

# New Appalachian Greenhouse Grower Packages Green

*Glenmary Farms in the Appalachian area of Virginia packs their greenhouse-grown strawberries in recyclable boxes created by a female farmer in Kentucky.*

BRISTOL, VA, USA, April 24, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Appalachian area of western Virginia is not typically where you'd expect to find a 2.5 acre high-tech greenhouse commercially growing strawberries. Even more surprising is that this farmer on the edge of flyover country refused to package his berries in traditional plastic "clamshells". Instead, he's using a new biodegradable and [easily recycled paperboard container](#) created by a female farmer in neighboring Kentucky.

Michael Richard, owner of Glenmary Farms, has been farming for several years. But in 2019 he set out to grow the best tasting [strawberry](#) that could be available year-round. Despite the many challenges of a startup business, he was committed from the beginning to growing and packaging his produce sustainably. Because most recycling centers won't take clamshell and billions end up in landfills annually, that meant no plastic. In the fall of 2020, through a google search, he found the Sustainable Produce Container, also created in 2019, by cherry tomato farmer Linda Fritz of Sun Sugar Farms in Verona, KY.

"At this point we hadn't even broken ground for the greenhouse," says Richard. "But we've always centered our business around leaving a positive environmental impact. When I started talking with Linda about her containers and the service she could provide, it was the type of package and partnership we were looking for. Linda's company designed the graphics on the box to help



Sun Sugar Farms created a new 1.5 Pint size since Glenmary Farms' strawberries outgrew the original pint size Sustainable Produce Container.

us share that message with our customers. She also created a new 1.5 Pint size for us to accommodate how big some of our berries ended up growing.”

Richard’s efforts are paying off and his berries are now available in area stores. One of the first major retailers to carry his strawberries is Food City. Food City is a privately held company with more than 75 retail food outlets in southeastern Kentucky, southwestern Virginia and northeastern Tennessee.

“One of the buyers of the Food City stores happened to stop at our produce stand where we sell direct to consumers,” Richard explains. “He was blown away by how much better our strawberries looked than what was coming out of California and that he’d never tasted as good of a berry. And, while we were talking, a woman came up and said she really loved that there was no plastic in the boxes.”

“

It’s not been easy and it’s not been cheap, but we’re excited to partner with retailers committed to quality produce and who also want to leave a positive impact on the earth.”

*Michael Richard*

So far Richard has purchased over 450,000 Sustainable Produce Containers out of the millions Fritz has sold since 2019. That’s 450,000 plastic clamshells other berry growers would have used that won’t be heading to a landfill. And even though Fritz’s solution is [less expensive than other plastic alternatives](#) in use by some largescale growers, the cardboard containers still cost more than plastic. “It’s not been easy and it’s not been cheap,” Richard comments. “But we’re excited to partner with retailers committed to

quality produce and who also want to leave a positive impact on the earth.”

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The Glenmary Farms' boxes can be reversed to having the natural Kraft brown version out to market to organic consumers

LinkedIn  
Instagram  
YouTube  
TikTok  
Other



Michael Richard of Glenmary Farms and Linda Fritz of Sun Sugar Farms' Sustainable Produce Containers finally met each other in person this past November.

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