our packaging products in 2024 were more sustainable and 27% more environmentally-conscious.’

We have already used PowerBI in previous years, to get an automated insight into the range for the products of FRIS and Agri. With the transition of part of the Horti division to a new ERP system in 2024, we were able to connect the transferred data to the assortment classification, providing even more insight.

Because this transition took place in mid-2024, we cannot yet provide a complete picture of Horti’s range in 2024. This is why we are now providing insight into the assortment classification of FRIS and Agri customers. A complete overview will be available to share next year.

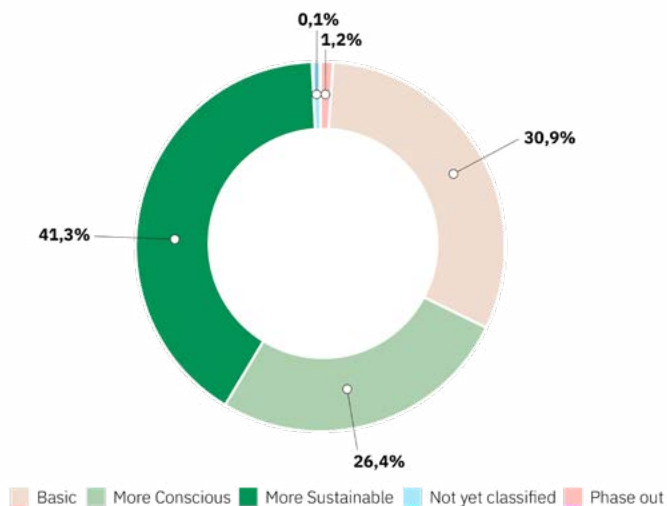
We can see that 41% of our packaging products in 2024 were more sustainable and 27% more environmentally-conscious.

We have insight into the entire range and can filter on topics such as recyclability and material type. As you can see, the majority of our packaging range is already recyclable, and a large majority of our packaging products are made of plastic or paper and cardboard. We will continue to work with our employees and customers towards further sustainability in 2025.



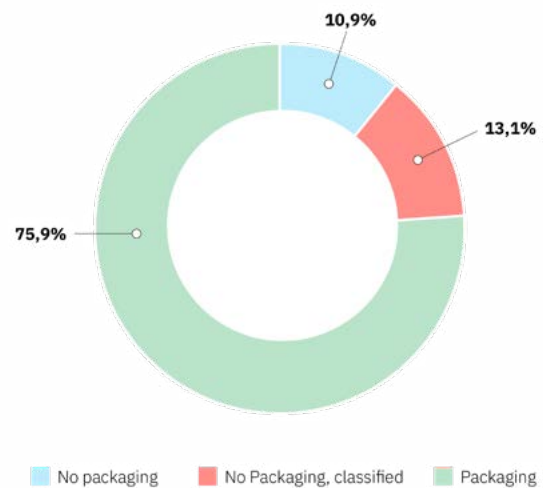
Assortment classification 2024

based on revenue,
excluding horti division



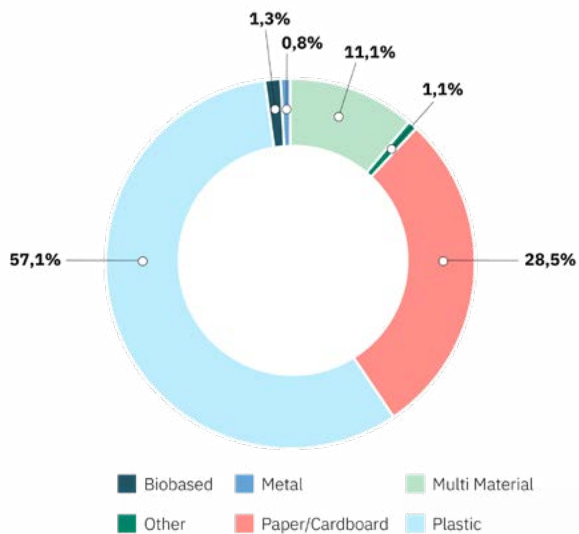
Share of packaging

als a % of revenue



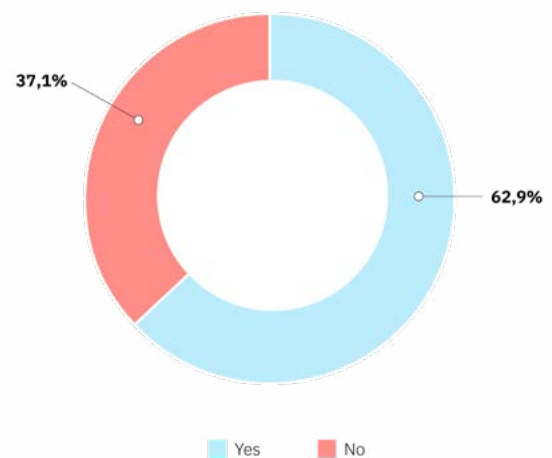
Types of packaging materials

as % of revenue



% of packaging that is recyclable based on revenue

(and the recycling situation in the Netherlands)



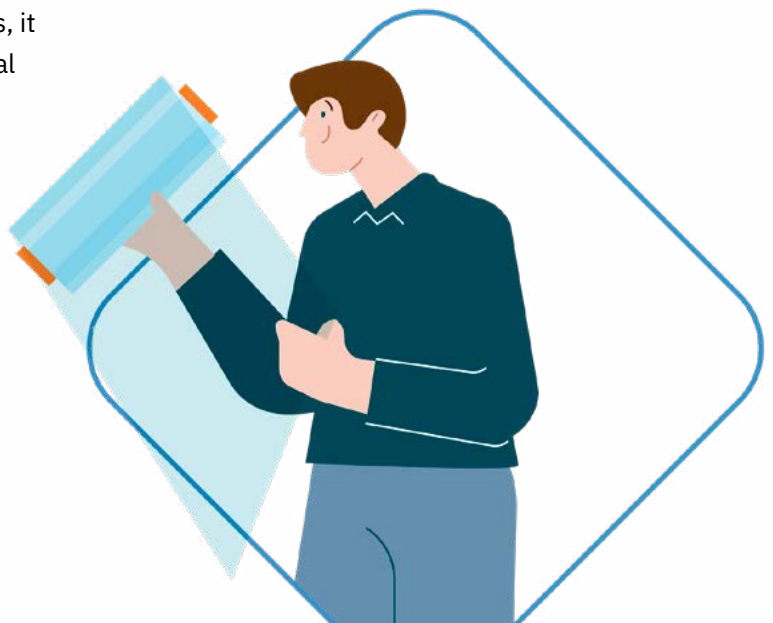


Nanofolie:

thin yet extremely strong

Sven de Brabander, Account Manager: ‘Nanofilm is an ultra-thin film that contains more layers than standard film thanks to its very small particle structure. While traditional film usually consists of 7 layers, our nano film has between 33 and 55 layers. This proves ‘thicker’ is not always better: a 15my nano film offers the same, if not better, protection than the regular 23my wrapping film. And technology does not stand still: there is now a nano-film variant with no fewer than 67 layers.

And because nano-film consists of several layers, it has a higher puncture resistance and the material tears less quickly. In addition, the film has the same stretchability as standard films, namely up to 300%. Another feature of nano film is its higher adhesive strength, which ensures the goods are enclosed even better. I dare say that in many cases, nano-film offers even better protection than regular films.’





Recy[®] Clear

From waste plastic to new sleeve

Recy Clear is our latest innovation: crystal clear and made from recycled plastic waste. This fully transparent material is available in all sizes, can be fully printed, and is easy to process, also on our Terra Machines – the sleeve machines for flowers and plants. By designing the flower and plant sleeves with a slimmer fit and shortening them slightly, we also save material. This means less waste, which is good for both the environment and your wallet.

The new standard

Our Business Development Manager John van Berkel is enthusiastic. John: 'The material is crystal clear; we have all the necessary certificates and the scientific substantiation. We are so confident in this product that we are also adapting our own range and making this recycled material (rOPP) our company standard. At the moment the Recy Clear sleeves come from Asia. In early 2024, our strategic supplier opened a new factory in Kosovo where we can produce the Recy Clear flower and plant sleeves. This reduces the delivery time of products to our European customers by 6 to 8 weeks, and requires fewer kilometres, which is better for the environment.'



Dr. Alan Campbell

'Our research has shown that **Recy Clear sleeves have a lower carbon impact** than a standard virgin sleeve or even an 85% rPE (recycled PE) sleeve'



Powered by science, The LCA Centre

In a world that is becoming increasingly complex, you can count on us for advice on the best packaging solution. We base ourselves on facts, and we try to combat greenwashing. Our own independent research centre, The LCA Centre, uses scientific research to support us in this. The LCA Centre compared a total of 9 flower and plant sleeves using Life Cycle Assessment. In the plastic sleeve category, Recy Clear comes out as the best. Choosing Recy Clear therefore immediately means a reduction of your environmental footprint. Would you like to know more about the full report? Please don't hesitate to contact us!

