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**The Lighter Side of Packaging:  
Weight Reduction Significantly Improves Sustainability Metrics for  
Tuna, Coffee and Milk Packaging**

(January 20, 2009 – Rochester, MI) Three new Life Cycle Inventory (LCI) studies indicate that significant reductions in energy consumption, solid waste generation, and greenhouse gas emissions can be achieved by moving to lighter weight packaging, and that the benefits are particularly pronounced for flexible, as opposed to rigid, containers. The research, which examined the environmental impacts of tuna, coffee and milk containers, was performed by Franklin Associates, a respected life cycle assessment firm, and peer reviewed by an independent board of experts. The studies took a cradle-to-grave approach, scrutinizing the steps from raw material extraction through disposal and/or recycling.

The milk study is an updated addendum to an LCI performed in 2007, while the tuna and coffee studies are new. Although all three underscore the environmental benefits of lighter weight packaging, the tuna and coffee studies highlight the additional benefits brought about by further weight reductions resulting from more advanced, flexible packaging containers such as multi-layer pouches, bags and brick packs.

According to Bob Lilienfeld, Editor of *The ULS Report* and an acknowledged expert on waste prevention, “We’ve been saying for years that weight reduction should be the primary strategy for developing more sustainable packaging, and that light weight trumps other considerations such as material choice, recyclability, or recycling levels. Forget about paper versus plastic or glass versus steel. To be more sustainable, simply use less stuff to begin with.”

*The ULS Report* was published on a regular basis between 1994 and 2000, and is now once again available quarterly. The coffee, tuna, and milk packaging research described herein, and the full ULS newsletter and research archives, are available at [www.use-less-stuff.com](http://www.use-less-stuff.com).

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