

PLA Renewable Resource - Excerpted from Grocery Headquarters Magazine June 2005

Friday, June 10, 2005

Excerpts from Grocery Headquarters Magazine, June 2005

GROWTH IN RECYCLABLES

Retailers are also expressing interest in natural and recyclable packaging, which is available from companies such as NatureWorks PLA. The company's packaging is 100% corn-based and offers all the qualities of traditional packaging while helping reduce environmental impact. NatureWorks, based in Minnetonka, Minn., uses field corn, an annually renewable resource, to replace finite raw materials like petroleum in packaging for food and consumer goods. This year, NatureWorks has hit retailers' shelves with many new packaging applications.

With Clear Lam Thermoforming, based in Elk Grove Village, Ill., NatureWorks introduced a series of round and square containers for fresh-cut fruits and vegetables for Del Monte; grab-and-go salad bowls with spoons in the lids; and rigid tops for leafy green salads for Newman's Own Organics, says Lisa Owen, NatureWorks' promotional director for rigid packaging. Del Monte is using the nature-based packaging across its fresh-cut line that includes Del Monte Gold extra-sweet pineapple, melons, fruit and vegetable medleys.

'A NATURAL FIT'

"We continue to expand our packaging with our manufacturer customers," says Owen. "Produce is a natural fit, and our customers are coming out with many new products, such as RPCs and single-serve dip trays for convenience foods."

Owen notes that key retailers and processors are requesting packaging from NatureWorks as another way to reinforce quality and product safety. In addition, she says that retailers are using natural packaging as a way to attract consumers.

NatureWorks is also working on biodegradable foam packaging, which Owen says has great potential for fruits and vegetables, as polystyrene foam comes under pressure from environmental groups.

Owen says NatureWorks is able to keep its prices stable while other packaging companies suffer from high oil and natural gas prices, which are up 20% to 40%. Because its products are made from field corn, NatureWorks' production cost is not tied to the petroleum market, which provides ingredients for most packaging. "Our prices are constant for a year, so we've been very well-received by customers," she says.

For more information on Grocery Headquarters and this entire article, visit their website at www.groceryheadquarters.com.