Recy Clear



Made from
recycled
plastic waste

Available
in various
sizes as well
as bespoke

A crystal-clear,
recyclable sleeve
for flowers and
plants





YURI HUISMAN
Key Account Manager

Sustainable packaging in retail

Our assortment classification is widely applied to different customers and customer segments. Our colleague, Yuri Huisman, will be happy to tell you how the range layout classification works to the customer's advantage

Yuri has been working as a Key Account Manager at Paardekooper for 32 years. He was there when Paardekooper was the first packaging company to use an LCA to calculate the environmental impact of packaging about 15 years ago. It took a while for this new perspective to 'land', but nowadays it is part of Yuri's daily routine: 'We approach every packaging issue from the question of whether and how it can be made more sustainable.'

'We approach **every packaging issue** from the question of whether and **how it can be made more sustainable.**'

Sustainable packaging forerunner

'We want to be Europe's sustainable packaging forerunner,' says Yuri, quoting Paardekooper's ambition. 'We cannot achieve this alone, we can only do so by working together with our customers and suppliers. We have been working with some customers to make their packaging range more sustainable for more than 15 years. The road to sustainability is a continuous process coming from changing legislation, material innovations, new insights and techniques. It is our job to inform customers as best as possible.'



Demonstrably sustainable

Large European companies have been required to report on their sustainability policies since 2024.

‘In collaboration with The LCA Centre, we help customers demonstrably make their packaging range more sustainable. We have also developed an assortment classification that we use to assess packaging for its level of sustainability based on such factors as recyclability, recycled material and certifications. This is how we help customers make more sustainable choices.’

Incorrect perception and conflicting interests

‘I think we can meet every sustainable packaging demand,’ says Yuri. ‘It’s not rocket science for us. We have the knowledge and experience of sustainable packaging. It is usually the surrounding factors that make it complex. It is often the image that gets in the way. For instance, if something comes from China, it is assumed to always be ‘bad’ for the environment because of the distance. Just like the perception that cardboard is always ‘better’ than plastic. The wishes or requirements of the customer’s marketing and CSR department can sometimes differ. Luckily, we always have a solution to satisfy everyone. Our packaging solutions prove that sustainability and a distinctive, premium design can go together very well.’



‘Our packaging solutions prove that **sustainability** and a **distinctive, premium design** can go together very well.’



Sustainable storage materials

As an example, Yuri mentions paper carrier bags with handles made of luxurious twisted paper. This makes it look and feel like cotton, but the luxury bag is still made of one type of material. ‘This was spotted by our employees in Purchasing and already successfully put into use by various customers. You have the luxurious look of a cord, but made of paper. The entire bag can be recycled with normal waste paper as it is completely recyclable due to the use of mono-material. In this context, we also see innovative closures for gift boxes that make plastic, paper tape and, for example, magnets redundant. Furthermore, there are now sustainable glitters made from minerals instead of plastic. We apply finishing techniques that make the use of ink or laminates redundant. Examples of this are embossing and water-based varnishes, which give the packaging a beautiful relief or other feel.’



Reusable packaging

‘Of course, our reusable solutions cannot be missing from this list,’ Yuri continues. ‘We developed a reusable shopper for De Bijenkorf made from recycled plastic that has the look and feel of a luxurious fabric. We developed reusable decorations for a perfumery chain in the shape of a charm to act as an alternative to the ribbon and bow. The consumer can wear the charm as jewellery. We are proud of our ability to create these kinds of solutions with our customers.’

Quick (win-)wins

Yuri is aware that this is not possible for everyone. Sustainability occasionally comes with a price tag. ‘What you pay for sustainability naturally depends largely on your wishes and requirements. Fortunately, there are also many examples of how you can actually save money with more sustainable packaging. It pays to take a critical look at your packaging and what you use it for. We often see customers unnecessarily using a heavier quality or choosing a bag with a block bottom, despite it not being necessary at all. Material savings are then quickly achieved, as are cost savings. It’s a win-win. Developments in materials also continue to progress. Materials are becoming increasingly thinner without compromising on load-bearing capacity, and they increasingly contain more and more recycled material.’



Bioglitter®

In October 2023, the EU introduced new legislation concerning microplastics, Regulation (EU) 2023/2055 on Microplastics, which bans the use of glitter containing microplastics. These regulations, which aim to prevent microplastics getting into the environment, also affect the packaging and decoration sector.

Marc Reick, inkoper

‘With Bioglitter® we are taking a step towards a more sustainable future without compromising on quality. **In our opinion, Bioglitter® sets the new standard for the industry.**’

Bioglitter®

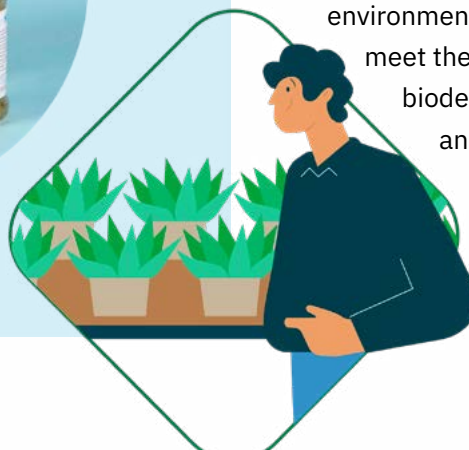
EU Microplastic
Legislation
compliant

Made from
plants, not
plastic

Sustainable
solution for
floral decorations

Here at Paardekooper we do not shy away from change. We are constantly looking for new sustainable opportunities.

The result: Bioglitter® – an innovative and environmentally-friendly solution. Our patented, advanced Bioglitter® products are made from cellulose instead of standard synthetic polymers or biopolymers and are fully compliant with Regulation (EU) 2023/2055, as they are designed to break down quickly and safely in the environment. In addition, these glitters meet the requirements for TÜV OK biodegradable WATER certification, and the OECD 301 test proves the water degradability of the glitters.





Circular chain partner

Here at Paardekooper we are increasingly focusing on solutions that result in packaging being returned so that it can be reused or recycled.

‘At Paardekooper we see it as our role to **take the lead and share our sustainability knowledge and expertise.**’

This is why we tested reusable packaging in 2024, down to the level of looking at the number of times the packaging is reused. This is not just to see how much packaging is returned, but also to substantiate this financially to our customer or consumer. We also expanded our range with several reusable packaging solutions, and further expanded our recycling solutions in 2024. New strategic partnerships were established and current partnerships strengthened to enable these solutions.

Fortunately, this produced good results: for our solutions using reusable packaging, around 95% is usually returned while 90% of our recycling solutions are returned. This applies in closed venues or when using a deposit system, and in both B2B and B2C environments.





Reusable cups and dishes

The future of food and beverage packaging is circular and sustainable. By using reusable systems, smart collection systems (such as smart bins) and RFID cups, we can significantly reduce the environmental impact of packaging. Recycling also plays a key role by closing the loop and reducing waste.

‘To encourage reuse,
we use innovative collection options.’

One of the most powerful ways to reduce your impact is to use reusable cups and tableware. Paardekooper offers a wide range of solutions for this, both for rental and purchase.

To encourage reuse, we use innovative collection options. Smart bins, for example, recognise packaging with RFID tags and make deposit systems possible. When consumers return a cup, the deposit is automatically refunded. This encourages packaging returns, reduces fraud, and reduces the need for additional staff.

What we saw in 2024 with reusable tableware:

- Return rates of 95% are possible with a deposit or other return incentives.
- We can even achieve a 98% return rate in closed B2B environments, provided the system is properly set up with sufficient collection bins and clear communication.
- An average of 93% of the packaging we rented in 2024 was returned.



In addition to reuse, recycling is an important pillar for the management of packaging. Examples of recycling initiatives include the recycling of cardboard coffee cups and (r)PET cups. These cups can be collected and recycled into new products, and this contributes to waste reduction and prevents litter.

Recycling

- In 2025, the minimum required return percentage is 80%.
- At closed (event) locations, return percentages of around 90% are possible if return incentives are used (B2C) or if good roll-out is carried out within the organisation (B2B).
- In 2024, our partner CircularPET collected 84,000 kg of (r)PET cups; approximately 84% were returned.

Working closely with our customers, we are investigating the best ways to get cups and tableware back, whether this is via reusing or recycling. We also advise as to whether subsidies are available, to help organise companies more sustainably and to reduce waste streams.



Read more

about cardboard
coffeecups
here*

Read more

about (r)PET
cups here

*page in dutch



Flower transport solutions

We would like to highlight 3 (flower) transport innovations: Floraloop, the Flower Eco Sheet tulip sleeve and reusable transport boxes.

Floraloop: the circulation of reusable flower buckets

Floraloop is an innovative concept. Each reusable bucket has a unique RFID sticker, which allows us to optimise cycle time, lifespan and efficiency, thus minimising the environmental impact. The total costs are sometimes even lower than disposable buckets because the buckets are used about 50 times and, in the case of the Netherlands, results in lower costs associated with the waste management contribution that must be paid. In addition, paying a deposit is not required.

