



By Carl Collen

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Berry growers in packaging commitment



Fresh berry producers jointly announcing a new packaging goal for all berry clamshells throughout North America

In a big step to help reduce the fresh produce industry's environmental impact, major North American fresh berry producers have announced their commitment to use 100 per cent recycle-ready packaging by 2025.

The California Strawberry Commission, the North American Blueberry Council (NABC), Asociacion nacional de Exportadores de Berries (Aneberries, Mexico), members of the National Berry Crops Initiative, and South American exporters are joining to maintain industry leadership in sustainable packaging.

The cornerstone of this collaboration is the commitment to new label standards, which will optimise the recycle readiness of all berry clamshells throughout North America.

The groups said that they are further unified in their commitments to encouraging consumer recycling of clamshells and establishing new purchase specifications for packaging manufacturers.

By working together as competitive collaborators, these actions will create economies of scale to reduce costs, and stimulate a closed-loop circular economy that recycles berry clamshells back into new berry clamshells.

This commitment to 100 per cent recycle-ready clamshells complements existing actions that use recycled content to make berry clamshells.

For over a decade, berry clamshells have been among the food packages that use the most California post-consumer recycled content in the US. For example, it is common for California berry clamshells to contain more than 50 per cent recycled content.

"Berry farming has a long history of innovation and leadership that once again came together to make this ambitious pledge," said Rick Tomlinson, president of the California Strawberry Commission. "Achieving 100 per cent recycle-ready packaging represents the type of continuous improvement that is common among farmers as they strive

for ever improving efficiency."

"The North American Blueberry Council (NABC) is pleased to join this coalition of berry industry leadership to help achieve this important and ambitious initiative," said Kasey Cronquist, president of NABC. "This commitment to 100 per cent recycle-ready packaging reflects a team effort and our continued focus on helping our growers, shippers and industry partners attain a goal that no one organisation could accomplish alone."

"Mexico plays an important role in creating value in the world supply of fresh berries, including the US market," stated Mares Benavides, president of Aneberries. "Our members are committed to forward-thinking sustainable practices and we are aligned in the collaboration efforts to collectively make a difference with more sustainable packaging. This reflects our mission as an organisation where profitability can't be separated from the responsibility of sustainability."

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

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“Clamshell packaging revolutionised the ability of berry growers to transport their fruit to consumers nationwide,” said Henry Bierlink, president of the National Berry Crops Initiative (NCBI). “Now, the industry is working together on the next phase of that revolution, one that preserves the ability to safely transport fresh berries to market while minimising product damage, reducing food waste, and demonstrating ongoing environmental stewardship. NBCI is a

committed partner in this berry clamshell sustainability initiative.”

Individual berry companies are making commitments to explore more sustainable and scalable solutions that include encouraging material recycling handlers and consumers to recycle more clamshells, including post-consumer recycled content in clamshell packaging, and supporting innovation of new materials that are readily recyclable and/or compostable.

Additional South American partners have also pledged their commitment to 100 per cent recycle-ready packaging by 2025, including Argentinean Blueberry Committee, Chilean Blueberry Committee, and ProArandanos (Peru).