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Owyhee rolls out first hemp-based compostable onion bags

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Owyhee Produce in Nyssa, OR, announced Oct. 9 a plan to create regenerative produce bags by converting hemp fibers sourced from the operation's own crops. These compostable bags are set to be an available packing option, releasing spring 2020.



The company will be growing 500 acres of industrial hemp on its Oregon farm land this year. The industrial hemp will be used to create CBD oil, with the leftover fibers used to create compostable bags and other industrial materials. Excited to finally come full circle in the company's mindful efforts to develop plans in reducing carbon emissions, pollution and waste, company members have a renewed drive to make it happen.

"We know not everyone can commit to these types of standards today," said Owyhee Produce

General Manager Shay Myers. “However, for the most demanding companies out there, those companies who have made the massive commitment to reduce carbon emissions, pollution, and waste, we are here. We are among the most climate-conscious and progressive farmers in the country, and we want to partner with the best companies to make a difference.”

In addition to producing compostable onion bags, Owyhee Produce has plans to strengthen the foundation of its motto, “There’s a difference!” by being responsible farmers for the future. The company plans for a cleaner greener future by 2022 with 100 percent compostable, biodegradable or recyclable packaging. The company also aims to be 100 percent regenerative, 100 percent carbon neutral and see a 25 percent water usage reduction per acre as well as a 25 percent fuel use reduction per acre with 0 percent monoculture or growing of a single crop in a given area.

Owyhee Produce said, “The regenerative idea just gained traction in recent years, due to the political climate of ‘going green,’ but it has always been a part of the company’s best practices. While onions may be its most demanding crop, Owyhee Produce only grow onions in each field once every five to six years. This rotation of crops restores the soil’s health naturally, reducing the need for synthetic fertilizer or fumigants, which lessens their impact on the environment and maintains their commitment to yield high-quality produce. This is why a compostable bag made more sense to Owyhee Produce — it breaks down faster and improves the soil’s health.”

“It is our duty to ensure that tomorrow’s farmers are able to efficiently farm from our sustainable farming practices of today,” Myers said.

Every crop serves a purpose. As a part of its rotating crops, Owyhee Produce plants beans and peas to fix nitrogen levels in the soil; beets, alfalfa, and corn for weed control; corn, wheat, and hemp to increase organic matter and soil health. Mustard and mint are used as natural biofumigants to prevent pest infestations other soil borne diseases.

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