In 2024, we ran a large-scale pilot with reusable flower buckets in collaboration with a retailer, a flower packer, a transporter and a washing company.



- The pilot was successful, with return rates of between 95% and 97% per cycles.
- An LCA study into the environmental impact of the Floraloop shows that, after just 5 rounds, the buckets have lower carbon emissions than comparable single-use buckets.
- Our own calculations, which are currently being externally verified, show that after 50 rounds, compared to comparable single-use buckets, material savings can be up to 85%, carbon emissions can be reduced by 75% and water consumption can be reduced by 60%. Even washing the buckets after each run uses less water than producing a new bucket for each use.

[READ MORE](#)



Flower Eco Sheet: the reusable tulip sleeve

The Flower Eco Sheet is an alternative for paper tulip sheets. The idea came from Robin Barnhoorn, export manager at ColorPack, one of our customers. The large amount of paper that was thrown away had been bothering him for years. 'The reusable tulip sleeve puts an end to this waste. We save 15 m³ of paper waste per week and the processing time has been halved.'

The sleeve is more sustainable, efficient, cheaper, and offers optimal protection. The covers are strong and do not absorb moisture. Thanks to the fibrous structure, the flowers stay perfectly in place and there is less chance of crooked stems. In addition, the Flower Eco Sheet provides additional time savings: it clamps itself closed, and only one sleeve is needed per crate instead of two. The reusable tulip covers can be washed after every season. And when the Flower Eco Sheet reaches the end of its life, it is fully recyclable after removing the tie strap.

[READ MORE](#)

In figures:

- The Flower Eco Sheet is expected to last at least five years.
- This results in significant material and cost savings.
- The payback period is approximately 14 weeks with an average reuse of 28 times.



'The reusable tulip sleeve puts an end to this waste. **We save 15 m³ of paper waste per week and the processing time has been halved.'**



Newwen Collaboration

Reusable polypropylene (PP)
transport boxes.
Reducing single-use
packaging



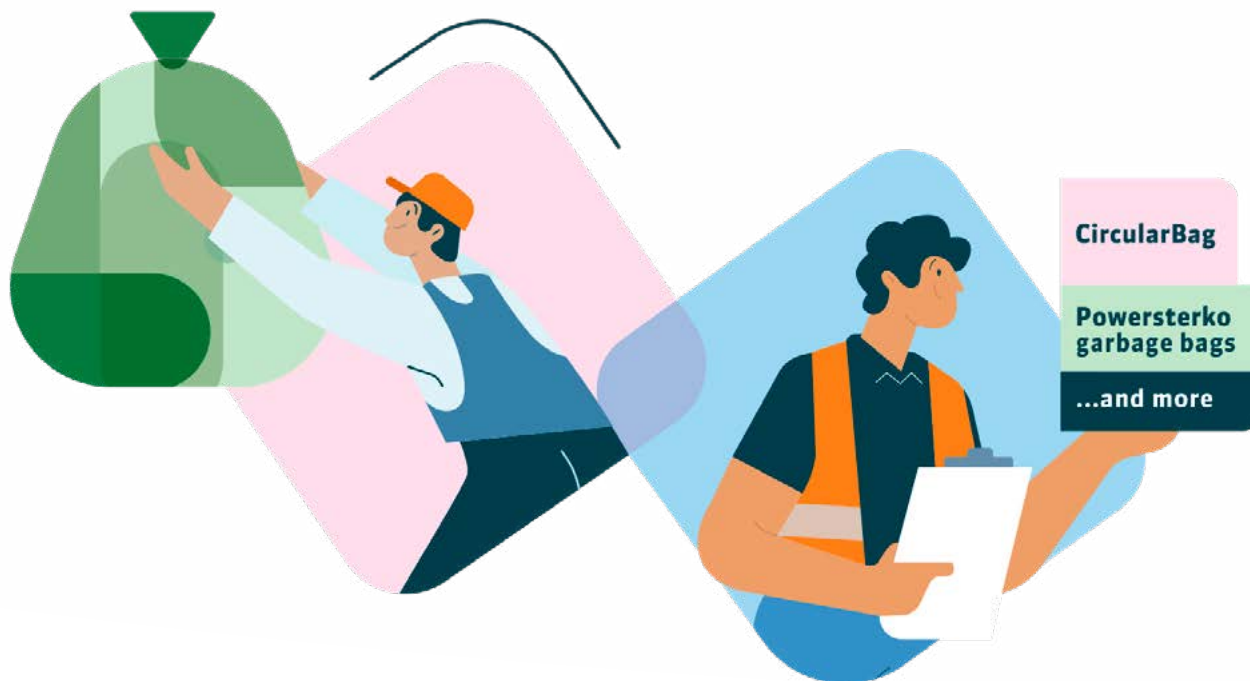
Available in
various sizes
and fully bespoke

Contributes to
carbon reduction
and saves space
during transport

Reusable plastic transport boxes

In 2024, Paardekooper started a collaboration with Newwen to make the transport sector more sustainable. Newwen is a leading player in reusable and traceable logistics materials. Together we introduced plastic (PP) transport boxes that can be reused up to 25 times. The boxes are easy to clean and available in both new and recycled materials. They can also be equipped with smart technologies, such as RFID and QR codes, for a more efficient and sustainable supply chain. In addition, the boxes can be folded flat, which means they take up minimal space when returned.

[READ MORE](#)



Other circular solutions

Recylution

Collecting plastic waste often involves costs. Paardekooper proves that this can be done differently with Recylution, a smart recycling process for plastic. This solution has been available to our horticultural customers for some time; the solution was rolled out in 2024 to catering and cleaning wholesalers, among others.

Customers collect their plastic commercial waste, including films and plastic covers, in our specially developed CircularBag. We collect it, our recycling partner Circular Plastics turns it into new raw materials, and they are then used for new products such as flower sleeves, PowerSterko waste bags and CircularBags. This high-quality recycling means less new plastic is used and Paardekooper, together with its customers, can make a positive contribution to the environment.

3,500 CircularBags were collected in 2024, representing 24 tons of collected plastic.

[READ MORE](#)

Reusable e-commerce shipping packaging

By 2030, 40% of all non-food e-commerce packaging in the EU must be reusable, with the exception of cardboard boxes. This requires new systems and collaboration within logistics chains. We were awarded a grant in 2024 for a circular chain breakthrough project in this area. Our reusable e-commerce shipping packaging, combined with the innovative return system of our chain partner BOXO Return, allows us to help our customers make their shipments more sustainable.

This system allows the consumer to choose reusable packaging with a deposit when ordering. They can then use this when returning the order or handing it in at a drop-off point so the consumer receives the deposit back.

A total solution of reusable shipping packaging, including return transport, has up to 70% lower carbon emissions and uses much less water than single-use cardboard packaging in the production process (source).

[READ MORE*](#)

**page in dutch*



Social



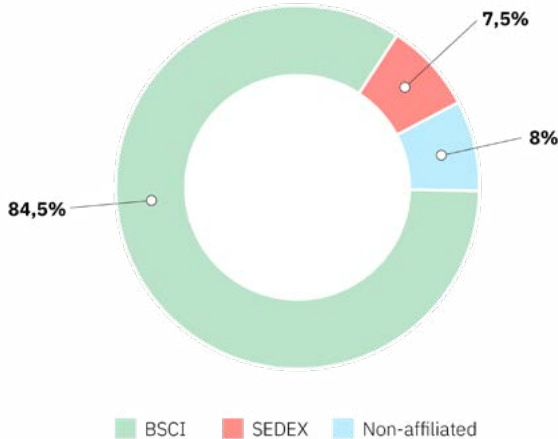
BSCI in numbers

Over the past year, we have made significant progress in the working conditions at our suppliers, also known as social compliance. A strong focus is on increasing the number of affiliated suppliers from risk countries who work with amfori BSCI or other social compliance audit platforms. These systems provide us with insight into the social performance of our suppliers through audits and audit reports. This has resulted in an increase in social compliance coverage from 89% of suppliers from high-risk countries last year to 92% this year. This increase demonstrates that more and more of our suppliers are meeting the strict BSCI standards, contributing to a responsible and sustainable supply chain.

