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Life Cycle Analysis for Packaging Products

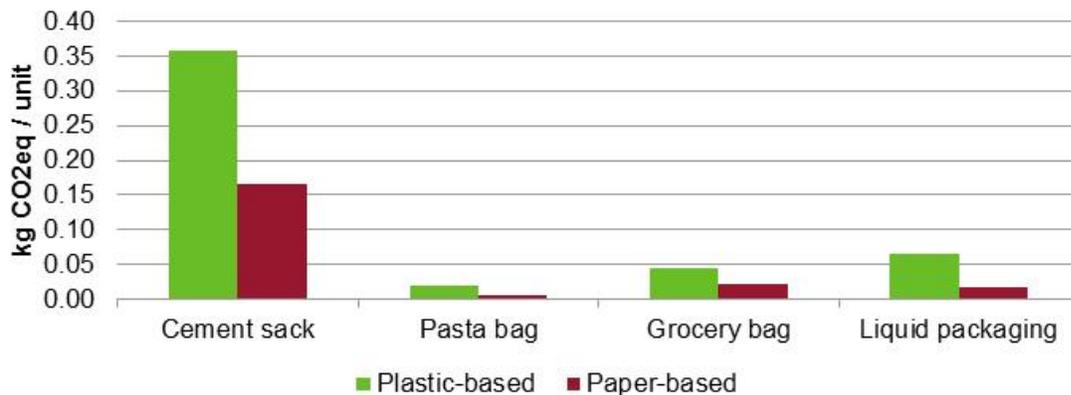
Life cycle analyses are increasingly used to compare the environmental impact of various products such as printing paper, packaging products, etc. However, caution should be exercised when analyzing results because the underlying assumptions may have a significant impact.

A study performed in 2015 for BillerudKorsnäs in Sweden compares the life cycle of various plastic packaging products to paper packaging products. This study highlights that the resource extraction and the production steps have the greatest environmental impact. The study also concludes that the BillerudKorsnäs products have a lower impact on global warming than plastic products manufactured elsewhere in the world (Germany and Indonesia). This difference is explained by the fact that the energy used by BillerudKorsnäs for production comes from renewable and nuclear sources, whereas the energy used in the manufacture of plastic products comes mainly from fossil sources (61% for Germany and 89% for Indonesia).

Another study conducted in 2011 by the *Environment Agency* in the UK on various types of carrier bags concluded that polyethylene bags had less impact on the environment than paper bags, unless the latter were reused at least three times. However, this study used a data set from 2003, when the use of fossil fuels for electricity and paper production in Europe was considerable.

These contradictory findings show the importance of a single regional variable, such as renewable electricity production, on the results of a life cycle analysis.

Global Warming Impact of BillerudKorsnäs Products vs Competition



Source: IVL, KSH Consulting

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