

BurrellesLuce Express

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HEADLINE: Companies pump out produce packaging

Source Website

By Susie Cable

(July 5) With consumers demanding more ready-to-eat products, convenience packaging is becoming increasingly important in the produce sector.

As part of the trend of packaging more fresh-cut and ready-to-eat items, several companies this year launched microwaveable packages of fresh-cut produce. The ***Sholl Group II***, Eden Prairie, Minn., introduced Green Giant-brand ***Freshtables SteamPerfect*** Pouches in May. The line consists of nine varieties of packaged fresh-cut fruits and vegetables with sauces, including apples and raisins with cinnamon sauce, broccoli and carrots with cheese sauce, and green beans with garlic butter.

Consumers microwave the pouches for about two minutes to steam the produce. In addition to being a quick and convenient method of cooking, steaming helps retain the produce's nutrients, Darci Eckermann, the ***Sholl Group***'s vice president of marketing and business development, said in a news release. The pouches weigh 12 ounces, and the suggested retail price is \$3.99.

Southern Specialties Inc., Pompano Beach, Fla., is shipping new 8-ounce microwaveable bags and overwrapped trays of Southern Selects-brand snow peas, sugar snap peas and french beans, said Charlie Eagle, vice president of business development. The suggested retail price is about \$2.99.

The company was preparing on July 3 to ship its new 12-ounce microwaveable bags of asparagus, Eagle said. It also offers a 2-pound microwaveable bag of asparagus for foodservice and club store customers. French beans also are available in 1- and 2-pound microwaveable bags, Eagle said.

Another line of microwaveable fresh-cut vegetables is Aunt Mid's Simple Starts, from Aunt Mid's Produce Co., Detroit. The 12 new packs include asparagus spears, baby french beans and a fajita vegetable mix. The packs weigh 8-16 ounces, depending on the variety of vegetable.

Rob Haley, Eastern region sales manager for Mann Packing Co. Inc., Salinas, Calif., said the company plans to introduce its Ready, Set, Steam line of microwaveable vegetables with sauce this summer or fall. The vegetables will be packaged in recyclable microwaveable trays with film lids that require no venting, he said.

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Highlights: Sholl Group II, Freshtables SteamPerfect, Sholl Group