The figures show that our commitment to social compliance is paying off and that **we are on track to achieve our sustainability goals.**

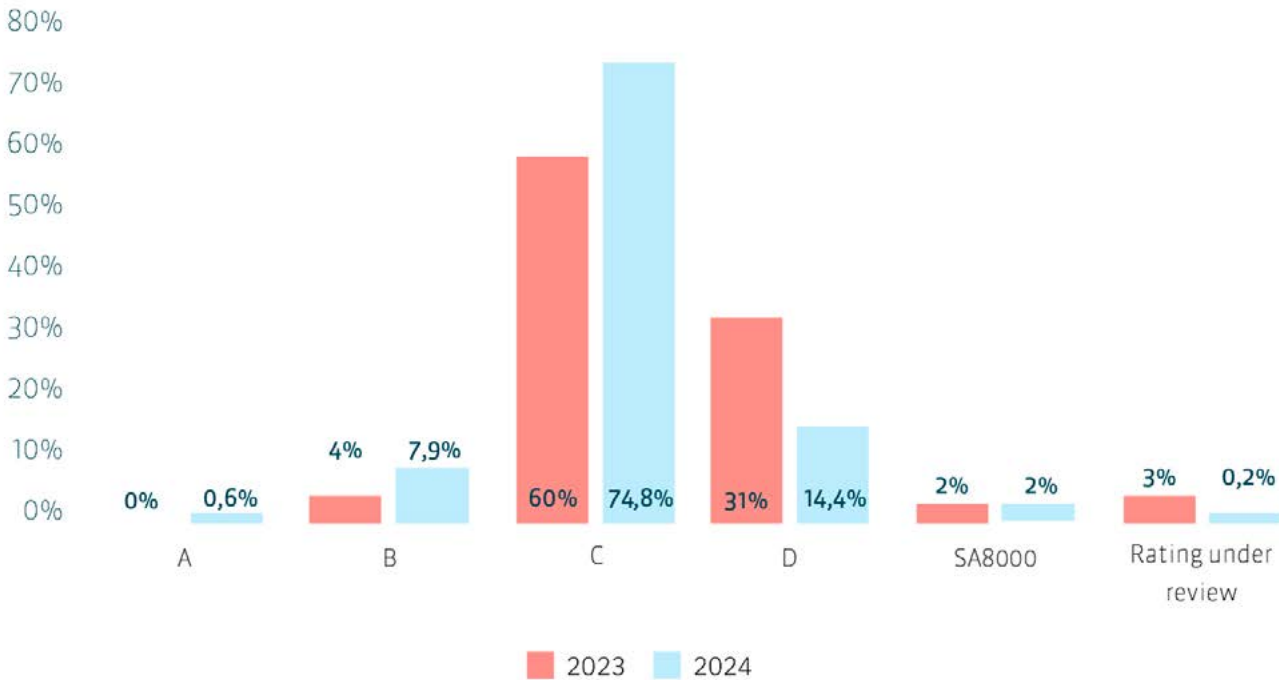
Based on the BSCI audit, a supplier is assigned a score from A to E, with A being the highest; the lower the score, the more areas for improvement have been found. The share of D-scores, based on purchasing turnover, has fallen significantly over the past year from 31% to 14.4%, and we now even have suppliers with an A-score. This reflects our ongoing efforts to improve the performance of our suppliers and support them in achieving higher social compliance standards. Using targeted training, audits and collaborative initiatives, we have helped our suppliers improve their scores and meet BSCI requirements.

Status of social compliance
as % of purchasing revenue



The figures show that our commitment to social compliance is paying off and that we are on track to achieve our sustainability goals. We remain committed to improving social and ethical standards within our supply chain, and we are working towards our goal of sourcing only from suppliers in high-risk countries that participate in BSCI or work on a similar form of social compliance by 2025. This is an important part of our broader sustainability strategy and our commitment to creating a positive impact on both the environment and society.

BSCI rating
as % of purchasing revenue (from affiliated suppliers)

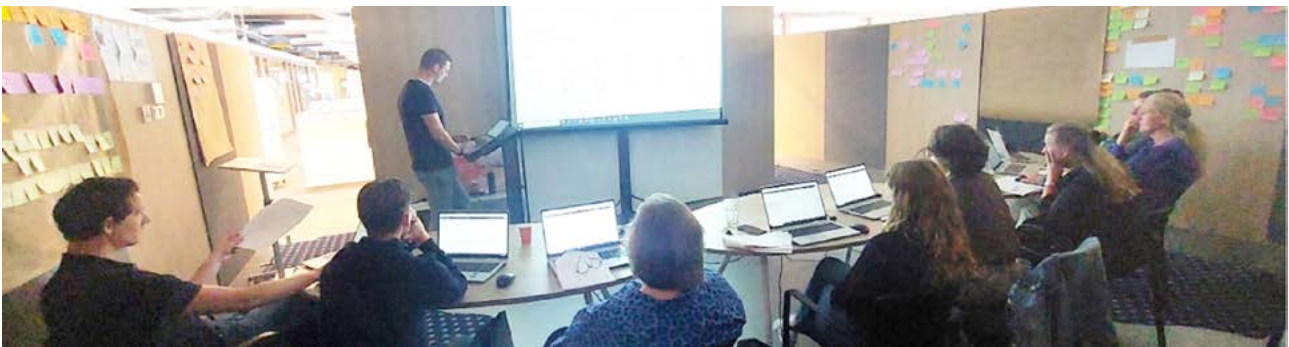


Employee development

To ensure our employees support our customers and partners as best as possible with their packaging and sustainability issues, we offer our employees knowledge and training in the form of our PK Academy. Our employees can follow internal training courses and watch general knowledge videos via this (online) platform. We have seen that they have put this to good use over the past year.

In addition, we launched a sustainability curriculum at the PK Academy in 2024. This allows us to inform (new) employees about all parts of our sustainability strategy and the materials available.

PK Academy had 437 active users in 2024, and 315 participations in internal training courses.



Training for employees, by employees

Last year, part of Paardekooper Horti switched to a new ERP system. We have done a lot of training together to make this completely our own. In total, 235 employees participated, we provided 160 training courses and covered 38 different topics. The best part: the training courses were given by our own employees. We are now fully prepared and using the system extensively.

What did our employees do last year?

Once again, our employees enjoyed plenty of fun activities together last year. This resulted in the creation of a nice balance between work and pleasure.

Christmas lunch

Cooking workshop PV Aeolus

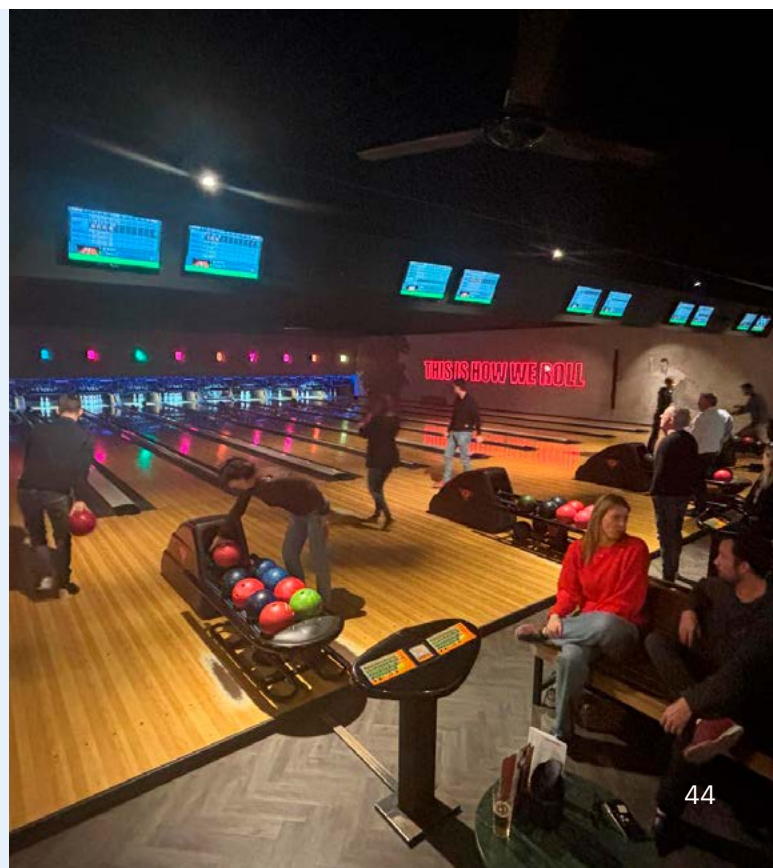
Sinterklaas celebration

Introduction days for new employees

PV Aeolus Boules Set

BBQ

Thanksgiving lunch for employees in the USA



The Works Council:

the connection between people and organisation



**ERWIN
LOTTERMAN**



**HANS
VAN DER KNAAP**

In our **RESPECT** sustainability strategy, the 'P' stands for People, the human side of sustainability. The Paardekooper Works Council is an important part of this. On the one hand, the Works Council has a stimulating role in safeguarding the organisation's sustainability strategy. On the other, the Works Council has a 'duty of care' task when it comes to our people. Or as Hans van der Knaap, chairman of the Works Council, states: 'Caring for people also means caring for the company.'

Guaranteed sustainability

An important step in ensuring sustainability within the organisation is creating support. According to Works Council member Erwin Lotterman, you can achieve this through transparent communication. 'Sustainable development is corporate policy. To make a success of policy, whatever form it takes, a connection is required between employees and the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT). As a Works Council we ensure this connection is strong. We pass on information from the shop floor to the directors, and vice versa; we involve employees in the objectives of the organisation in such a way that it is clear to everyone in order to create a shared understanding. We achieve sustainability together. We have a meeting with the directors once every six weeks. The Works Council members meet each other more often. We always try to organise these meetings as sustainably as possible, with a view to minimising logistical movements.'

