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September 28, 2011

www.stemilt.com

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Stemilt Growers

Stemilt named to the Washington Green 50 list

WENATCHEE, Wash. – Stemilt Growers was recently named to Washington state’s Green 50 list for its excellence in sustainability and social responsibility through the Responsible Choice program. *Seattle Business* magazine announced the winners of the 2011 Green Washington Awards and which companies made the Green 50 list during an awards ceremony in Seattle on September 21st.

This marks the fourth time Stemilt has been recognized by the publication for its sustainability efforts. Stemilt was named the “greenest” agriculture company in Washington back in 2008. Stemilt joins companies like Alaska Airlines, Starbucks, and Weyerhaeuser on this year’s Green 50 list.



According to Stemilt marketing director Roger Pepperl, making the Green 50 list is a testament to the commitment of an entire organization to find ways to operate more efficiently and in a sustainable manner.

“Our founder, Tom Mathison, started the Responsible Choice program back in 1989. He believed strongly that, as farmers, it was our duty to protect the land in order to make agriculture a sustainable business for future generations. The passion he held for the environment lives on today in his son and grandsons, as well as the entire Stemilt family. It is a great honor to be on the Green 50 list and join the ranks of great Northwest companies,” Pepperl said.

Kyle Mathison, Tom's son and fourth generation cherry grower, has contributed a great deal to Stemilt's leadership in sustainability. He started a compost farm on Stemilt Hill back in 2005 in order to regenerate green waste from Stemilt packing facilities and orchards into a nutrient-rich fertilizer, which now feeds over 1,000 acres of apple, pear, and cherry trees. Mathison was also responsible for opening



Fourth generation cherry grower Kyle Mathison tends to his compost on Stemilt Hill.

the Stemilt Organic Recycling Center (SORC) in Wenatchee, which provides local businesses and community members with a low-cost option to dispose of their green waste, such as grass clippings and tree branches. The green waste that is collected at SORC is taken to Stemilt Hill to be made into World Famous Compost.

“We’re growing World Famous Fruit and so our compost must be world famous as well,” said Mathison. “By using compost for fertilizer, we’re producing fruit with higher sugar levels and deeper flavors, both of which enhance the overall eating experience for consumers.”

In addition to composting, Stemilt has focused on Responsible Choice initiatives that conserve energy and water. Recycling is also a feature throughout the company. Stemilt has a unique program with its local fiber tray manufacture that allows the company to regenerate its recycled paper and newsprint into fiber trays for packing fruit. Stemilt is able to produce 78 percent of its annual needs for fiber trays with its own recycled paper.

“When it comes to sustainability, even subtle changes like our paper recycling program can make a big impact, both economically and environmentally,” said Pepperl.

Social responsibility is another area of focus for Responsible Choice. Stemilt offers health benefits to all full-time employees and opened an employee health clinic at its Olds Station facility in March 2010 through a partnership with ANOVAWorks. The free clinic service allows employees to receive medical advice from qualified health professionals at their convenience.

“The health clinic has been a real positive at Stemilt,” said Pepperl. “We’ve expanded hours and are now open five days a week versus three when it first opened. It’s a great way to provide employees with quality care that is easily accessible.”

To learn more about the Responsible Choice program, visit: http://www.stemilt.com/Farm_With_Us/ResponsibleChoice.cfm

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