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For Immediate Release

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Study Shows Continued Growth of Corrugated Common Footprint for Produce

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (March 15, 2004) – A new study conducted by Willard Bishop Consulting, Ltd., (Chicago) on behalf of the Corrugated Packaging Alliance (CPA), confirms the continued increase in the use of Corrugated Common Footprint (CCF) containers for shipping fresh produce. The study interviewed retail produce executives, produce growers and shippers representing five major commodity groups, produce packaging distributors and corrugated manufacturers about current and projected use of traditional corrugated, CCF and returnable plastic containers (RPCs).

KEY FINDINGS:

- 1. Merchandising preference is a driver of container type**
 - Three out of four retailers primarily hand-stock produce displays.
 - On a weighted basis, 42 percent of produce is merchandised and displayed directly from the shipping container.

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- Supercenters (at 70 percent) and Club Stores (at 100 percent) are by far the heaviest users of display-ready containers.
- CCF containers are most commonly requested during a commodity's seasonal peak for retailers' display-ready merchandising.

2. CCF usage continues to increase

- Retailers reported CCF use increased (from Spring to Fall 2003) from 20 to 22 percent of total produce volume, while the grower/shippers (of the five selected commodities) interviewed indicated a 15 percent increase in shipments in CCF containers during this same time period.
- CCF usage is projected to increase to 27 percent of shipments in the next 18 months.

3. RPC share projected to decrease

- RPC use is projected to decrease from 8 percent to about 5.6 percent of shipments in the next 18 months.

Study results also indicate that traditional corrugated remains the dominant packaging material for shipping produce. Use of corrugated containers, including traditional and CCF, is estimated at over 92 percent of annual, retail case volume.

The retailers interviewed represent 61 percent of total, annual retail produce volume. Growers surveyed include major producers of deciduous fruit, grapes, citrus, row crops, cooking vegetables, value-added produce, and tomatoes; they

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represent various size companies as well as all major U.S. geographical regions.

The Corrugated Packaging Alliance (www.corrugated.org) is a corrugated industry initiative jointly sponsored by the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) (www.afandpa.org) and the Fibre Box Association (FBA) (www.fibrebox.org). Its mission is to foster growth and profitability of corrugated in applications where it can be demonstrated, based on credible and persuasive evidence, that corrugated should be the packaging material of choice; and to provide a coordinated industry focus that effectively acts on industry matters that cannot be accomplished by individual members.

Willard Bishop Consulting, Ltd. (WBC) offers a wide range of consulting services to companies operating in the retail and foodservice supply chains. For over 25 years, WBC has successfully guided clients through volatile and highly competitive environments. WBC's solutions produce competitive advantage and sustainable gains in sales and profits for its clients in manufacturing, retail, wholesale, and technology. WBC is committed to helping clients read and respond to changes in the market.

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