A good balance

'The added value of transparent communication has also proven itself during the reorganisation,' says Hans. 'The reorganisation plan includes provisions and guidelines to go about things carefully and keep the people in mind in terms of the difficult issues that arise during such a reorganisation. In the meantime, work continues 'as usual'. It was a huge challenge, but I think we managed to maintain a good balance between business interests, employee well-being and sustainable development.'

‘Caring for people also means caring for the company.’

Together

The Works Council has been committed to the social plan in recent months. Erwin says about this: ‘Although the road was challenging at times, we achieved a strong result together. We worked together, not against each other. With external support, the Works Council and management jointly designed and optimised the reorganisation plans.’

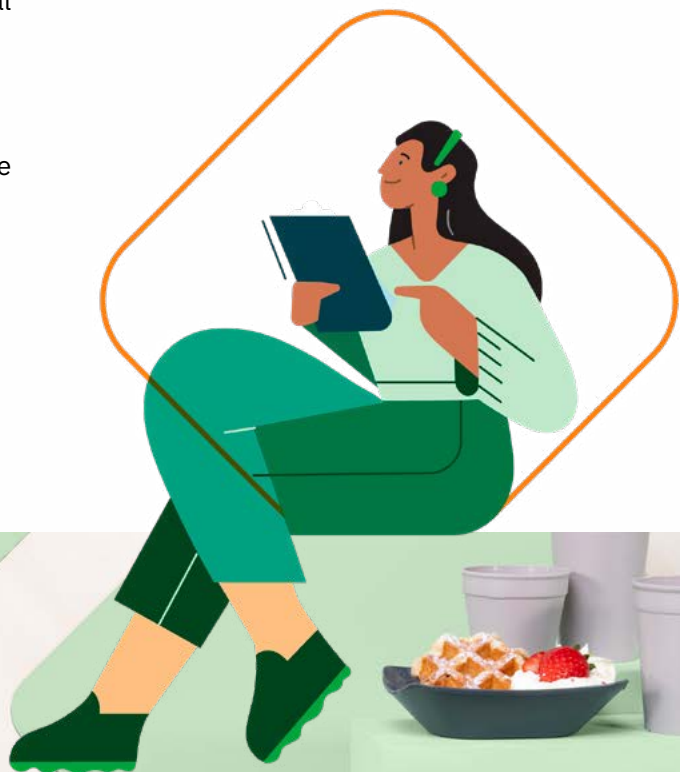
Caring for people

‘Clarity is essential here,’ Erwin emphasises again. ‘Especially when it comes to employee well-being. It creates uncertainty. Clarity about the why, how and where we are going is incredibly important. Answering questions and removing uncertainties was one of our most important tasks in the past period.’

‘But also: paying genuine attention to each other and expressing appreciation for each other,’ Hans adds. ‘A pat on the back every now and then, for example, can be very valuable.’

Future

The guys look back on an intensive and educational process for them as Works Council members. Erwin: ‘And we’re not there yet, in fact, this is only just beginning. Now the processes have to be adapted to the new organisation by the people. The pillars of transparency and togetherness are not only important here, but also a binding condition. As a Works Council, we will continue to work towards this.’

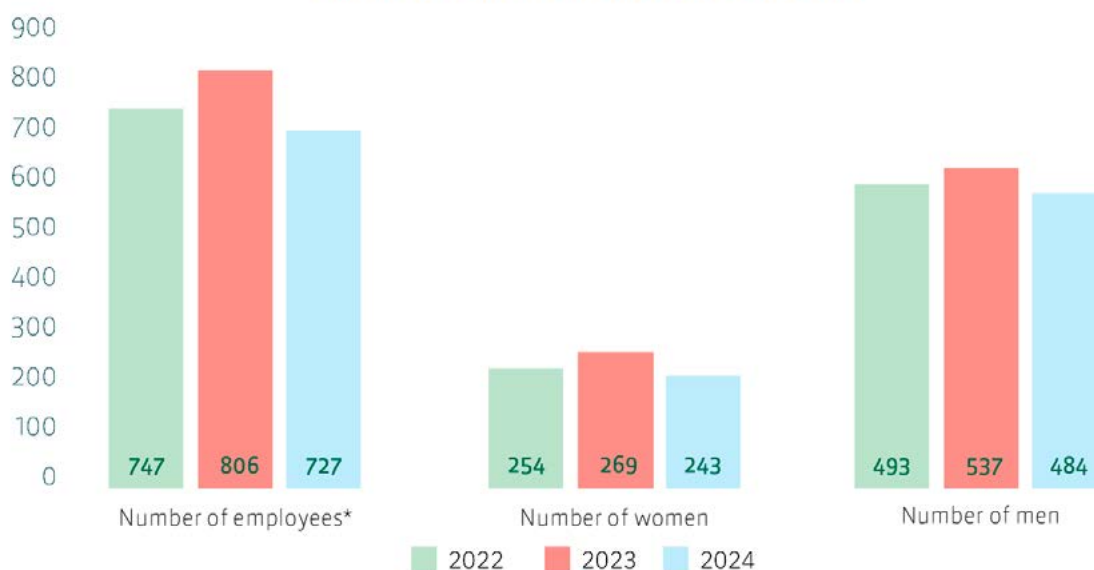


Our employees in figures

Here at Paardekooper, our nearly 1,000 (international) employees are invaluable; they form the core of our company. They contribute to our success on a daily basis in their roles as warehouse employee, buyer, seller, facility employee or product manager. Thanks to their commitment and dedication, we can do what we are good at: providing our customers with high-quality packaging and relieving them of all their packaging challenges. Together we make Paardekooper what it is.

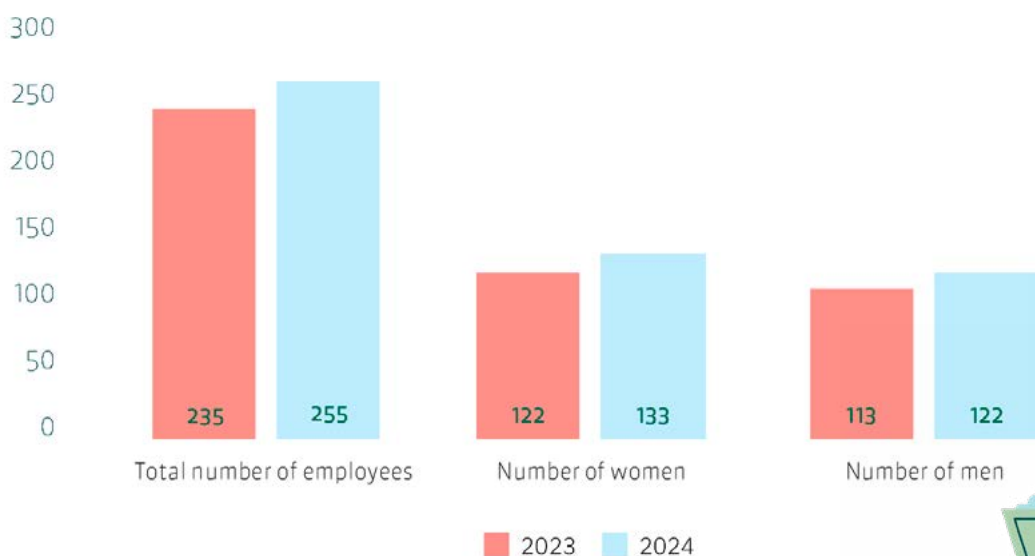
The HR data for 2024 shows that it was a challenging year for Paardekooper and its employees. Nevertheless, thanks to their commitment and dedication, our employees have contributed to the results achieved in 2024.

