

IS IT POSSIBLE TO MAKE A POTATO BOX STRONGER, BUT NOT MORE EXPENSIVE?

As potato packers in Washington state faced more and more pressure to contain costs over the last 10 years, they simply started switching to cheaper and cheaper boxes -- which may have saved money, but it also drew lots of complaints from large retailers and created a blight on the brand they had all worked so hard to develop.

When Weyerhaeuser suggested they switch to ClimaGuard™, many of these packers were skeptical. Would it really be possible to use this new technology and still pay about the same money for the boxes?



CLIMAGUARD™ CONTAINERBOARD

A RECYCLABLE CONTAINERBOARD SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO DECREASE WICKING AND PROVIDE IMPROVED WET-AND-DRY STRENGTH.

WE KNOW IT IS:

Potato packers in Washington state are fierce competitors and not normally willing to share resources. However, when Weyerhaeuser showed five of the state's largest packers how they might be able to combine forces to overcome their container issues, they agreed to work together towards a unified solution.

Basin Gold, Baker Produce, Tri-Cities Produce, Blue Ribbon Produce and Desert Ridge Produce are all large fresh potato packers (and Weyerhaeuser customers) that ship to high-profile clients all over the country -- as well as Korea, Russia, Canada, Mexico and Taiwan. And all face the same constraints: an evaporating work force, rapidly rising labor costs, stagnant retail pricing and a drop in demand due to recent fad diets.

To address these business challenges, the packers first switched to cheaper (and weaker) boxes, then began investing in automated packaging equipment. However, the cheaper boxes not only didn't run well in the automated equipment, they also failed to protect the potatoes. When retailers and workers on the packaging line both began complaining about too many box failures, the companies knew they had a real problem.

Weyerhaeuser suggested a solution: Switch to ClimaGuard™ containerboard to overcome the failure issue; and agree to use the same box design in order to get a better price. The proposal made sense, and all five packers soon agreed to participate in the innovative effort.

CONTINUED ON BACK SIDE

CONTINUED FROM FRONT SIDE

By agreeing to use the same container design and materials, Weyerhaeuser was able to quote all five of these packers a high-volume price. That means each company got a far better box than they had been using – with hardly any increase in cost.

Some of the key design benefits of the new box include:

- UNIQUE VENTILATION PATTERN ADDED TO HSC FLAPS (TOP AND BOTTOM) ALLOWS AIR CIRCULATION WHATEVER THE STACKING PATTERN.
- INNOVATIVE CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES MAKE THE NEW CONTAINER MUCH STRONGER BUT NOT ANY HEAVIER.
- TWO PACKERS COMBINED THE NEW BOX WITH CHROMAPAK™ TECHNOLOGY GRAPHICS TO IMPROVE BRANDING EVEN MORE.

Key benefits of the ClimaGuard™ containerboard include:

- BOXES OF POTATOES CAN BE PLACED IN COLD STORAGE FOR LONG PERIODS WITHOUT ANY WORRY OF FAILURE.
- NONE OF THE COMPANIES HAD TO MAKE ANY CHANGES TO THEIR PACKAGING LINES TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEW BOX.
- SWITCHING FROM WAX-IMPREGNATED MEDIUM CARTONS TO THE CLIMAGUARD™ BOX RESULTED IN A SIGNIFICANT COST SAVINGS THROUGHOUT THE SUPPLY CHAIN.
- THE NEW CONTAINERS ARE RECYCLABLE, WHICH IS A BIG PLUS FOR THE LARGE RETAILERS THESE PACKERS SUPPLY.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Since switching to ClimaGuard™, none of the companies has had a box failure, and all report very positive feedback from packaging line workers, as well as retailers.



CAN CLIMAGUARD™ GIVE BERRY GROWERS A COMPETITIVE EDGE?

Sunnyridge Farm ships thousands of trays of blueberries every season – most of them all the way up the Eastern seaboard to Wal Mart distribution centers in the Northeast. So it's imperative that the trays stack well and are able to protect the delicate fruit throughout the entire storage, transport and merchandising process.

When Sunnyridge began experiencing more box failures than it thought appropriate, it turned to Weyerhaeuser for a solution. Would Weyerhaeuser's ClimaGuard™ be able to deliver?



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WE KNOW IT CAN:

Berries make life tough for their containers. They're heavy. They're juicy. And when they have to be kept cold until they reach the retailer, the moisture and humidity can lead to a total box breakdown. Because of this, many berry growers think box failures are just a part of business, and often turn to un-recyclable wax-impregnated medium to help. But Sunnyridge Farm isn't just any berry grower. This Florida-based farm is one of Wal Mart's most valued suppliers. So when Sunnyridge began to experience too many tray failures, it turned to Weyerhaeuser for solutions. Weyerhaeuser's designers recommended the following:

- Use ClimaGuard™ – a recyclable containerboard specifically designed to decrease wicking and provide improved wet-and-dry strength.
- Redesign the end tabs and minor flaps to help with stacking, and re-configure the placement of the container's vents to improve cooling.
- Try ChromaPak™, a proprietary printing technology developed to reproduce high-impact photographic images.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Sunnyridge Farm accepted the ideas and adopted the new container. Now, the company couldn't be happier. The new trays are stronger and easier to stack. The berries cool faster, thanks to the new venting design. The high-impact graphics are attention-grabbing (and print more consistently). And the farm's customers are thrilled to finally be receiving a container they can recycle.