



Breaking News on Food & Beverage Development - North America

## Green Sheep Water taps into demand for sustainability as a bottled water with a green conscience

By Elizabeth Crawford, 31-May-2016

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**Sustainability and environmentally-friendly claims are becoming increasingly influential among consumers with recent research from The Hartman Group finding almost a third of consumers always buy products based on social well-being and environmental concerns.**

In addition, research from Natural Marketing Institute recently found shoppers are 58% more likely to buy products and services when they know they are healthy or sustainable.

One company that is effectively tapping into this trend is Green Sheep Water, which puts itself out there as a bottled water with a green conscience.

*"We started Green Sheep as a way to give people access to something that is convenient and healthy to drink, but with a reduced impact [on the environment]"* than the current, exponential use of plastic bottles that more often than not are disposed of after a single use and are not recycled, Nicole Doucet, co-founder of Green Sheep Water, told FoodNavigator-USA at the inaugural Healthy & Natural Show in Chicago.

*"A lot of people don't know this, but there are 1,500 plastic bottles that get used every single second and only about 30% of those ever make it to a recycling bin. That means 7 out of 10 bottles end up in landfills and oceans,"* she said.

Doucet acknowledged the ideal way to tackle this problem and reduce waste related to bottled water is not to create it in the first place by drinking water from the tap in a reusable container. But, she added, that is not a realistic expectation given that the bottled water category in America is growing exponentially as more people look for healthy, convenient beverages to drink on the go.

As a middle-ground alternative, therefore, Doucet and Jess Page co-founded Green Sheep as a company that could help reduce the environmental impact of plastic bottled water by using aluminum bottles instead.

*"Aluminum gets recycled more efficiently and more often than plastic, glass and cartons – so it is the most sustainable option, at least in terms of packaging, right now,"* she said. Specifically, the company notes on its website that aluminum is recycled more than twice as often as plastic with a recycle rate of about 67% versus 31% for plastic bottles.

Another benefit of aluminum is it is lighter than glass, which allows the firm to ship more containers per truck and reduce its emissions from transportation, Doucet said.

Increasingly popular cartons also are lightweight and offer many of the same benefits as aluminum compared to plastic or glass, but they are difficult to recycle and only about half of American communities currently have the capability to recycle them, Doucet said.

### **Marketing benefits of aluminum**

An aluminum can also offers substantial marketing and branding benefits in that it helps Green Sheep Water stand out on store shelves, Doucet said.

*"We're the only ones doing this right now. If you walk into a supermarket or grocery store and you look at the bottled water shelf, you see a lot of plastic bottles, you'll see a couple of glass ones and you'll see maybe one or two cartons,"* Doucet said. But the aluminum bottle *"grabs people's attention very quickly and it looks like premium packaging because it's a lot sturdier than a plastic bottle – especially now that they've been decreasing the plastic that goes into the bottles."*

The downside for marketing water in an aluminum bottle, however, is that most people do not expect aluminum packaging to be filled with water. Plus, because it is opaque, consumers cannot see that it is filled with water, so they can be confused, Doucet said.

The company is addressing this problem, however, by updating the packaging so that the company's logo is smaller and the words bottled water are positioned front and center in a large font. The new packages should hit store shelves soon, according to the co-founders.

In addition to the new package, the company is negotiating nationwide distribution for this summer and is working on a line extension, about which it is very excited, Doucet said.

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