

SVENSKA RETURSYSTEM AND FULL BELLY FARM WIN 3RD ANNUAL RPA EXCELLENCE IN REUSABLE PACKAGING AWARD



Arlington, VA, July 15, 2014 – Two companies that achieved measurable and significant cost and environmental savings earned the 3rd annual Reusable Packaging Association *Excellence in Reusable Packaging Award*.

“We received strong submissions this year that documented the multiple and far-reaching benefits of reusables on small and large scales. The award program is another example of RPA’s leadership in promoting the value and expansion of reusables,” said Robert Engle, RPA Chairman and President and CEO of International Contract Molding, LLC, (ICM) an Otto Company. ICM sponsors the award program.

Svenska Retursystem establishes common pooling system in Sweden

Svenska Retursystem earned the award for companies with revenues over \$25 million. The company led a program to establish a common pooling system for more than 200 food producers in Sweden and food manufacturers throughout

Europe that export their goods to the Swedish trade. Every product for every grocery chain is delivered in the same standardized size and type of returnable crate and pallet. Since the program’s inception in 2001, nearly 1 billion crates have been delivered, replacing the same number of single use packaging. By offering the whole industry the same terms and cost of packaging, the program has neutralized packaging as a competitive factor and freed up the food producers to focus more on their core business.



Measurable savings, documented through interviews with customers, users, and surveys, include:

- Store staff save 45 minutes a day in labor, a savings of 725,000 hours and \$22 million dollars annually.
- The cost savings for using reusables versus expendable packaging for one year is \$18.7 million.
- Food waste is reduced thanks to the better protection provided by the packaging. One example: an egg supplier reports a 75 percent reduction in broken eggs.
- A life cycle assessment conducted by an independent firm found the returnable crate gave rise to 44% less CO2e emissions than corresponding disposable packaging. Since the program’s inception, this corresponds to a reduction in emissions of over 115 million kg of CO2e.

“Winning this award is a great honor, and it is added confirmation of the value of the program,” said Conny Swahn, Sales and Marketing Manager at Svenska Retursystem. “Together with our customers, we are delivering important benefits for the entire grocery business. The reusable transport items are easy to use, save time and cost in handling the goods, reduce food waste, and they reduce the environmental impact!”



Full Belly Farm saves costs and labor with reusable tote

Full Belly Farm, a certified organic farm in California, won the RPA award for businesses with revenues less than \$25 million. The grower replaced 8,330 waxed cardboard boxes with 2,000 reusable plastic totes with attached lids in July 2013. The plastic totes are filled with produce for weekly deliveries to families and then picked up and returned to the farm for reuse the following week. The delivery sites include Full Belly Farm’s 44 residential produce

pick-up sites and three farmers’ markets. The delivery containers withstand temperatures between 40 and 120 degrees Fahrenheit, handle exposure to summer sun and winter rain, and protect produce during shipping distances up to 150 miles. The program was funded with a \$15,000 grant from [StopWaste.Org](#).

Measurable improvements include:

- Cost savings of \$14,161 per year in avoided waxed cardboard box purchases; a savings of 8% of total box costs. The savings will continue every year as long as the boxes last.
- Reduced labor to set up and stack cardboard boxes and line them with paper linings each day. Adding the paper lining required an additional person on the box filling line – a considerable cost for a small company.
- Avoided 6.54 tons of cardboard waste per year, resulting in an annual reduction of 34.1 tons of greenhouse gas emission.

“All of us at Full Belly Farm strongly believe that it is important to reduce unnecessary packaging,” said Judith Redmond, co-owner. “We are proud to win this award, and it makes us realize that reducing packaging is more likely when the whole community and groups like [StopWaste.org](#) and the RPA are involved.”

The RPA Excellence in Reusable Packaging Award recognizes companies that have developed, supported, or implemented measurable and innovative reusable solutions in a business-to-business supply chain. The judges are Sara Willis Hartwell, Senior Policy Advisor, US EPA, Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery; Ben Miyares, President, Packaging Management Institute; Justin Lehrer, Program Manager, StopWaste.Org; and Rick LeBlanc, editor of Packaging Revolution. The call for nominations for the 2015 award will be posted on the RPA website in the spring of 2015.

Learn more at PACK EXPO 2014

The companies will provide details of their award-winning implementations at the RPA’s Reusables Learning Center at PACK EXPO in Chicago. The center is part of RPA’s Reusable Packaging Pavilion, a popular one-stop resource for companies interested in implementing reusables into their supply chain, or strengthening the return on their existing reusable assets. The Pavilion brings together 36 exhibitors and a series of informative sessions about reusables. <http://reusables.org/pack-expo>

About Svenska Retursystem

Svenska Retursystem simplifies, streamlines and environmentally adapts flows of goods for the Swedish grocery business by operating and developing packaging systems based on reuse instead of single use. Consumer products are delivered in returnable transport items (RTIs) that are reused within a system, thus benefiting the environment. The system is growing rapidly, and Svenska Retursystem has replaced over one billion RTIs since the beginning. <http://www.retursystem.se/>

About Full Belly Farm

Full Belly Farm, located in northern California, has been using organic practices since 1985. With the help of a dedicated, year-round, hard-working crew, the farm grows vegetables, fruits, nuts, flowers, and eggs. Three families own the farm and work there full time. The farm maintains habitat areas for beneficial insects, pollinators, and wildlife, and integrates crop production with long-term environmental stewardship. <http://fullbellyfarm.com/>

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