Paardekooper Group NL locations

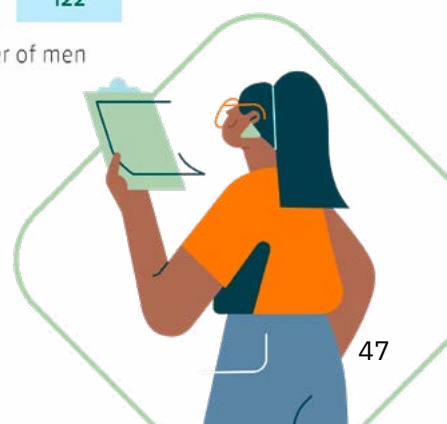


* 727 employees from Dutch entities excl. interim employees

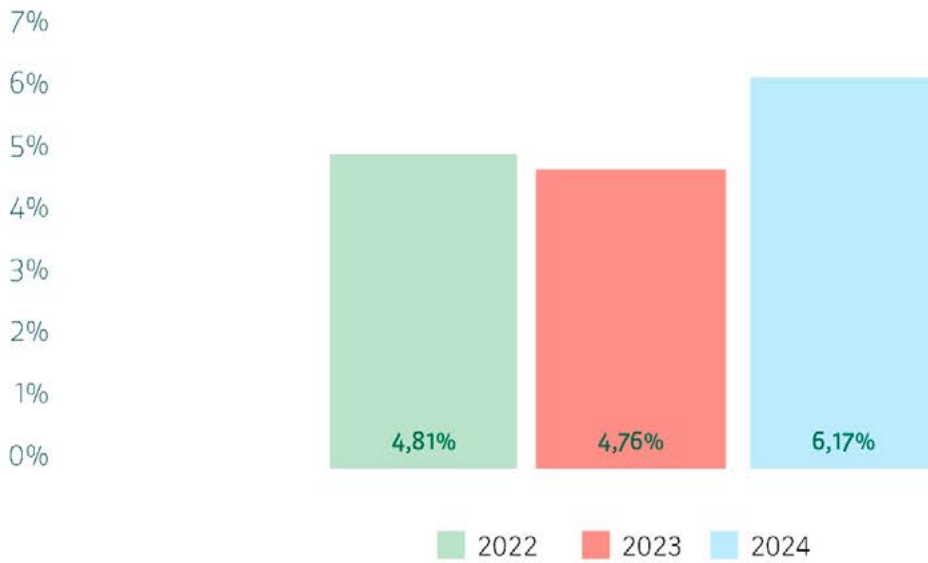
Foreign locations



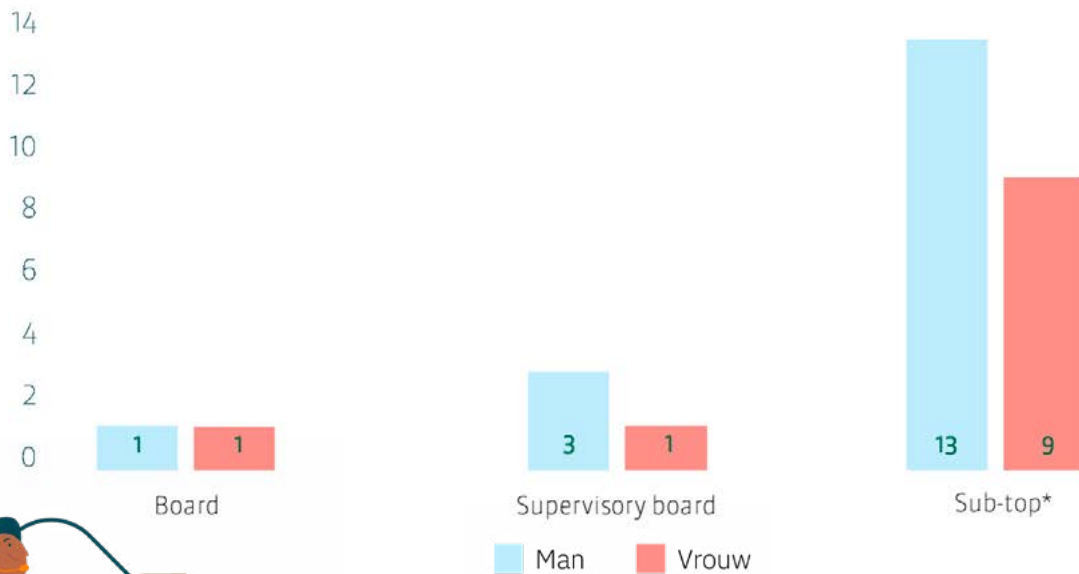
Most of these international employees work in our flower sleeve factory in Vietnam, the rest work for our offices in Belgium, China, Colombia, Ireland, Kenya, and the United States



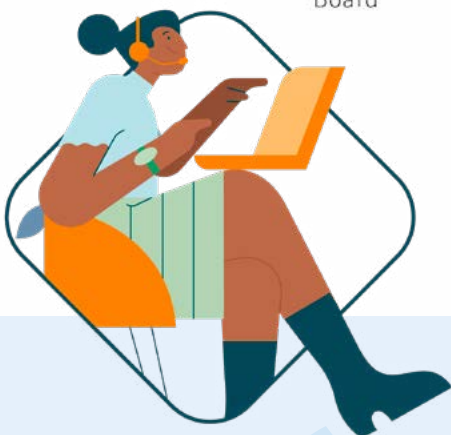
Sick leave



Royal Dutch Paardekooper Group, management composition



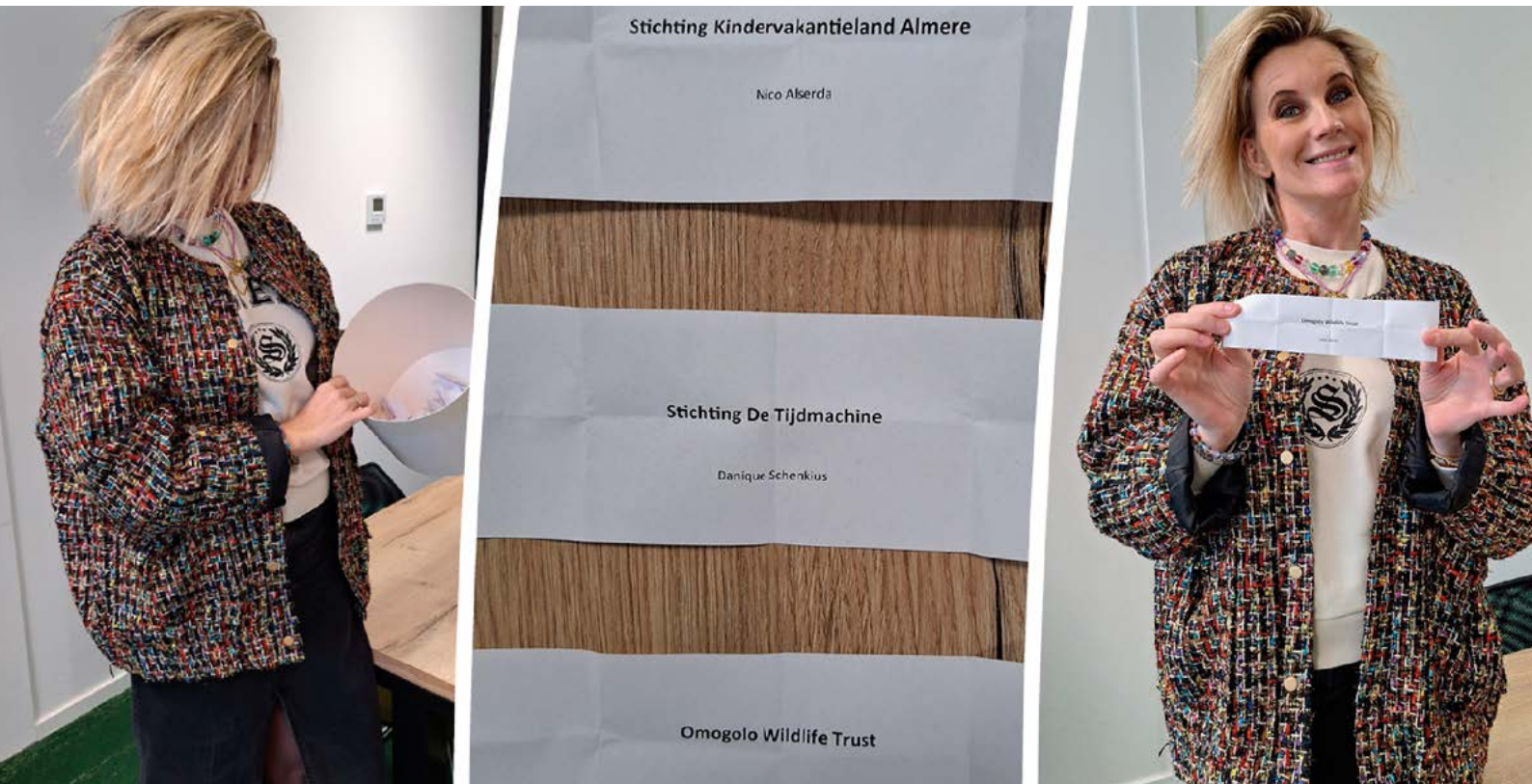
* The sub-top are the Division Management Teams (DMTs) and the group management below the sub-top



‘At Paardekooper we see it as our role to **take the lead and share our sustainability knowledge and expertise.**’

Positive impact on society

As a family business, we realise that we have an important role to play. Not only by working towards more sustainable business operations and more sustainable products, but we can and want to have a positive influence on society as well.



December charity campaign

This year, during the month of December, employees chose 3 charities to make a donation to. In 2024 these were:

Stichting Kindervakantieland Almere

The Stichting Kindervakantieland Almere (Almere Children's Holiday Land Foundation) offers children aged 6-12 a carefree holiday. It is aimed at children who spend their holidays at home, for example due to a lack of financial resources.

Stichting De Tijdmachine

The Stichting De Tijdmachine (The Time Machine Foundation) is committed to helping the elderly who live independently or in a nursing or care home. With a proven approach, attention and pleasure, they contribute to the (structural) improvement of the quality of life of the elderly in their projects.

Omogolo Wildlife Trust

Omogolo Wildlife Trust is a Dutch non-profit organisation that supports projects worldwide that contribute to nature conservation and animal welfare.



