

Blue bags for greener skies

BY KAREN OCANA

Recycling is a team effort, whether you are at home, at the office, or anywhere in between. If somewhere in between happens to be on board an Air Canada plane, you may have noticed that blue recycling bags have made an appearance. We have two managers from In-Flight Service to thank for coordinating the recycling efforts of cabin crew. They are **Andrianna Pischos**, Manager, IFS Equipment Planning and Supply Chain, and **Patrick Botter**, Manager, IFS Development & Design – North America. They happily gave us the lowdown on the **Onboard Recycling Program (ORP)**.

Unofficially, Air Canada has been recycling onboard products as far back as the late 1990's. Officially, the ORP and its blue bags came into effect on December 1, 2006 within North America. The program is still being implemented, according to Andrianna, but the current mandate is for crew to collect aluminum cans in one blue bag, newspapers in a second, and to leave both in the galley of the aircraft for CARA to hand off for recycling. In Patrick's estimation, recycling goes as planned on the vast majority of flights. He is especially proud of the enthusiasm with which cabin crew have embraced this initiative. The objective in launching the ORP in a limited format was to get significant and relatively easy results fast. The ORP is the result of teamwork between Environmental Affairs, which sets the regulatory guidelines, IFS which delivers the program, and Cara Airline Solutions, with which Air Canada has a service contract that includes recycling. According to Frank Cress,



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Left to right: Patrick Botter, Manager, IFS Development & Design – North America; Sheela Lee, Flight Attendant and Laura Mazurier, Flight Service Director.

VP Operations – Excellence, at Cara, "Cara works hand-in-hand with Air Canada to achieve the objective of actively reducing recyclable waste going into landfills."

People may ask why Air Canada's onboard recycling program is limited to newspapers and tin cans. Why not compost the food coming off the airplane? It should be so simple to recycle everything! **Teresa Ehman**, Manager, Environmental Affairs, is used to setting the record straight. Environmental Affairs is responsible for applying the regulatory guidelines laid out by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (C.F.I.A.). This is the same body that screens the food imported from all over the world into Canadian society and the Canadian food chain. In Teresa's words, "The CFIA is responsible for keeping any organic or waste vector out of Canada." Think Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), last reported in Canada in 1952, but present in many countries. Air Canada cannot compost its organic waste nor recycle any of the paper or plastic products used for the onboard meal service to prevent cross-contamination of potential disease-carrying agents from one country to another. Under present circumstances, airline food

waste must either be incinerated or go to a strictly regulated landfill site.

On the upside, Environmental Affairs, with Strategic Purchasing, ensures that all of the onboard paper products on Air Canada's flights are supplied by Kruger Products (formally Scott Paper), an ISO 9001 certified company that also meets the ISO 14 001 Canadian Standard* and is at the forefront of both reforestation and using high yield and recycled fibre. Kruger paper products meet and exceed all provincial and federal government regulations regarding pollution and the control of environmental impact.

Teresa, Patrick and Andrianna agree that more can and will be done. Cara's co-operation is integral to getting the metrics in place so that program managers can keep track of how much waste is being recycled and how much progress is being made. Much dedicated work is going into ensuring that the initial success of the ORP will be matched by an equally successful system for measuring the results of the recycling initiative.

* This is a forest-specific environmental management standard with an established framework for tracking, evaluating and communicating environmental performance.