



Command Packaging Opens Recycling Plant in California

Command Packaging, a manufacturer of reusable shopping and restaurant bags, has broken ground on a 130,000-square-foot agricultural plastic recycling facility in Salinas, Calif. The facility, being called Encore Recycling, is scheduled to start operations in October 2013.

According to Command, when fully operational Encore Recycling will have the ability to recycle more than 100 million pounds of plastics per year. Initially, Encore will target plastic scrap generated from the agricultural sector.

The company expects to add 40 jobs in October. Going further, the company expects to have more than 100 employees in 2014 and hopes to grow the staff to 500 people.

"Encore Recycling is leading the way to help California create the standard for a sustainable and closed-loop recycling system throughout the United States," says Pete Grande, CEO of Command Packaging and Encore Recycling. "Implementing a sustainable recycling model that works for the consumer, the grocery store and the environment, is a win-win for all. People love plastic. It's part of our everyday lives. Instead of trying to eliminate it, we need to create a "smarter" plastic and Encore is doing that."

In a release, Command Packaging says that its Encore Recycling business will partner with growers to collect, wash, and recycle the agricultural plastics that are currently being disposed. The facility will recycle the plastic into reusable bags called smarter bags, which will be used by grocers in the state.

"We have established a hub system where growers can drop their plastic off at one of our conveniently located drop-off sites where we will bale it and send it to our processing facility in Salinas," Grande says.

Grande adds that the types of agricultural plastics to be recycled include fumigation film, mulch film, drip tubing, hoop housing and processor film.

The company's new facility will provide complete recycling services, including sorting, shredding, washing and pelletizing of the material.

As for quality issues that have plagued the plastics recycling industry, Grande says that quality problems should not be an issue. "We will only accept specific types of plastic from a selected list of growers. The list of growers and, eventually, the types of plastics we will accept will grow in 2014.

"We have to maintain tight controls on the source of plastic we receive to comply with our stringent chain of custody protocol. This is necessary to ensure that the recycled materials sent downstream for processing are of the highest quality and consistent."

While a significant amount of the plastic pellets produced will be used by Command Packaging, the company also will sell pellets to selected manufacturers as well, Grande notes.