New classrooms for children at Kurahia's Primary School in Kenya

We teamed up with the Dutch Flower Foundation (DFF) and contributed to new classrooms for the Kurahia's Primary School in Kenya. The Dutch Flower Foundation was established by Dutch Flower Group and aims to make a social contribution to the well-being of people in need, especially children. DFF has been supporting projects through Penta nursery for years, and this time extra help was required to renovate two classrooms for 50 children with special needs. We are very proud that we have contributed to this

‘It was really impressive to see the impact of our donations in real life. **It is fantastic that we made this possible together with Paardekooper.**’

Iris de Waal, board member at DFF, visited the school and says: ‘It was really impressive to see the impact of our donations in real life. It is fantastic that we made this possible together with Paardekooper,’

We wish the children of Kurahia's Primary School in Kenya a lot of fun learning in their new classrooms.

Ride for the Roses

The Ride for the Roses is an annual cycling and walking event in which participants take action for their loved ones who are battling cancer or have died from it. Paardekooper Horti contributed to this wonderful event by sponsoring Single Rose sleeves.



RIJD VOOR EEN ROOS UIT LIEFDE VOOR JE DIERBARE



Governance

Business integrity and transparency

To ensure integrity, we have drawn up a code of conduct. This Code of Conduct provides guidelines for ethical behaviour, honesty and respect in all business interactions. We encourage our employees to report any concerns or violations of the Code of Conduct through our online confidential reporting centre, Speeki, so that we can respond promptly and appropriately.

Transparency is another important aspect of our business operations. We communicate openly and honestly, not only in our daily work but also in this sustainability report for example. In addition, we ensure decisions that affect everyone are communicated as quickly as possible, and that employees have the opportunity to ask questions.

‘At Paardekooper **we greatly value integrity and transparency.**’

Our core values





Modint Round Table Session

Collective sustainability of packaging in the textile industry

Working closely with Modint, a trade association, we organised a round table session for their members in June who want to make their packaging more sustainable. With a nice mix of textile producers and retailers, we shared insights and challenges in the market.

During this interesting afternoon we explored solutions concerning more sustainable packaging materials and practices. For example, we looked at the trade-off between paper and plastic, how transport film can be made more sustainable, and how we see the future of e-commerce packaging. Judging from the many enthusiastic responses, it was a successful meeting that inspired the participants.



Sustainability governance structure

Sustainability is established at various levels within our organisation. Lyanne Paardekooper monitors the implementation and brings sustainability to the attention of the board of directors and the Supervisory Board. Susan van Kruijsbergen implements the sustainability strategy and leads the sustainability team. Elske Schotte focuses on circular business models. Both teams support the organisation through knowledge sharing and training. In 2024, we started reorganising the organisation to have clearer lines and a stronger financial position, with an expected implementation in 2025.



‘Responsibility for sustainability is established at various levels within our organisation.’

Responsibility for sustainability is established at various levels within our organisation. CMO and representative of the family, Lyanne Paardekooper, has sustainability in her portfolio at the director level. Sustainability is embedded in the strategic building blocks of the organisation, and Lyanne monitors its implementation. She brings sustainability to the attention of the directors and the Supervisory Board. She also manages our Group Manager Sustainability, Susan van Kruijsbergen, and Group Manager Circular Business, Elske Schotte.

Susan is responsible for the implementation of the sustainability strategy within the organisation, for example by developing it into programmes and projects. Where relevant, Susan participates in the Division Management Teams (DMTs) to discuss projects.

She heads the sustainability team, which consists of two sustainability advisors, both responsible for one of the divisions, Horti and FRIS. These internal advisors act as a point of contact for employees; they support employees in their own division with sustainability issues towards customers, as well as participate in projects at group level.



In addition to the sustainability team, the Circular Business Team, led by Elske Schotte, also plays an important role in our efforts to become the forerunner in sustainable packaging and a driver of sustainability in Europe. Elske and her team, consisting of three project leaders, focus on setting up, developing and selling circular business models in which reusable products can be traced using RFID or QR.

Both teams support the organisation with a focus on knowledge sharing and expertise. By providing training and developing tools, we encourage all employees to put sustainability at the heart of their own work. Executing our strategy is therefore a shared responsibility of the entire organisation, to which everyone contributes.

Update per EU law in development

From the Single Use Plastics Directive to the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive, these are all European laws that have been adopted or are in development and that are important for us and our sector. You can read everything you need to know here.

SUPD

(Single Use Plastics Directive)

Description: The SUPD aims to prevent and reduce the impact of certain single-use plastic products on the environment and public health. In addition, it aims to promote the transition to a circular economy. This is achieved by introducing market restrictions, consumption reduction targets, mandatory recycled content in PET beverage bottles and extended producer responsibility requirements. Looking back on the entry into force of the SUPD in 2019, it is now being assessed by the European Commission.

Paardekooper offers reusable alternatives, plastic-free alternatives and cups with approved recycling streams. In addition, The LCA Centre checks whether products that claim to be plastic-free actually are.

PPWR

(Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation)

Description: The PPWR aims to significantly reduce the amount of packaging and packaging waste, promote reuse and recycling, and thus strengthen the circular economy. In addition, it aims to stimulate the use of recycled plastic by creating a market for high-quality secondary raw materials. The law comes into force on 12 August 2026. Some measures will apply immediately (i.e. from 12 August 2026), while others will be introduced gradually over the years that follow.

Paardekooper is looking for products that meet the PPWR in various ways. For example, we introduced transparent flower sleeves with 70% and even 97% recycled content, and we offer various re-use systems to provide customers with alternatives for products that will no longer be permitted.

GPSR

(General Product Safety Regulation)

Description: The purpose of the GPSR is to safeguard the health and safety of consumers and to ensure consumers have adequate means to enforce their right to health and safety. This is achieved by laying down rules for the safety of consumer products placed or made available on the EU market. The measures under the GPSR have been in effect since 13 December 2024.

By keeping track of all product data, Paardekooper can provide for this.

FCM&A

(Food Contact Material & Articles Regulation)

Description: Food Contact Material & Articles (FCM&A), such as packaging, containers or tableware, can transfer their constituents to food, which can affect chemical safety and quality (taste, odour, appearance). The EU legislation on FCM&A aims to address this by assessing the safety of different substances used in the manufacture of FCM&A. The European Commission recently adopted a ban on Bisphenol A (BPA) and other bisphenol derivatives in FCM&A. For most products there will be an 18-month transition period. The transition period has been set to 36 months for varnishes, coatings and professional production equipment.

Supported by a dashboard, Paardekooper proactively monitors and controls Documents of Compliance for all food contact materials to ensure the safety of food contact materials.



The future of packaging

During a meeting of Royal Flora Holland for growers of potted plants, we shared our insights on the future of sustainable packaging and the legislation that will play a role in this.

We discussed (upcoming) legislation, such as the Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR), the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) and the Green Claims Directive. We provided the attendees with practical tips and examples of packaging options that can be used within these new guidelines.

CSDDD

(Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive)

Description: The CSDDD aims to promote sustainable and responsible business practices in corporate value chains. This is achieved by imposing obligations on companies covered by the Directive to conduct environmental and human rights due diligence and adopt a climate transition plan in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement. The timeline is currently under consideration in the Omnibus proposal.

In addition to working on social compliance via amfori BSCI, a group of students conducted research into the risks in our chain in 2024. We will continue to build on their results to support our customers who need to comply with CSDDD as much as possible.

EUDR

(EU Deforestation-free Regulation)

Description: The EUDR aims to reduce the EU's impact on global deforestation and forest degradation linked to the production of specific commodities and some derived products. Products placed on the EU market or exported from the EU must be free from deforestation, legally produced and accompanied by appropriate documentation proving this, known as a due diligence statement. Following a recent ruling by the European Commission, the measures will come into effect from 30 December 2025 instead of 30 December 2024.

The NVGP/Ververpakkingsunie trade association is holding discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, the NVWA and politicians to gain acceptance for NGOs with a global chain assurance and risk analysis system. Collaboration is taking place with the FSC organisation to develop a suitable system for the packaging wholesaler. In addition, the purchasing departments of both divisions are guided in achieving Paardekooper's '100% FSC-certified article,' policy.

GCD

(Green Claims Directive)

Description: The GCD aims to strengthen the prevention of false and misleading voluntary environmental claims in B2C commercial practices by setting requirements for substantiation, verification and communication of such claims. Although EU legislation is still developing, the market is already starting to respond to the intention to combat greenwashing.

At Paardekooper, we are careful about what we promise our customers. If a customer wants to base a purchasing decision on environmental impact data, we work with The LCA Centre to produce comprehensive and robust peer-reviewed LCA studies that help defend environmental claims.

CSRD

(Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive)

Description: The CSRD strengthens and standardises the rules around sustainability reporting in the EU, covering a range of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) aspects. The first companies have to apply the new rules in fiscal year 2024 for reports published in 2025. The timeline for unlisted companies such as Paardekooper is currently under consideration in the Omnibus proposal.

Paardekooper has published three sustainability reports in preparation for the CSRD. This has provided us with experience for the first mandatory report that will be published next year.

