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Milliken Collaborates with Food Industry Leaders to Launch Packaging Concept Designed for Fresh Grab-n-Go Snack Program at IDDBA 2017

Clear, Microwaveable, Modular Packaging for Hot and Cold Snacks Is on Display in the Show and Sell Marketplace at the Event

Anaheim, Calif. - Today's busy consumers are constantly on the go, and are increasingly supplementing or replacing meals with convenient snacking options. In fact, [Technomic](#), a top food industry research and consulting firm, reports "83 percent of consumers in 2016 vs. 76 percent in 2014 snack on a daily basis."¹ As this snacking trend accelerates, and the popularity of the perimeter grows, shoppers will expect to find more snacking options in the deli.

One barrier to executing snacking, using fresh foods in the deli/prepared foods section, is proper packaging. To address this issue, members of the Show & Sell Committee representing Tyson Foods, Inc., Rich Products Corporation and a leading retailer enlisted the help of Milliken & Company, in conjunction with Display Pack, Inc., to create the "Pick Your Plate" plastic packaging concept.

"Our research shows there is a substantial growth opportunity for snacking within the deli/prepared foods department," said Amber Langston, channel marketing manager, Tyson Foods, Inc., and 2017 IDDBA Show & Sell Deli Committee member. "Currently, the majority - 58 percent - of shoppers look to center store to fulfill their snacking needs, while the deli only captures 18 percent."²

To help capitalize on this potential growth, the Pick Your Plate packaging design and material address the needs of both consumers and operators:

- The power to mix & match for a completely customized snack or meal
- Microwaveable for reheating at home or the workplace
- Approved for both hot and cold cases
- Glass-like clarity (lid and base)
- Easy recyclability

The Pick Your Plate concept is on display here at IDDBA 2017, in the deli section of the Show and Sell marketplace.

Designing a Better Consumer Experience

The Pick Your Plate concept features a rigid plastic tray with four wedge-shaped cavities in which consumers can place individual 10-oz or 20-oz lidded tubs of pre-packaged hot or cold food. The tray makes it easy to carry multiple containers, and doubles as a plate. Alternatively, shoppers can choose a single container without the tray. All components of the design, including the tray, are microwaveable, which avoids the inconvenience of having to transfer the food to another dish.

For consumers, a major advantage of the Pick Your Plate concept is the flexibility it gives them to choose as many portions as they want, as well as the size of the individual portions. Further, it is ideal for many different meal or snacking occasions:

- A snack run at work for employees
- A light or robust lunch to bring home or back to work, or eat in the store
- A quick bite on the go
- Fresh, healthy snacks for growing teenagers
- Light dinners for busy families
- Petite meal options for seniors with smaller appetites
- Custom choices for picky children

Streamlining Store Operations

In addition to a satisfying consumer experience, the Pick Your Plate concept offers advantages for store operations. With this solution, employees in the deli/prepared food section never need to worry whether or not a package is hot-case approved. Using one type of packaging for both hot and cold foods also helps to simplify the supply chain and reduce inventory.

Flexible packaging also accommodates a variety of food options. “This convenient packaging design is suitable for a wide range of fresh, prepared foods, like our Authentic Hickory Smoked BBQ Pork, Beef Brisket or Chicken,” said Kristi Robey, culinary manager with Rich Products Corporation. “In addition to prepared foods, desserts and other bakery items would work well with the packaging. Basically, if it can be sold as a smaller portion, it can be included in this concept.”

Robey and the Show & Sell Deli Committee also propose the following product ideas for Pick Your Plate: fresh fruit, prepared salads, green salads, boneless chicken wings or tenders, meatballs, Crisпитos[®], calzones, olives, fresh vegetables, dips, sides and cheese/meat combos.

Enhancing Appeal with Clarity and Microwaveability

As a key member of the Pick Your Plate collaboration team, Milliken recommended its NX[™] UltraClear polypropylene (PP) for the tubs and lids. This clear material displays the food to its best advantage and connotes high quality and purity to discerning shoppers. It is also the first plastic to combine glass-like clarity for improved aesthetics with temperature resistance for heating and reheating. NX UltraClear PP is engineered to handle hot-fill applications, warming under heat lamps and microwaving. Plus, it is equally well suited for packaging cold foods such as salads, fresh deli items and desserts.

“Pick Your Plate packaging takes a different approach to the traditional grab-n-go formats in supermarkets, which are typically for larger, meal-size portions,” said Emily Blair, business development manager, Milliken Chemical. “Our new concept targets consumers who don’t want to be limited by having to purchase pre-packaged, highly processed snacks like granola bars and chips. The customization capabilities of Pick Your Plate are further enhanced by the clarity and microwaveability of our NX UltraClear material.”

To produce the concept, Milliken turned to Display Pack, a leading Single Source Solutions® packaging company. Display Pack's rigid thermoformed packaging designs can withstand processing environments, protect the product throughout distribution and enhance the consumer experience.

"We believe that the concept of selecting individually packaged items to customize a snack or small meal is the first of its kind in the fresh prepared food arena," said Andy Blackmore, director of Sales & Marketing for Display Pack. "The Pick Your Plate collaboration has produced an innovative concept that will open retailers' and food manufacturers' eyes to the close relationship between fresh prepared foods and high-quality packaging."

In addition to being on display in the Show and Sell Marketplace at IDDBA, the new customizable packaging concept is being featured at Milliken's booth, #1974, where representatives are on hand to discuss this novel design and the company's other packaging technologies. It is also being shown at Display Pack's booth, #1288.

About Milliken

Milliken is an innovation company that has been exploring, discovering, and creating ways to enhance people's lives since 1865. Working from our laboratories, application and development centers around the world, our scientists and engineers create coatings, specialty chemicals, and advanced additive and colorant technologies that transform the way we experience products from automotive plastics to children's art supplies. With expertise across a breadth of disciplines that also includes floor covering and performance materials, the people of Milliken work every day to add true value to people's lives, improve health and safety, and make this world more sustainable. For more information, visit www.millikenchemical.com.

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¹Snacking definitions and attitudes continue to shift. Technomic Inc. March 30, 2016.

<https://www.technomic.com/snacking-definitions-and-attitudes-continue-shift>

²Tyson Foods, Inc. / Infoscout Snack Attack Quantitative Study 2015.

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PHOTOS: New “Pick Your Plate” Packaging Concept

To meet consumers’ need for more snacking options in the deli, members of the Show & Sell Committee representing Tyson Foods, Inc., Rich Products Corporation and a leading retailer enlisted the help of Milliken & Company, in conjunction with Display Pack, Inc., to create the “Pick Your Plate” plastic packaging concept. This unique plastic packaging design is customizable, versatile, attractive and sustainable. It can be used in hot and cold cases in the deli/fresh-prepared food section, is microwaveable for reheating at home or the workplace, and offers glass-like clarity and easy recyclability.

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High resolution photography is available by contacting Amy Godfrey at agodfrey@ahminc.com.