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New York produce companies an integral part of Kurt Zuhlke & Associates

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Kurt Zuhlke & Associates Inc. in Bangor, PA, is a leading packaging manufacturer and an advocate of environmentally sustainable practices. Kurt Zuhlke Jr., company president, has personally designed and developed some of the most widely accepted packaging products in the produce industry today.

He told *The Produce News* that retailers, wholesalers, growers and distributors in New York state are an integral part of the company's business, and company's in the Empire State are as concerned about the environment as they are in other regions of North America.

The company uses PETE, an abbreviation for Polyethylene Terephthalate, in the majority of its packaging items.

"PETE is commonly recycled from soft drink bottles and injection molded consumer product containers," said Zuhlke.

"When recycled, it is used in many applications besides packaging, such as in carpeting, clothing, automobile parts and even to manufacture trash and recycling containers," he continued. "It's important to maintain the circle of recycling in an effort to keep these materials out of landfills as much as possible."

Zuhlke attends many trade shows and other produce events in North America throughout the year. He said that it is common for retailers to visit his booth or be introduced to him and learn about his

specialized packaging.

“These retail representatives then go back to their suppliers or packaging divisions requesting that they use our packaging,” Zuhlke explained. “There is a very high demand today for packaging for soft fruits and vegetables that need to arrive in produce departments in good shape, and so need to be in containers that prevent damage.”

Although retailers and consumers want high-quality products that are free from damage, they are also totally tuned into the environment. Even internal sustainability initiatives run deep at Kurt Zuhlke & Associates’ facility and operation.

“But customers also want good service,” Zuhlke pointed out. “These elements are the top priorities for us. Our goal has always been to service our customers and to ship on time.”

Kurt Zuhlke & Associates began over 55 years ago by Kurt Zuhlke Sr. Through his hard work and dedication, he made Kurt Zuhlke & Associates Inc. a leader in the produce packaging industry. Along with the help and support of Kurt Sr.’s wife, Frieda, Kurt Zuhlke & Associates Inc. continued to grow and meet the needs of the ever-changing produce industry.

As the business grew, Kurt Zuhlke Jr. joined the company. In the following years, Kurt Jr.’s wife, Cindy, came on board, as well as many dedicated employees.

Kurt Jr. added Earth-friendly ideas, new designs and a renewed dedication to the industry. As the produce industry began to change with the times, Kurt Zuhlke & Associates did too. ProducePackaging.com was developed, and changes were being made to meet the needs of the consumer, retailer, repacker and supplier.

“Our customers are across the produce board,” explained Zuhlke. “Many growers and suppliers use them to pack according to their customers’ specifications, but many retailers today repack at the store level in order to customize their offerings. This means that all levels of the industry are important to us.”

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