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NewStar now offering spinach packed in eco-friendly bags

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NewStar Fresh Foods, a Salinas, CA-based grower, shipper and processor of fresh produce, announced the launch of a fresh spinach packaged in new eco-friendly, socially responsible EarthFirst PLA packaging film. Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer, began selling 10-ounce bags of NewStar's spinach packaged in PLA film in September.

EarthFirst PLA film is manufactured by Plastic Suppliers in Columbus, OH, utilizing NatureWorks PLA resin from NatureWorks LLC. Made from midwestern corn, EarthFirst polylactic acid packaging film is a bio-based plastic alternative to many petrochemical-based films that can be used in a wide range of packaging applications. The material provides the convenience, look, feel and performance of petroleum-based plastic packaging while being made from a 100 percent annually renewable natural resource.

The launch of NewStar sustainable packaging is a culmination of months of research and application, fueled by the desire of company executives to curb dependence on finite environmental resources.

"We felt a larger commitment was needed as a company ... to move toward sustainability in agricultural practices, and using EarthFirst PLA packaging film is another step toward becoming greater stewards of the environment," John Killeen, NewStar's vice president of sales and marketing, said in a press release.

The company's efforts toward sustainability began in May with a dual launch of a new certified organic line of products, and the introduction of PLA packaging with NewStar one-pound organic baby spinach packaged in a NatureWorks PLA clamshell.

"In an era of resource depletion, NewStar is making concerted efforts in corporate responsibility to shift conventional business practices toward renewable resources, and although it's not the easy

thing to do, it's the right thing to do," Mr. Killeen added. "Working with Wal-Mart to launch our PLA packaging was a natural fit with their efforts to promote sustainability initiatives."

The technology to produce EarthFirst PLA film allows abundant, annually renewable resources like ordinary field corn to replace finite ones, like petroleum, in everyday products, such as food packaging. Essentially, PLA resin technology converts the starch stored in corn into natural plant sugars. The sugar is then fermented into lactic acid, which is used to create clear resin pellets called polylactic acid, or PLA, that can be shaped into a variety of bottles, containers, trays, film and other packaging.

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