

packaging concepts

Natural skin balm uses 3D printing to make biodegradable jar



Here's a new twist to the trend of using bio-based materials for natural products.

While sales were soaring for Anita's Balm all-natural eczema and skin care moisturizer, founder Anita Redd faced a packaging dilemma: Bottles were being discontinued. So she embarked down the do-it-yourself road and opted for an alternative manufacturing method to solve her problem—3D printing.

"We were excited about the possibilities available to us with 3D printing, in terms of the different plastics we could use and the different shapes we can create," Redd says. "We chose polylactic acid filament because it is biodegradable and we created a unique five-piece jar. 3D printing enables us to change our designs relatively quickly and inexpensively and we can adapt to different needs our company has."

One of the other unique features of this new jar is its functionality. It works like a push-up deodorant stick, twisting at the bottom, which is unusual for a container that looks like a jar. The 1-oz container sold out in weeks upon its launch into the marketplace and Redd says they continue to sell every jar they print.

The company uses 3D printers from **MakerGear** (www.makergear.com) to make the container pieces, which are then assembled and filled. "We were pleasantly surprised with how well the jar turned out and with how we can keep our Maker Gear running around the clock with few problems," Redd says.

When asked if there was a volume threshold where she would have to consider finding a container supplier, Redd says she does not have a number in mind. In recent weeks, "we have investigated and abandoned injection molding for our jars and have embraced 3D printing even more fully," Redd says. As sales grow, they plan to invest in more 3D printers and will continue to make their own jars. Approximately 1,300 stores nationwide carry Anita's Balm, including Smith Drug, Fleet Feet Sports and numerous specialty stores. Products are also sold online.

"Typically cosmetic jars are decorative but use ABS plastic, which takes 500 to 1,000 years to break down in landfills and oceans," Redd says. "Jars like ours prove containers can be functional and decorative and not harm the environment."

There is a patent pending on the design. "It's the only one like it on the planet," Redd says. "The ability to compost and biodegrade is really going to impact the cosmetics industry in unimaginable ways."

Dog food gets personal with custom packaging

For the first time in the U.S., a major pet food manufacturer is producing personalized dog food for your pooch—Just Right by Purina. The idea behind the concept blends together a dog owner's first-hand awareness of his/her pet's needs with Purina's established nutritional expertise to develop a personalized feeding experience for individual dogs. Dog owners will have the option of personalizing the packaging by including a photo of their dog and adding his or her name on the package. Also, the

that 70% of pet owners want more input in and control of their pet's food. While we use existing industry packaging for our dry food bags, we are the first major pet food manufacturer to apply personalization techniques to the packing labels, including dog photo, blend name, personalized feeding instructions and product features/claims."

Lester adds, "Just Right represents an opportunity to invite highly involved pet owners to

