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Agros partners with IFCO for ideal tomato packaging solution

Agros Produce LLC, a pioneer in the production of tomatoes grown in high-tech greenhouses in Mexico, has partnered with IFCO Systems, one of the world's leading providers of Reusable Plastic Containers for fresh food packaging, establishing a strategic partnership for the use of IFCO RPCs to pack and transport Agros' tomatoes to retail grocery customers in the United States and Canada.

"IFCO RPCs are OMRI Listed and an ideal packaging solution for our tomatoes," said Montserrat Duarte, CEO of Agros Produce LLC. "They provide a sustainable solution along with a food safety guarantee through their cleaning and sanitization process. It is an efficient way to reduce labor costs. With IFCO we have reduced product damage and increased the freshness of our tomatoes. On the sustainability front, we have been able to reduce our environmental footprint as well as those of our customers. This partnership is a win-win for all of us."

Agros Produce uses more than 400,000 IFCO RPCs annually to pack and ship a variety of its greenhouse tomatoes to grocery retailers throughout the U.S. and Canada, including Beefstake tomatoes, tomatoes-on-the-vine, Roma tomatoes and grape tomatoes. Agros Produce ships conventional and USDA-certified organic tomato products to its North American customers directly and through distribution warehouses in Arizona and Texas.

"We are proud to partner with Agros Produce to ensure its nutritious, fresh and delicious tomatoes successfully reach its retail grocery customers and ultimately the kitchens and tables of consumers across North America in the most safe and sustainable way," said Dan Martin, president of IFCO North America. "Our companies share the goal of a sustainable fresh food supply chain that nourishes and sustains millions of consumers around the globe."

"IFCO RPCs have helped us in different ways, reducing labor costs, increasing efficiency, providing better protection for the fruit, and reducing claims from shifted and/or collapsed cases when compared to the use of cardboard boxes. Logistically, RPCs have helped us optimize the capacity of our shipments, reducing freight costs. In addition, the diversity of IFCO RPC sizes provides us with the versatility we need for packing our wide variety of tomato products, as well as develop new products for our customers. And when we use RPCs, we are able to meet and contribute to our sustainability goals," said Mrs. Duarte.

IFCO said its RPCs use less energy and water and produce less CO2 and solid waste than single-use packaging. The company said they also keep produce fresh longer, are easier to handle and protect produce better than one-way packaging. Each RPC is cleaned, washed, sanitized and wrapped after each use, and is used up to 100 times before being recycled.