

# newsworthy trends

## Better Packaging Makes Supermarket Prepared Meals Taste More Like Homemade

(NAPSA)—Americans are buying more of their evening meals from the prepared food section of the supermarket than ever before, to the tune of over \$12 billion a year. Most of these prepared foods are being purchased for the evening meal by families looking for healthy alternatives to fast food that require little or no cleanup.

Families that have tried prepared foods know that selections can turn out as good as grandma's cooking or as disappointing as fast food delivery. But the industry is changing and great-tasting selections, such as roasted chicken, specialty pastas and variations of grandma's homemade gravy are now available. The success of these meals, however, often depends on the cooking and heating instructions.

"Not all prepared foods are labeled with clear heating directions, so the consumer is left holding the package and wondering what to do with it," says Mona Doyle, founder of the Consumer Network, a trends-based consumer research firm. "Some packages are unsafe to use in the microwave, but are not marked as such. Others are only microwaveable and not oven-safe."

The good news is that food-packaging manufacturers are catching on and are producing packaging that is more convenient and provides better heating and cooking results.

One option now available is



**Versatile, durable packaging like VersaTray plastic offers consumers a choice of cooking prepared foods in the microwave or conventional oven for tasty results every time.**

*VersaTray*® plastic, by Eastman Chemical Company. This tough durable plastic can withstand very low as well as very high temperatures—from -40°F to 400°F—and can be used in both microwaves and conventional ovens.

Entrees and side dishes packaged in *VersaTray* plastic containers can be recognized by a colorful logo and are available nationwide in retail chains such as Safeway, Costco, BJ's Club Stores, Albertson's and Publix. Look for it in your supermarket under the prepared foods section in the freezer case.

If your supermarket is not using *VersaTray* plastic for its prepared foods, ask them to check with their packaging supplier. For more information, visit [www.versatray.net](http://www.versatray.net).