

Responsible Choice



a commitment to sustainability and social responsibility





About Responsible Choice

Responsible Choice - Developed in 1989

- Responsible Choice stemmed from Stemilt founder Tom Mathison's passion to protect the people and natural resources so valuable to Stemilt
- In the program's early years, Stemilt encouraged growers to conserve water, protect orchard soils and use fewer chemical applications in orchards.
- The Responsible Choice program established a system where environmental safety, consumer safety and worker safety could be continually monitored.
- By quantifying each of these areas, improvements were made, which ultimately increased returns to the land for all Stemilt products.



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Water Conservation



- Use of micro sprinklers increase irrigation efficiency up to 85% versus 50% efficiency of a typical overhead irrigation system
- Soil nutrient testing done prior to applying fertilizer
- Changing and turning off water nozzles on packing lines saves a combined 60,156,000 gallons of water per year
- New wastewater system at Stemilt's slicing plant eliminates need to haul wastewater, by removing sediment and distributing it to the sewer (savings of \$123,864 annually)

Composting Natural Wastes



- Twenty-three acre site dedicated to composting Stemilt's 'green' waste, including: leaves, culled fruit, wood chips and lime
- The impact of composting is substantial—preventing more than 160 truckloads of waste from filling up area landfills each year.
- Waste is regenerated into a nutrient-rich fertilizer that fuels over 1,000 acres of Stemilt orchards
- Compost boosts the nutritional balance of the soil and reduces the need for synthetic fertilizers

Integrated Pest Management

- Focus on using minimal pesticides through Integrated Pest Management (IPM) since 1989
- Stemilt orchards use information on the life cycles of pests and their interaction with the environment to properly manage populations
- The use of beneficial predators, like trained falcons, helps naturally ward off-fruit damaging birds
- Kestrel houses bring in additional predators to keep pest levels low



Recycling Programs



- 100% of the recycled paper and newsprint from Stemilt goes to nearby tray manufacturer, Keyes Fiber where recycled materials are generated into new fiber trays for packing fruit.
- Approximately 8 million trays, or 35% of Stemilt's annual need for fiber trays, comes from these recycled materials
- Stemilt also has company-wide recycling programs for paper, cardboard, plastic, glass, scrap metals, etc.
- Between 2006-2008, Stemilt recycled 5,076,995 pounds of cardboard and 632,400 pounds of plastic for a combined savings of over \$100,000



Columbia Riverfront Restoration Project



- In April 2009, Stemilt led a large-scale clean-up and riparian planting along the Columbia River commercial waterfront.