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Make No Compromise in the Choice of Barrel

Reusable or disposable? Stainless steel or plastic? In the brewing industry, the recent past is defined by intensive discussions on which barrel is best suited for the transport of beer to the market. Environmental considerations, weight, food safety or operational safety – these are just a few aspects that need consideration. Often, however, the only question to be asked is “are they cheaper or not”? A precise answer can usually only be given with specific individual analyses and a general right or wrong answer cannot be defined easily. The topic “safe usage and product safety”, in particular, are not just a pure question of faith!

According to the saying, “all roads lead to Rome” – but the question is; which path leads to the quickest destination and without a detour or disruption to service? In this context, many breweries ask the question: “How can I deliver my beer in the safest and most cost effective way and ensure that it arrives in the very best condition?”

The stainless steel kegs have set the standard for several decades – a standard which no other barrel can surpass in terms of safety, hygiene, cost effectiveness and environmental friendliness.
In addition to the relatively low weight and long life in excess of 30 years, the stainless steel keg offers decisive advantages:

- high safety reserves (25 times the operating pressure)
- closed system processing providing a sterile container
- easy handling with automated cleaning and filling through the valve in a closed system
- used on average of 210 times in 30 years (@7 turns per year)
- **fits existing logistic systems** – safe and inexpensive handling
- low investment cost per glass of draft beer (330ml) of 0.03 €

**Environment in Focus:**

In the era of sustainability, waste reduction and recycling are key issues. The responsibility for the future of our planet applies particularly to beverages such as beer. In this context, the following areas need to be highlighted:

- waste Reduction
- energy consumption in the production of barrels

This container – the stainless steel keg – has, with regular maintenance, a life expectancy of 30+ years. The material, stainless steel, with its long life and ability to be reused makes an outstanding environmentally friendly contribution to waste reduction. Alternatively, the barrel offers a life extension through volume reduction providing a new life cycle as a more compact light weight barrel. At the end of its service life, the circle closes, with the 100% transfer of the stainless steel keg into the recycling process. The stainless steel that is extracted in this process is reused in steel production and reduces the primary energy demand and, as a result, CO₂ emissions, as shown in the following graph.

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1 Total volume 6000 litres, price 80 € new – Remaining value (Scrap metal) 20 € = 60 € Acquisition cost
Although the demand for steel in the last 20 years has increased by 57%, energy consumption has decreased by 60% and CO₂ emissions by 50%. This is due to changes in production methods, investment in technology and industry awareness. The increased use of scrap metal is also effecting the footprint of Stainless Steel. In conclusion, the following can be put on record in terms of ecological value – stainless steel kegs are environmentally friendly due to their:

- long life
- reusability
- use of stainless steel
- 100% recyclability

**Product Safety in Focus:**

Breweries invest millions in high quality brewing techniques and stainless steel tanks because it is proven to be the best material. To deliver the carefully brewed beverage to consumers in the best possible quality, the use of stainless steel is responsible, logical and ecologically consistent. This is because once the barrel has been filled with beer and is on its way to the consumer, the brewer has barely any, or even, no opportunities to exert influence with respect to:

- the stability of the taste
- the physical stability of the barrel
- safety in use

To ensure the consumer that their beer meets the highest standards in quality and taste, breweries invest heavily in marketing. This standard is reflected by the claim made on countless labels – "premium beer"! A promise that must be kept at all stages of production, packaging and dispense that guarantees the taste experience for the consumer every time. Therefore, it is necessary to protect the beer from external
environmental influences and to comply with hygienic standards against impurities and unwanted taste profiles. The stainless steel keg has the following characteristics:

- 100% food safety, absolute taste neutrality
- 100% UV protection and impervious to gas, for long life in distribution
- 100% Closed loop processing and filling in a sterile environment

**Safe Use in Focus:**

Stainless steel kegs fulfil the highest safety standards. This is particularly the case in the following areas:

- inflated preload pressure / inflated saturation pressure
- temperature related increase in internal pressure
- pressure build up due to faulty treatment (e.g. resulting from an accident)
- incorrect supply of CO₂

Modern stainless steel kegs are well equipped for any contingency. According to DIN 6647-1, containers of up to 50 litres are required to be stable under pressure of 60 bar – without bursting! However, it is even safer to equip the kegs from the outset with a safety bursting disc that opens at a maximum of 45 bar and allows the excess pressure to escape safely. Kegs from Franke Beverage System, for example, are able to be equipped with a burst disc as a standard safety feature.

**Barrels with Future Potential**
The stainless steel keg has now been a faithful and trusted companion of breweries for over 50 years. With its long history, high safety performance and continuous development, the stainless steel keg is the measuring stick that will make it very difficult for alternative material developments (e.g. in synthetic materials) in some markets, plastic “kegs” (specially made disposable kegs) are appearing as an economic alternative due to long distances or poor infrastructure. But brewers have to ask themselves the critical question – why are customers drinking their beer in far away destinations? The answer can only be that a particular pleasure is involved – a pleasure that can, however, only be guaranteed with optimal packaging. Indeed, if the concern is for product safety and safe use, combined with concerned ecological considerations for the future of our planet, there is no alternative – nor will there be in the future – to the stainless steel keg. Neither your customers nor, of course, your brewery can do without the highest safety standards and the best product safety!

About Franke Beverage Systems

Franke Beverage Systems is the world’s leading provider of stainless steel containers for the beverage industry and is part of the internationally active Franke group (Aarburg, Switzerland). The company’s headquarters are located in Kreuztal (Germany), while it also has service companies located in the U.S. Over 140 staff are employed worldwide. Franke Beverage Systems provides innovative, efficient and environmentally friendly products and services that offer their partners added value – value which is sustainable. The main products include stainless steel kegs, rubber/steel/rubber kegs and Finn kegs. The latest production techniques and quality standards guarantee long-lasting products and offer numerous national and international clients a safe investment.

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