



Certified-sustainable fruit packer earns 'superior' food safety rating

Food Alliance-certified Pride Packing Co. gets 95% grade from PrimusLabs

by *Sustainable Food News*

June 3, 2010

Food Alliance-certified producer and handler Pride Packing Co. recently received a 95 percent grade in the highly respected PrimusLabs Audit, placing the company in the program's top scoring bracket.

Pride Packing is located on 3,000 acres near Wapato, Wash., and grows apples, pears, cherries under the Mary's Pride brand, as well as Food Alliance-certified peaches, nectarines and apricots.

Its 60,000-square-foot fruit packing facility is also Food Alliance-certified. It grows and packs more than 2.5 million cases of fruit annually.

Pride Packing is a subsidiary of United Salad, based in Portland, Ore.

PrimusLabs audits evaluate good manufacturing, food safety, and food security practices that are not currently addressed through Food Alliance certification for social and environmental responsibility.

Food Alliance certifies farms, ranches and food processors for sustainable agricultural and production practices such as safe and fair working conditions, reduction of pesticide use and toxicity, healthy and humane care for livestock, no genetically modified crops or livestock and no hormones or non-therapeutic antibiotics.

Businesses that meet Food Alliance's standards, as determined by a third-party site inspection, are allowed to use the non-profit's green eco-label to claim social and environmental responsibility, which differentiates products and can strength brands.

"On an ongoing basis, we commit substantial resources to insure that our growing and packing operations exceed important industry standards," said Ernie Spada, owner of Pride Packing. "As a family owned company with over 40 years of history, we take pride in knowing we are responsible growers, packers and stewards of our environment."