CBAM

(Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism)

Description: The CBAM (Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism) is the EU's tool to 'set a fair price for the carbon emitted during the production of carbon-intensive goods entering the EU, and to encourage cleaner industrial production in non-EU countries,' A transition phase will run from 2023-2026, during which only reporting obligations will apply. From 2026, a permanent system will come into effect where financial payments must be made.

Paardekooper is already reporting the required data in preparation for the actual entry into force.

In 2024, our employees provided internal training on the costs associated with the waste management contribution that must be paid and the SUP.

These training courses were well attended and our employees were given the most up-to-date information to inform our customers.





DIANA SCHIFFER

Packaging Regulatory Advisor

Forward Regulatory Insight

Forward Regulatory Insights provide a critical advantage by anticipating potential regulatory changes. The LCA Centre has a full-time staff member who closely monitors EU regulations and compiles insights. This information helps Paardekooper proactively prepare for changes, minimise risks and protect operations. Understanding upcoming regulations can help future-proof product designs and materials. These insights support strategic planning and investment decisions, enabling Paardekooper to adapt and innovate for a resilient future.

Forward Regulatory Insights help us to anticipate legislative changes. This valuable information comes from an extensive network of consultants, policy makers, NGOs and lobbyists in Brussels, Strasbourg and the EU Member States.

Paardekooper has a full-time employee focused on following key regulations concerning packaging, waste, toxicity and claims, ensuring we are always up to date with accessible timelines.

By looking ahead to upcoming legislation, we can quickly respond to changes, limit risks and protect our processes. For example, we can adapt our packaging designs and materials to meet stricter environmental and toxicity standards even before

these regulations officially come into effect.

This helps us make better investment choices and strategically prepare for Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) studies together with The LCA Centre.

These insights not only guide our strategic decisions, but also give us the opportunity to prepare and innovate. Although not yet binding, they are the best predictors of future legislation, keeping us ahead of the competition and adapting to change. Forward Regulatory Insights are therefore not only a way to avoid uncertainty, but also a powerful tool for building an agile, competitive future.

Our collaborative partners

HSP!, Horti Sustainable Packaging Initiative

By working together intensively, we want to accelerate the transition to more environmentally-friendly packaging. As a result, we want to make an active contribution to a sustainable future for the floriculture sector and to a healthy living environment. The initiative focuses on three themes: chain transparency and certification, circularity in materials and packaging, and life cycle assessments. In 2024, we continued to work on the goals set in 2023. Paardekooper takes part in the working groups.



Circular Plastics Alliance

Our participation in the Circular Plastics Alliance sees us working on various sustainable packaging solutions. Examples of this are the CircularBag and the Recy Flower Sleeves

Training and discussion on plastic reuse with Circular Plastics Alliance

Last year we welcomed the Circular Plastics Alliance to our office. We provided space for a group discussion and training by the Circular Plastics Alliance, and shared our own stories about how we help customers make more sustainable choices and about our solutions for reusable packaging. It was interesting to talk to different companies from all kinds of different sectors about the use of plastics and their reuse.

MVO Nederland

The network organisation MVO Nederland supports and connects organisations working in the field of sustainability. This has created a network of partners that innovate and implement together in order to achieve the new economy. Paardekooper is a member of the large companies network, and we have participated in the community of practices 'CSR' and 'Chain Responsibility and Due Diligence' over the past year.



NVC, Nederlands Verpakkingencentrum

Trade association NVC connects companies that recognise the importance of packaging, and it encourages the continuous improvement of packaging. The NVC gives packaging companies a collective voice in the market and politics.

Packaging Chair

With increasing complexity, education becomes increasingly important. Paardekooper contributes to the Packaging Chair of the University of Twente, established by the NVC, more specifically through the MSc study 'Packaging Design & Management'. As a result, Paardekooper contributes to the knowledge of the packaging technologists of the future.

UNIVERSITEIT
TWENTE.



Stichting Vierdaagsefeesten Nijmegen

Our branch in Beuningen has been involved in the Four Days Marches in Nijmegen for many years. As a partner, we support them in making the festival more sustainable by supplying rPET cups for the circular cup system in collaboration with CircularPET.

VBW, Vereniging Bloemist Winkeliers

The Vereniging Bloemist Winkeliers (VBW) [Royal Association of Florist Shopkeepers] is the enterprising trade association for established florists in the Netherlands. As a partner of VBW, we support florists in the field of creativity, innovation and developments in relation to sustainability.



Supporter van Schoon, initiatief van Verpact

At Paardekooper we focus on reducing waste by offering more sustainable packaging alternatives and developing circular systems. As a Supporter of Schoon, with over 100 years of experience in the world of packaging, we are committed to co-operation throughout the supply chain, including use of the right recycling bins and encouraging clean-up campaigns.

Boxo

BOXO Return is a universal return system for reusable shipping packaging in the Netherlands. The system consists of software for web shops, a deposit system, and collection points throughout the Netherlands. We are working with Boxo to develop the reusable shipping packaging market.



Tomra

TOMRA offers total solutions for the collection and sorting of beverage containers. TOMRA also has machines for collecting, storing and paying out for reusable deposit cups with QR or RFID and offers all the necessary services 7 days a week. We are working with TOMRA to test and develop the reusable cup market.

Our colleague in Miami, Joyce Aerts, is chairman of the Sustainability Task Force of IFPA (International Fresh Produce Association) on behalf of Paardekooper. Through this task force, she is committed to making the fresh produce sector in the US more sustainable. For example, this task force conducted a survey last year on sustainability among IFP's ornamental horticulture members and, at the request of the task force, Dr. Alan Campbell gave them a presentation on sustainability and LCA.



Sustainable Packaging:

Insights for Florists and Green Professionals

At the 'Sustainable entrepreneurship into the future' event of Plantion, VBW, Smithers-Oasis and Wholesale Centre Plantion in October, employees Merel de Vries, Sustainability Advisor, and Hans de Jong, Product Manager, shared our insights of sustainable packaging

developments. The target group of the event were florists and other green professionals, which led to an interesting dialogue about how to involve the customer in sustainability. Using our assortment classification, we provided visitors with tools for making their range more sustainable. We provided practical examples of how entrepreneurs can contribute to improve the recyclability of the materials used.

Fruit Attraction Madrid:

Legislation and Sustainability in Fresh Produce Packaging

During the Fruit Attraction trade show in Madrid, we not only shared information about our current range of fresh produce packaging, Dr. Alan Campbell also gave a presentation on developments in legislation at the request of Paardekooper.

In addition, we also presented a product passport for a number of sustainable products that provides insight into product properties, the carbon impact and a practical translation of this carbon impact. Visitors could therefore compare the more sustainable alternative with the standard product on a number of points.



Our certificates

To make our assortment more sustainable,
we work with the following sustainability, packaging, and environmental quality certifications.

BRCGS

This standard sets specific food safety and quality requirements for organisations in the storage and distribution sector that trade in food. Paardekooper supplies to food producers and large retailers, so this is explicitly demanded by our customers.



BSCI

We are a member of the amfori BSCI initiative, which shows that we are committed to a responsible approach as regards working conditions throughout the supply chain. Our goal is to only purchase from BSCI-affiliated suppliers in high-risk countries. As of 31 December 2024, we had 84.5% BSCI coverage and a total of 92% social compliance coverage through other platforms such as Sedex. We ensure that all the suppliers for whom we are responsible undergo timely re-auditing.

EcoVadis

Our sustainability efforts earned us a silver EcoVadis medal in 2024. EcoVadis is a platform that enables companies to evaluate the sustainability performance of their suppliers, manage risks, and encourage eco-innovations in their global supply chains. By participating in the EcoVadis supplier assessment, we provide customers with insight into our sustainability efforts.



ETI base code

Our Horti division is ETI certified. ETI stands for Ethical Trading Initiative and is a set of internationally recognised labour standards that aim to promote ethical working conditions in global supply chains. The ETI base code covers a wide range of labour rights, including freedom of association, fair wages and safe working conditions.

QA-CER

Paardekooper is QA-CER certified. This means the purchasing, sales and distribution of all our recycled products, which demonstrably contain 30% or more recycled material, fall under the requirements of QA-CER certificate.



FSC

The international, independent FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) quality mark ensures raw materials for wood and paper products come from responsibly-managed forests. Our goal is to source more than 95% of our paper, wood, cardboard and bamboo products from outside Europe and bearing the FSC quality mark by the end of 2025. At the end of 2024, 91.9% of these items had the FSC quality mark, based on purchased kilos.

ISO14001

Since 2012, Paardekooper BV, as an organization, has been ISO14001 Environmental Management certified. Last year, Paardekooper Horti BV was added to this certification, and the certification was expanded with the CO2 reduction management module.



[SEE ALL OUR CERTIFICATES](#)



About this report

Paardekooper wants to make sustainability accessible and understandable to a wide audience. We hope that this report will contribute to that for you. If you have an idea, tip, question or comment, please contact us at: duurzaamheid@paardekooper.com

The report covers the period from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024. Unless otherwise stated, the results relate to all the (international) activities of Koninklijke Paardekooper Group.

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This report has not been externally verified. We are currently focusing on implementing policies and achieving results. We are working towards future external verification.

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