

# newsworthy trends

## Grocers Are Filling Nature's Shopping Cart

(NAPSA)—It wasn't long ago that finding natural foods at the grocery store simply meant stopping by the produce aisle. However, with nearly half of American shoppers thinking a selection of natural foods and beverages is important, grocers are looking to go natural wherever they can—even with plastic packaging.

Largely driven by concerns about obesity and diet-related health issues, more than 60 percent of consumers say they check labels to avoid additives and preservatives, and just over half say they have purchased organic foods. In fact, the market for organics is expected to increase 21 percent each year, reaching a projected value of \$30 billion by 2007. This is driving grocers to carve out more shelf space for organic and natural food offerings.

For some grocery retailers the push for natural selections even extends to how their food offerings are packaged. Several grocery chains and food companies have begun offering fresh food in packaging made from a corn-based plastic. The clear packaging looks and feels like regular plastic, but it is derived from an annually renewable resource rather than oil and can be disposed of in commercial composting facilities.

Nature-based packaging appeals to shoppers who are pressed for time, but still want to bring home wholesome and nat-



**Natural plastic packaging is coming to your grocery shelves.**

ural food for their family. It's no surprise then that the packaging material, called NatureWorks PLA, is often used for fresh-cut fruits and vegetables, which offer similar consumer value.

Del Monte Fresh Produce, one of North America's largest suppliers of fruits and vegetables, is using NatureWorks PLA across its fresh-cut produce line that includes Del Monte Gold fresh-cut pineapple, melons and fruit and vegetable medleys. California-based Club Fresh, another leader in the fresh-cut category, is pairing NatureWorks PLA with cut melon, fruit mixes and diced vegetables.

Using corn-based containers gives these companies an "oh wow" element to promote when talking to consumers about how fresh-cut fruits and vegetables fit into a healthy lifestyle. A perfect complement to natural foods like fresh produce, it is helping grocers take advantage of the growing trend toward natural solutions.