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## Inline Plastics – First USA Manufacturer to Infuse All Products With Post Consumer Content Derived from Chemical Recycling

Shoppers increasingly want to buy their fresh fruits and vegetables in some type of packaging. In fact, the U.S. demand for produce packaging is projected to increase 4% percent annually, according to the May 2018-released report, *Produce Packaging Market in the U.S.*, by the Cleveland, OH-headquartered The Freedonia Group. Yet, at the same time, another survey showed over half (55 percent) of all consumers at least occasionally made food and beverage selections “with sustainability in mind.” This insight is based on a report titled, *Sustainability 2019: Beyond Business as Usual*, which was published by the Bellevue, WA-based The Hartman Group.

Now, Inline Plastics offers a best-of-both-world’s solution. That is... high-performing packaging that protects and presents fresh produce at its best while offering the lowest carbon footprint on the market.

### A Commitment to Sustainability and Product Innovation

In March 2020, Inline Plastics announced its revolutionary integration of something called rDPET™ across its full product lines, namely its Safe-T-Fresh® and Essentials brands. This makes Inline Plastics the first food packaging manufacturer in the United States to develop high performing food-grade packaging material infused with post-consumer content, born from recycling at the molecular level, known as chemical recycling.

This milestone achievement was bringing this new technology and proprietary process to market. The crux of what differentiates ‘reborn’ or rDPET™ from traditional PET plastic is that the process takes recycled PET and breaks it down into its original building blocks or polymers. Then, these are combined with fresh or virgin ones.

Since everything happens at the molecular level, the end-product rDPET packaging retains all the strength and clarity of clean new plastic. What’s more, Inline Plastics further reduced negative environmental impacts by powering its thermoforming production in-part by using solar panels.

By using rDPET™, coupled with an energy efficient proprietary manufacturing ‘direct to sheet’ process, Inline Plastics realizes the following environmental benefits in comparison to traditional PET:

- Diverts nearly 1 billion water bottles from the world’s oceans and landfills annually
- Uses over 50% less energy during material production
- Reduces the carbon footprint by 112,000 acres of forest or emissions equal to 233 million miles driven per year

Benefits to Inline Plastic’s customers – growers, food processors and retailers and their customers — is similarly strategic. Specifically, more companies are building their portfolio with 5- to 10-year sustainability goals in mind. By applying 10% post-consumer content to all Inline Plastics products, customers can take advantage of the

recycled content for their sustainability efforts without being restricted to a specific product line. The company can supply customers annual Environmental Contribution Certificates showing CO<sub>2</sub> savings that resulted from purchasing Inline products made from the low carbon footprint rDPET™, which can then be shared with their consumers.

The integration of rDPET™ across all Inline Plastics product lines was no small task. However, the company knew the importance of

this solution to its customers. Plus, the old ways just weren’t the best anymore. Case in point is that traditional mechanical recycling reduces material performance, impacts visual clarity, and impacts the merchandising of the product. Leveraging chemical recycling technology required a couple of years of fine tuning before the Inline was satisfied in bringing this process and its products to the market.

The work isn’t done yet. One of the big challenges is that there is a high demand and limited supply of post-consumer content. Globally, recycling rates today are around 9%. This year, the company is

ramping up to 10% post-consumer content, with the goal of increasing this percent as supply becomes more available. To this end, Inline Plastics is working with sustainability organizations to improve recycling rates in the U.S. This forward-thinking work, plus the use of chemical recycling, enables plastic to be reused and avoid landfills or even worse, make its way into the world’s oceans.

### Something for Virtually Every Fresh Fruit & Vegetable

Inline Plastics is no stranger to innovation. In 2006, the company created the first tamper-evident and tamper-resistant technology in the market with its Safe-T-Fresh®. Starting in 2008, Inline transitioned from OPS to an energy efficient, environmentally friendly PET called DPET. Compared to OPS, the environmental impact of DPET is more favorable and sustainable, in comparison, and it is 100% curbside recyclable.

Today, the company offers over 300 products in seven product families over the two brands, Safe-T-Fresh® and Essentials. Given the unparalleled leak resistance, all 7 Safe-T-Fresh® families are a great choice for fruits and vegetables. Available Safe-T-Fresh® products range from 2- to 128-ounces, with many different options for the most popular sizes: 8-, 12-, 16-, 20-, 24- and 32-ounce.

Over the past 3 years, Inline Plastics has launched 5 major new product families. SquareWare, RoundWare, SnackWare, PagodaWare and Snackers all very applicable for fruit and vegetable packaging.

