



The GPI has focused much of its attention on sustainability issues and how to encourage more recycling of glass products in the USA. The organisation cited 2017 recycling percentages from the U S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): 39.1% for beer and soft drink glass bottles, 39.1% for wine and liquor glass bottles, and 15.1% of food and other glass jars; overall 33.9% of all glass containers were recycled. The organisation also cited statistics from the Container Recycling Institute: States with container deposit legislation have an average glass container recycling rate of just over 63%, whilst non-deposit states only reach about 24%.

“GPI and our members are engaging in conversations to boost recycled content to meet brand customer sustainability goals and industry environmental objectives” stated Mr DeFife. “These conversations have become even more important as the pandemic persists and demand for safe and sustainable packaging rises. The GPI has made some direct grants to communities to bolster their glass recycling infrastructure, and with help from the Glass Recycling Coalition (GRC) whose mission is to educate and inform consumers about glass recycling and work together to help address problem areas. The GRC has made intervention grants to communities, and helped spin up the Glass Recycling Foundation (GRF), which is taking over that role within the coordinated glass industry stakeholders.”

Ardagh Group

Ardagh Group, headquartered in Ireland, is a global company with metal and glass production facilities in 12 countries, including 13 glass manufacturing facilities in North America. “Ardagh Group, Glass – North America is currently the largest domestic glass container supplier to the food, spirits and wine industries in the United States” said John Shaddox, Chief Commercial Officer of Ardagh Group’s Glass – North America. “For more than 125 years, Ardagh Group has been producing innovative glass bottles in the U S.”

Public reports issued by Ardagh Group indicated that the Glass – North America business unit had revenue of \$1.246 billion for the nine months ending September 30, 2020 versus \$1.287 billion during the same period in 2019.

Mr Shaddox noted the Covid-19 coronavirus has affected the glass packaging industry in the US: “The packaged food industry has experienced increased demand, due to an overall increase in at-home consumption. Other segments, primarily those within the alcoholic beverage market, have seen disrupted sales, due to restrictions that have impacted on-premise consumption opportunities.”

“The Covid-19 pandemic continues to evolve, and the assessment of the potential impact is still ongoing for many businesses” said Mr Shaddox. “Ardagh continues to prepare



A depalletiser for glass bottles is seen here at Hamburg Brewing Company, Hamburg, New York. (Photo provided courtesy of Ska Fabricating).

to react quickly to adjustments in demand from our customers. Whilst the demand for packaged food could normalize in 2021, the consumption of alcoholic beverages could experience an upward trend through increased opportunities for on-premise consumption.”

Opportunity for growth in 2021 and beyond

“According to Euromonitor, US consumption of food and beverage products packaged in glass are expected to increase overall in 2021 as compared to 2020” detailed Mr Shaddox. “Euromonitor is also projecting increases in overall US consumption of products in glass for 2022, 2023 and 2024, when compared to the prior year, as well as for each of the respective markets – beer, non-alcoholic beverages, food, spirits, and wine.”

The ability to utilise cullet – recycled glass – to produce new glass products has been critical to the operations of the company. “Ardagh is a leader in the use of recycled glass content in Europe and aims to grow its use of cullet in North America,” explained Mr Shaddox. He noted that the company “is an active member of the Glass Packaging Institute (GPI) and the Glass Recycling Coalition...Glass – North America promotes sound energy, environmental and recycling policies.”

Arglass Yamamura

Arglass Yamamura also sees growth opportunities in the USA. As covered in the ‘On the Spot’ interview in this issue, production began at new manufacturing facility in Valdosta, Georgia in December of 2020. “We

are certain our products, our flexibility and service will be appreciated and welcomed by our customers” stated Luis Gonzalez, Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Arglass Yamamura.

Mr Gonzalez indicated that among the products the firm will be producing at this facility are “glass containers for the spirits, wine, beverage, and food industries.” He explained that glass products will be “mostly in flint colour with the possibility of producing a wide array of colours as well.”

Sales will focus initially on the USA, but Arglass Yamamura is also “eager for business in the Caribbean countries and others that may need our high quality bottles,” according to Mr Gonzalez.

Much as with Ardagh Group and others in the glass industry, Arglass Yamamura sees sustainability as a key element of the glass industry. “We hope to play a very important role in recycling of glass by trying to simplify the process and hopeful to be able to capture as much glass from Georgia and neighbouring states for our facility” said Mr Gonzalez. “Sustainability is a core value at Arglass Yamamura, and we will do as much as we can to improve and increase the recyclability of glass bottles in our immediate area of influence.”

Ska Fabricating

One indication that growth may be possible within the glass container industry comes from Ska Fabricating. This business produces bottle and can depalletisers as well as pre- and post-fill equipment that allows customers to get their product packaged and distributed. Ska Fabricating is based in Durango, Colorado.

“We build machines that are ▶



Three of the varieties of products sold by Sherpa Chai. (Photo provided courtesy of Sherpa Chai).