



By Liam O'Callaghan

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A sustainable sticking point

New Zealand grower-packer-exporter, Bostock New Zealand commits to using compostable stickers on its organic apples



Heidi Stiefel and Tom Bostock with the stickers

Bostock New Zealand has improved the sustainability of its products by announcing it will use compostable 'price-look-up' (PLU) stickers on its organic apples.

The company said it is the first Southern Hemisphere exporter to use the environmentally friendly alternatives in a successful trial this year.

The PLU stickers are necessary for the fruit to be easily identified by checkout staff, but they add a lot of plastic waste, with about 1bn PLU stickers being used on New Zealand apples each year.

Heidi Stiefel, organic supply manager of Bostock New Zealand, said the company will look forward to rolling out more compostable stickers next season.

"We are using the compostable stickers for a European customer and on the large Braeburn apples targeted for the US and the local New Zealand market. The sticker laminate is 100 per cent industrial compostable and so is the backing the stickers come on. There are thousands of

metres of backing, so it is good that it is now compostable material instead of being plastic," Stiefel said.

"The sticker trial has been very successful, and we have had no technical issues. We will definitely work with the supplier to roll out more compostable stickers across our apples in 2020."

Stiefel said it would be the company's preference to not use PLU stickers, but many customers and retailers require the stickers for identification, especially US, Asian and New Zealand customers.

"Without PLU stickers, consumers would not be able to easily identify organic apples from conventional apples, so they are necessary."

The compostable sticker meets FDA and EU regulations for direct food contact and breaks down when put in an industrial compost.

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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