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Lufthansa Cargo is the world's first cargo airline to use more environmentally friendly plastic film for transportation

- Innovative and particularly thin plastic film with ten percent recycled material in use worldwide as of mid-September
- Freight airline relies on holistic strategy for handling plastic as a valuable material to reduce consumption

Each year, Lufthansa Cargo needs about 500 tons of plastic film worldwide to protect its freight during transport. As part of its sustainability strategy, the company has been working for many years to reduce the need for plastic and to establish the most environmentally friendly handling possible at its approximately 300 stations around the globe. Starting in mid-September,

Lufthansa Cargo will be the first cargo airline to use a new type of film that consists of ten percent recycled plastic and is also one micrometer (one μ) thinner than previous films. This means that about two kilograms less film is needed on each cargo flight.

"Plastic waste has become a major problem for the environment worldwide. We are therefore particularly concerned to reduce our need for plastic and to use it in a way that conserves resources. In our sustainability strategy, we follow the guiding principle 'Every Action Counts'. Every step we can take to make airfreight logistics more sustainable is important to us - in the air as well as on the ground," says Dorothea von Boxberg, Chief Executive Officer of Lufthansa Cargo AG, explaining her motive behind the intense focus on the topic of plastics. "We are particularly pleased to be the first cargo airline to be able to use a more environmentally friendly film in the transport of our freight after many tests at selected stations and good cooperation with our specialist departments, our waste disposal company and our film producer. This brings us a step closer to our goal of using our plastic film in a circular way."

The goal is a closed-loop use of the recyclable material plastic

Lufthansa Cargo is pursuing a comprehensively conceived plastics strategy based on the idea of using the recyclable material according to the closed-loop principle. For example, Lufthansa Cargo is working together with its local waste disposal company and film manufacturer Verpa Folie Weidhausen GmbH in Germany to collect the approximately 400 tons of used film per year in Frankfurt that is no longer needed after a transport, to have it processed into granulate, and to have it incorporated into new film as a recycling component. Numerous tests have taken place in the past, both in handling at Lufthansa Cargo and at the disposal company and film manufacturer, in order to come closer in small steps to the desired cycle, also called "closed loop" in sustainability management.

"The development of a sustainable plastic film is a long-term task on which we have worked intensively with Lufthansa Cargo. Together, we have developed requirements for the new film, tested it in operation and can now introduce it as a standard product worldwide at Lufthansa Cargo," explains Peter Griebel, Managing Director of Verpa Folie Weidhausen GmbH. "Now we have set ourselves the goal of successively increasing the recycled content of our plastic film to 30 percent by 2025."

Lufthansa Cargo has also established multiple use of plastic film as a standard handling process since March 2022. This step will also gradually contribute to reducing overall consumption. The airline is also focusing on the collection and disposal of end-of-life materials: Worldwide, a review of how plastic film is collected and disposed of has been carried out in recent months and - where necessary - agreements have been adapted with local disposal companies to ensure that as much of the recyclable plastic material as possible is collected and disposed of properly - and does not end up in the environment.

Further improvements in handling plastic film in progress

At the end of the year, further optimization of the films is on the agenda: In the future, Lufthansa Cargo wants to use films from the manufacturer Verpa that contain a recycled content on the one hand and are also biodegradable on the other. What is special about this is that, despite the recycled content, these films will also be recyclable together with other films without restriction. After all, the primary goal is and remains the material recycling of the films. However, if films do end up in a landfill, they will be completely degraded in a natural way within eight to ten years thanks to special enzymes that stimulate the decomposition activities of bacteria many times over - without creating micro plastics. In the long term, Lufthansa Cargo also wants to find local film manufacturers worldwide who can produce the plastic film according to its strict sustainability criteria and make it available locally - ideally in the future made from sustainable biogenic raw materials.

Lufthansa Cargo AG

With a turnover of 3.8 billion euros and a transport performance of 7.2 billion freight ton kilometers in 2021, Lufthansa Cargo is one of the world's leading companies in the transport of airfreight. The company currently employs around 4,200 people worldwide. Lufthansa Cargo's focus is on the airport-to-airport business. The route network covers around 300 destinations in more than 100 countries, using both freighter aircraft and cargo capacity from passenger aircraft operated by Lufthansa, Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines, Eurowings Discover and SunExpress, as well as trucks. The majority of the cargo business is handled via Frankfurt Airport. Lufthansa Cargo is pursuing the goal of becoming the world's most sustainable cargo airline. To achieve

this, the company relies on state-of-the-art technologies and continuous investments in the area of sustainability. In 2021, important milestones were reached, such as the fleet modernization to an all-B777F fleet and the introduction of completely CO2-neutral freight transport for all customers. In 2022, Lufthansa Cargo plans to successively equip its fleet with Sharkskin technology and expand its Sustainable Aviation Fuel program to further reduce CO2 emissions. Lufthansa Cargo is a wholly owned subsidiary of Deutsche Lufthansa AG and the specialist for the logistics business of the Lufthansa Group.

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