

Press Releases

Corrugated Standard Produce Containers Share Compatible Footprint In The United States And Europe

The Fibre Box Association (FBA) and the European Federation of Corrugated Board Manufacturers (FEFCO) announce compatibility between their respective corrugated produce container standards.

Bruce Benson, president of FBA, said, "Compatibility between the two organizations' standards is important for retailers who are sourcing fresh produce internationally--the containers must work together to realize the cost benefits of modularity in this environment. It solidifies corrugated's advantage as the most cost-effective container choice for shipping produce between countries and continents."

Jean-Pierre Lardillon, secretary general of FEFCO, added, "We are very pleased that we could harmonize the two new standards so quickly. Member companies of FBA and FEFCO have worked hard to design standard containers that will work well in either market. Box manufacturers know they must provide trays that perform well throughout the supply chain. Handling full and mixed load pallets becomes much more efficient with harmonization of tray sizes and interstacking systems. We are confident that both growers/shippers and retailers will appreciate this innovation."

The FBA standard (formerly called the "Corrugated Produce Container Modularity Standard") and the FEFCO standard both establish recommended uniform footprint dimensions and interstacking container features for corrugated containers. They facilitate efficient loading, handling, storage and shipment of fresh fruits and vegetables on industry-standardized pallets in the United States and Europe.

Containers meeting the FBA and FEFCO common footprint standards will embrace the following:

- The containers may be stacked in full-size (597 mm x 398 mm) or half-size (398 mm x 298 mm) footprint configurations without overhanging any industry-standard pallet (1200 mm x 1000 mm [metric] or 40 in. x 48 in. [Grocery Manufacturers of America, or GMA]) in the United States and Europe.
- The FBA standard provides for both display and non-display containers. The FEFCO standard specifies open-top trays only.
- The containers can be stacked in stable mixed loads with other shippers' FBA or FEFCO standard produce containers, regardless of the produce origin or container manufacturer.
- The containers have been designed to prevent nesting, even when stacked in mixed loads.
- The containers can be shipped anywhere in the United States or Europe without compromising industry standards. As a result, growers/shippers need to inventory fewer boxes for goods to be shipped to the vast majority of markets throughout the world.
- The corrugated manufacturer is responsible for adhering to good container design and manufacturing practices which ensure that the container will provide optimal container strength and product protection for its intended purpose and particular commodity.

Specifics covering compression/stacking or burst performance are to be determined by the container manufacturer and the customer--they are not outlined in the standard. In addition, the standard allows for vast design flexibility, meaning that containers may vary significantly in terms of styles, container depths, cooling/venting features, graphics, full pallet displayability, interior colors, as well as self-locking and/or machine set-ups.

"FBA is supporting the Corrugated Common Footprint Standard with an educational program - targeting growers/shippers and retailers--to encourage its use," Benson said. He stated FBA is also prepared to take substantial measures to ensure that corrugated manufacturers who display the Corrugated Common Footprint specification marking on their containers are in compliance with the standard.

FEFCO members are in the process of promoting their common footprint standard within their respective organizations to stimulate usage in Europe as well.

FBA's member companies produce 90 percent of the corrugated packaging manufactured in the United States. FEFCO represents 22 national associations, as well as individual companies, in the European corrugated industry.

For more information, please contact Jim Nolan, vice president of the FBA, at **847-364-9600** or Jean-Pierre Lardillon, secretary general of FEFCO, at **011 33 1 53 20 66 80** .