



SUSTAINABILITY AT RIVERIDGE



Riveridge is a full service apple grower, packer and exporter representing multi-generational grower families throughout North America. The heart of Riveridge's business is in what the earth produces, so operating in a sustainable way that lessens impact on the environmental is not only a core belief, it's good for business.

That is why Riveridge and its partner farms are working to reduce the environmental footprint of their operations. They constantly look to improve current practices and make strides toward implementing more sustainable technologies and methods.

Riveridge and its partner farms are reducing environmental footprint by focusing on:

- Energy and fuel efficiency
- Natural pest control
- Waste reduction and recycling efforts

MAEAP VERIFIED

Riveridge is verified by the Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) through the Michigan Department of Agriculture. Receiving MAEAP verification required Riveridge to pass a three-phase program beginning with an educational session, an on-farm risk assessment was administered and a third-party verification guarantees the farm has instituted environmentally sound practices.

It signifies the company's commitment to environmental stewardship. Riveridge is an advocate of the MAEAP program and is strongly encouraging its many partner farms to follow its lead.

ENERGY AND FUEL EFFICIENCY

Riveridge looks for any way, large or small, to reduce the energy consumption in its facilities and operations.

Riveridge's packing facility was renovated in 2010 with industry-best, leading-edge equipment. Energy efficient improvements include:

- Refrigeration control system decreases the energy required for refrigeration by over 30%, saving over 400,000 kilowatts of per year
- T8 electronic and LED lighting results in approximately 20% and 80% energy savings, respectively
- Heat expended from the compressor is captured and reused to heat the facility

- Variable Frequency Drives on the apple grading system allows the volume to match the demand

In Riveridge's orchards, frost is controlled principally by wind machines. Traditional methods of frost control like orchard heaters and burning of straw bales has a more significant impact on the environment. Using wind machines helps ensure a more consistent crop and slashes energy use.

All of these efforts reduce Riveridge's reliance on energy and ensure the produce is cared for and processed with minimal impact on the environment.



NATURAL GROWTH & PEST CONTROL TECHNIQUES

To optimize produce growth and control pests, Riveridge utilizes natural methods to ensure each variety of fruit grows to its fullest potential with the least amount of environmental impact possible.

Riveridge works alongside universities to research and test the use of pheromones in pest control. Pheromones are naturally produced chemicals that confuse harmful insects, disrupt their mating and ultimately decrease population. It is a targeted, pest-specific approach that does not impact the beneficial insects and minimizes the need for other less eco-friendly pest control methods.

Additionally, Riveridge's veteran scouts to check for outbreaks of insects and take action only when necessary to minimize chemical use.

Technology is also helping reduce chemical usage. Gone are the days of air-blast sprayers indiscriminately coating the entire tree whether it needs it or not. Computer controlled smart sprayers determine areas that need treatment. Using these sprayers, Riveridge reduced its annual chemical usage by an average of 25% over the past five years.

Riveridge uses other natural methods to reduce insects:

- Flower beds in orchards encourage pest predators like wasps and attract beneficial insects like bees and butterflies
- Bat and bird houses are used to attract the natural predators of insects that can cause harm to the orchard
- Use of light reflective material and soap bars to detract unwanted insects and animals



WASTE REDUCTION & RECYCLING EFFORTS

Riveridge is significantly reducing the amount of waste it sends to landfills through a combination of sustainable packaging material use, recycling initiatives and compost practices.

Fruits are packaged using reusable crates and returnable plastic containers. Additionally, Riveridge recycles a quarter of a million pounds of corrugated cardboard per year. These sustainable packaging materials and recycling practices are used by Riveridge and its partner farms.

Another waste reduction technique used is composting. Orchard prunings are ground up and are then used as compostable material to improve soil tilth and return potash to the soil. In the past, prunings were burned, requiring soil amending to replace lost nutrients.

Waste reduction initiatives such as these have reduced Riveridge's waste output from 12 dumpsters per month to only two dumpsters. And the work continues to reduce that even further.



PARTNER FARM SUSTAINABILITY

Every farm affiliated with Riveridge uses the same high standards. Riveridge has long been acknowledged as an industry leader in sustainability, and as such affiliates with farms that share the same ideals.

With multiple farms working toward a goal of maximum sustainability, the positive impact on the environment is multiplied.

FUTURE

The future of produce business relies on the condition of the earth – and as cultivators of the land, Riveridge is passionate about improving performance of its operations. Not only do these sustainable initiatives reduce Riveridge's impact, but they also increase yield and produce better quality, bigger fruit. That's something everyone can enjoy.



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