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Pacific Natural Foods Extols Benefits of Aseptic Cartons at NACUFS

Natural and organic foods in aseptic packaging meet the diverse expectations of Gen-Y customers, who demand everything from flavor and variety to ecological sustainability

Washington, D.C. – As part of its ongoing commitment to educating customers on the importance of creating a more ecologically sound environment while meeting the breadth of consumer demands, Portland, Ore.-based Pacific Natural Foods, the industry leader in sustainably packaged foods, presented on natural and organic sustainable business practices to attendees of the 2008 conference of the National Association of College & University Food Services (NACUFS) here on July 12.

Pacific Natural Foods co-presented with Tetra Pak, one of the world's leading suppliers of food processing and packaging systems, to deliver results of independent research of food-purchasing habits of Gen-Y customers. Noting that college and university foodservice is evolving to meet the emerging demands of this demographic, the two companies drew on their respective expertise to explain why sustainability is achieved through natural and organic foods packaged in aseptic cartons made of renewable materials.

The key message that college and university foodservice managers embraced was the fact that aseptic packaging bears a carbon footprint that is considerably less than that of traditional packaging. For example, because aseptically packaged foods are shelf-stable without refrigeration, trucks save energy by not chilling en route. Plus, due to their efficiency of shape and the materials of which they're made, aseptic containers consume less space and contribute less weight than metal cans and glass and plastic jars, and thus encourage greater fuel economy during transportation.

"We chose to use aseptic packaging because of its ability to keep even the most perishable products fresh, tasty and nutritious for months, in a convenient format for consumers, without preservatives or refrigeration," said Patrick Gabrish, Director of Foodservice. Pacific Natural Foods was a pioneer in the use of aseptic packaging when the company was founded 20 years ago, when environmental responsibility was not the issue that it is today. Nevertheless, "We realized then that the earth's resources are finite, and we wanted to lead by setting an example for others to follow," Gabrish said.

While no package today is fully sustainable, over the last two decades, aseptic packaging has become increasingly recyclable. (Fifty-six million residents have access to carton recycling, which has grown 50% since 2003.) Pacific Natural Foods utilizes Tetra Pak packaging because it is made primarily from renewable sources.

Today's college and university students want their foods to represent the best of all possible worlds: health coupled with taste, convenient but sourced locally, quality and affordability, and variety with familiarity. Aseptically packaged natural and organic foods

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can meet those diverse demands while offering inventory, safety and cost solutions to operators, Gabrish said—all while creating minimal impact on the environment.

About Pacific Natural Foods

Founded in 1987, Pacific Natural Foods is a recognized leader in natural foods. Our mission is to be the most respected brand in natural and organic products. From our president's office to the factory floor, from our organic farms to restaurateurs' menus, we are committed to building a business we can be proud of. Through our commitment to The Delicious Taste of Nature™, we are dedicated to helping families and individuals live healthier, more vital and rewarding lives by developing foods that are delicious and good for you, as well as good for the community, farmers and producers, and for the planet we all share. Visit www.pacificfoods.com/foodservice for more information.

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