

For immediate release

## **“Koehler NexPlus® Advanced” Flexible Packaging Paper Recognized with Baden-Württemberg Environmental Technology Prize 2023**

- **Koehler showcases the many benefits of developing innovative paper-based packaging solutions**
- **Innovative new solution makes it quick and easy to switch from plastic to paper packaging**
- **Flexible packaging paper is recyclable and can help significantly reduce a company’s carbon footprint**

**Oberkirch, 10/25/2023** - Koehler Paper (part of the Koehler Group) is celebrating winning third prize in the “Material efficiency” category of the Baden-Württemberg Environmental Technology Prize 2023 for its “Koehler NexPlus® Advanced” flexible packaging paper. Offering barrier protection against acids, fats, and mineral oils, the “Koehler NexPlus® Advanced” paper is suitable for packaging products such as chocolate and snacks. It is also fully recyclable and – with a score of 19 out of a possible 20 points – has been certified in line with the “Made for Recycling” standard from environmental service provider Interseroh. In comparison with standard plastic packaging, flexible paper packaging such as this has the potential to significantly reduce a company’s carbon footprint.

The award ceremony took place on October 24, 2023 at the Schwabenlandhalle conference center in Fellbach near Stuttgart, Germany, and was presided over by Dr. Andre Baumann, the German State Secretary for the Environment, who praised the prize winners and nominees, saying: “The caliber of this year’s prize winners and long list of nominees is proof of the innovation shown by Baden-Württemberg’s industrial sector in finding new, more sustainable ways to manufacture their products and preserve our precious resources. The Baden-Württemberg Environmental Technology Prize exists precisely to showcase these ideas.” Frank Lendowski, Finance and Administration Director for the Koehler Group, and Dr. Markus Wildberger, Corporate Director for Technology at Koehler Innovation & Technology, accepted the prize at the award ceremony in Fellbach. “Sustainability is a basic guiding principle for the way the Koehler Group does business, a cornerstone of our company’s strategy, and therefore an integral part of our organization. It is an honor to be awarded this Environmental Technology Prize for our flexible packaging paper, but it is also our motivation to go further and develop even more innovative paper solutions for the future,” explained Frank Lendowski the meaning of the award for the company.

### **Innovative “Koehler NexPlus® Advanced” packaging paper simplifies the switch to paper packaging**

The “Koehler NexPlus® Advanced” packaging paper was created by a team of experts from both Koehler Innovation & Technology and Koehler Paper. The product expands the range of barrier papers available to businesses looking for suitable opportunities to replace plastic packaging with paper. “The base paper—

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which we developed in-house—has been designed to be as compatible as possible with existing packaging plants, in order to reduce the investment costs involved in switching to paper-based packaging. The functional coating provides barrier protection against acids, fats, and mineral oils, and is also sealable, using either a cold seal adhesive or a hot sealing system directly on the packaging machinery,” explained Dr. Markus Wildberger, Corporate Director for Technology at Koehler Innovation & Technology. Other advantages of this packaging paper include its excellent printing properties—vital for communicating product information to end consumers—its suitability for hot sealing, and its outstanding crease resistance. Moreover, the paper’s barrier properties remain intact even at the end of intensive packaging processes.

When it began using “Koehler NexPlus® Advanced” to package its “nucao fruits” and “nucao nuts” products at the end of 2022, chocolate start-up nucao became the first chocolate manufacturer on the market to use a primary packaging material made from 100% paper. Making this switch has enabled nucao to meet a key consumer demand for greater sustainability and to lead the way in the chocolate market with how it chooses to package its products. The primary packaging for most chocolate products currently on the market is made from aluminum foil laminated materials, the majority of which cannot be recycled. Studies clearly show that consumers perceive these laminated packaging materials to be bad for the environment and prefer the natural appearance and recyclability of paper packaging.

### **Sustainable packaging: Innovative paper solutions with ‘NexFlex®’ from Koehler Paper**

The research and development team from Koehler Innovation & Technology worked with the experts from Koehler Paper to develop the NexFlex® product range, a unique and 100% recyclable generation of flexible packaging papers. The aim here is to replace plastic in packaging by using so-called barrier paper wherever possible. The range covers a broad spectrum: It includes standard coated and uncoated papers used in laminates for pouches, sachets, and other applications, making them suitable for a wide range of packaging for food and non-food products. The next generation of papers for flexible packaging are sustainable barrier papers with functional surfaces for product-specific protection (Koehler NexPlus®). The NexFlex® product family also includes papers coated on one side with good dimensional stability and high smoothness (Koehler NexCoat®), as well as uncoated paper with a natural appearance (Koehler NexPure®).



*Figure: Frank Lendowski, Bettina Bastien (Brand Owner Manager Flexible Packaging Paper) and Dr. Markus Wildberger accept the Baden-Württemberg Environmental Technology Prize 2023 for the “Koehler NexPlus® Advanced” flexible packaging paper at the award ceremony in Fellbach. Source: Environmental Technology Prize*

### **About the Baden-Württemberg Environmental Technology Prize 2023**

First established in 2009, the Baden-Württemberg Environmental Technology Prize is awarded every two years by the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of the Environment, Climate Protection, and the Energy Sector to local businesses whose innovative products, technologies, and processes are making a significant contribution towards protecting the environment or preserving the planet’s natural resources. The EUR 100,000 prize money is distributed between the winners across four categories as well as a special jury prize. Prizes are awarded in each of the four categories—“Energy efficiency,” “Material efficiency,” “Technologies for reducing, processing and separating emissions,” and “Measurement and control technology for Industry 4.0”—to products or processes with real potential to help protect the environment and promote the efficient use of resources. To be eligible to enter, companies must have their headquarters or a

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subsidiary based in Baden-Württemberg and their innovative solution must be on the verge of market launch or have been on the market for no more than two years.

## About the Koehler Group

The Koehler Group was founded in 1807 and has been family-run from that moment to the present day. The group's core business activity lies in the development and production of high-quality specialty paper. This includes—among others—thermal paper, playing card board, drinks coasters, fine paper, carbonless paper, recycled paper, decor paper, wood pulp board, sublimation papers, and also innovative specialty papers for the packaging industry since 2019. In Germany, the Koehler Group employs around 2,500 people across five production sites, with three additional sites in the USA. The group operates internationally, with an export share of around 75% in 2022, and brings in an annual turnover of around 1.3 billion euros.

As an energy-intensive company, Koehler invests in renewable energy projects such as wind energy, hydropower, photovoltaics, and biomass with its Koehler Renewable Energy business unit. The Koehler Group has set a goal of producing more energy from renewable sources by 2030 than is required for its paper production operations.

With its Koehler Innovative Solutions division, Koehler is collaborating with start-ups to promote innovations in the core business segments “paper” and “renewable energy”.

Find more information at: <https://www.koehler.com>

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