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Alternative Proteins: Packaging Becomes a Strategic Factor

Poly-clip System Sees Alternative Proteins as a Strategic Growth Area, with Increasing Demands for Efficiency, Product Safety and Sustainability

Hattersheim am Main, August 2026 – The market for alternative proteins continues to evolve, and with it the demands placed on production. What initially centred on product innovation is increasingly becoming a question of efficiency, scalability and economic viability. As a result, the entire value chain is coming more sharply into focus.

Poly-clip System is observing growing demand for solutions that can be flexibly adapted to different product concepts while keeping pace with increasing production volumes. "The next stage in the development of alternative proteins will not be determined by taste alone, but by industrial scalability, product safety and resource efficiency. This is precisely where packaging becomes a strategic factor," explains Dr Alexander Giehl, CEO of Poly-clip System.

From Product Idea to Industrial Production

While established food applications often focus on modernising existing production lines, the alternative protein sector is seeing the emergence of new product categories and additional production capacities. Particularly dynamic is the transition from pilot projects to industrial-scale operations. As the sector becomes increasingly professionalised, demands across the entire value chain are also increasing.

"Today, manufacturers need more than innovative product ideas. They need solutions that enable these products to be manufactured and packaged reliably, safely and economically at large volumes. The challenge lies in successfully translating a product idea into industrial production. That is why we do not see packaging as an individual component, but as part of an integrated industrial system," says Giehl.

Scalable Packaging Solutions for a Wide Range of Applications

Flexibility is particularly important for plant-based products, as recipes, textures and product formats are often still evolving. Poly-clip System's solutions can handle different product structures – from sliceable applications to paste-like protein products. The level of automation can be adapted to different production volumes and stages of product development.

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In addition to plant-based sliced products, clip technology can also be used to package products such as tofu, pastes and convenience applications. The portfolio ranges from manual machines for smaller batches to highly automated lines for industrial applications. This allows customers to start with solutions suited to their current production level and gradually increase the level of automation as production volumes grow.

Less Packaging as Part of an Integrated System

Guided by the principle “The packaging company with less packaging”, Poly-clip System takes a holistic approach. Independent studies by Circular Analytics in Vienna show that, depending on the application, clip-based packaging solutions can significantly reduce CO₂ emissions compared with conventional packaging. Comparisons from established food applications illustrate the potential: for sliced sausage, clip-pak® has a CO₂ footprint of 9.74 grams in the application scenario studied, compared with 17.42 grams for a comparable thermoformed tray with top film. For spread sausage, clip-pak® accounts for 13.01 grams, compared with 79.7 grams for a preformed tray with snap-on lid and film.

In addition to reducing material consumption, clip-based packaging systems can help lower transport weight and logistical requirements. Combined with suitable casing materials, optimised production parameters and appropriate equipment hygiene, clip technology can also support stable processes and a high level of product safety. “Our task is to design resource-efficient packaging solutions in such a way that they also operate efficiently and reliably on an industrial scale,” emphasises Giehl.

Such solutions are also becoming increasingly important in B2B markets. Alternative protein manufacturers are increasingly supplying foodservice operators, industrial processors and co-manufacturers. As a result, alongside production, greater focus is being placed on requirements such as flexible portioning, efficient handling and streamlined logistics.

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About Poly-clip System

Poly-clip System is the world's largest provider of sustainable clip closure solutions and is recognized as a global market leader and hidden champion in this segment of the food industry and packaging sector. The corporate group maintains 37 sales offices. Additionally, there are sales partners in nearly every country worldwide. Poly-clip System's clip closure solutions excel not only in the meat processing industry and butcher trade but also in numerous other sectors, such as the chemical industry. Current [news](#) about Poly-clip System can be found in the press section of the website.

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Poly-clip System's clip-pak® technology is suitable for plant-based alternatives, as well as vegetarian sausage and sliced meat alternatives



Dr Alexander Giehl, CEO Poly-clip System

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Poly-clip FCA 80 – automatic double



Poly-clip PDC-A 700 – double clipper



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