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Wild Flavors' operations manager Peter Kindzierski demonstrates quick setup of the returnable bulk container, above, which arrives collapsed for easy shipment, below.

Plastic totes drive the flavors 'wild'

Wild Flavors, one of the largest, most advanced beverage-flavor houses in the country, moves from 55-gal drums to 300-gal returnable, plastic intermediate bulk containers that can be tracked via the Internet to transport bulk flavors easily, saving time, labor and material costs.

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When it comes to food and beverages, color, taste and flavor are three keys to survival in the marketplace. Just ask Wild Flavors, Inc., considered a leader in delivering innovative flavors, colors and ingredients as well as processing technology to the food and



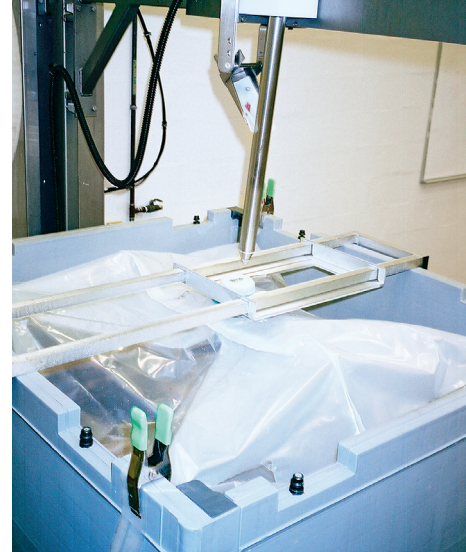
beverage industry. Based minutes from greater Cincinnati in Erlanger, KY, operating in a 190,000-sq-ft facility near a recently opened, 250,000-sq-ft North American distribution center, the company creates flavors and compound flavors for a variety of beverages, syrups and dairy products including yogurt, alcoholic drinks, spritzers and more.

The company also creates flavor systems, liquid and dry colors, a Colors From Nature® line, a Health Ingredient Technology & Solutions® line, spray dry technology and encapsulation technology. Keeping track of all of its shipments could drive any company, well, wild. Wild Flavors needed a way to improve product accountability while protecting its products and monitoring its shipments throughout distribution, which currently spans the Midwest. The company plans to go nationwide by year-end.

To transport its fruit flavors for beverages in bulk, both inbound and outbound, Wild Flavors now uses 300-gal, plastic,

intermediate bulk containers (IBCs) from **Container and Pallet Services**, or CAPS (www.useCAPS.com). Replacing 55-gal drums, the collapsible IBCs offer Wild Flavors' customers a convenient container that reduces handling time, labor and costs within its facilities. Provided as a fully outsourced container-management model, according to CAPS, the IBCs allow Wild Flavors to reduce labor and packaging costs without having to invest in containers, manage the reverse logistics or bear any ongoing cleaning/maintenance costs. And, Wild Flavors no longer has to prepare, delabel or store any bulk packaging.

CAPS' comprehensive tracking service is designed to keep tabs on the IBCs, supported by an Internet-based inventory management system that affords container-fleet accountability. The movement of each container can be registered and tracked by any Internet access point, practically anywhere, at any time.



After the outer walls are erected, the form-fitting, three-ply film bag liner can be added, left. The outer HDPE housings, center, are rugged enough to prevent damage from stacking, forklifts and the elements. The heavy-duty film bag liner within the IBC is connected to a single-lane filler that deposits fruity beverage flavor. One IBC equals about five of the 55-gal drums, right.

Wild Flavors' operations team was also looking for opportunities to improve efficiency. As its business grew, converting from the smaller drums to the IBCs offered a win-win solution for the company and its customers with an easy-to-use container that still offers the same benefits of a one-way tote.

In fact, Wild Flavors employs the totes on a pay-per-use basis in which it pays for the one-way shipping of the IBCs and CAPS then redistributes the containers through a collection of 14 customer service centers throughout North America. These centers, or depots, provide and reposition the IBCs from end users to manufacturing facilities. From there, reporting is immediately available to help track, trace and manage the containers.

The depots handle container maintenance, such as cleaning, storage and repairs, which relieves Wild Flavors from having to do so. The only thing Wild Flavors has to do is place a container order. "We place the order for containers and set up and fill them," states David Haase, vp of operations.

"The new IBCs also conform to certain food and beverage customers' no-wood policies that restrict wooden pallets in production areas," he adds.

PD learns from Drew Merrill, vp of business development and strategic planning at CAPS, that the customer service center and logistics group in Livonia, MI, handles the repositioning of all IBCs back to an applicable service center. "We leverage such methods of transportation, including boxcar, stack train and more, and have a network of transportation providers," he says. "We have standardized on 300- and 315-gallon IBC types so that we can pool our assets among multiple customers."

In Wild Flavor's case, approximately five of the 55-gal drums can fit in one of the new IBCs, depending on product weight. They eliminate the need for a wood pallet and strapping and can be stacked five-high when full, although Wild Flavors stacks them two-high. CAPS obtains its knocked-down Arca ComboLife IBCs through **Schoeller Arca Systems (www.arcausa.com)**. They come with form-fitting, 3.2-mil, three-ply bag liners from **CDF Corp. (www.cdf-liners.com)**, accessories and top- and/or bottom-discharge outlets, along with setup training, technical service and location support. The outer container housings are constructed of high-density polyethylene and are rugged enough to prevent damage from over-stacking and from the elements. The IBCs come with an integral pallet for four-way entry.

"We have yet to exceed the number of trips for any given container," Merrill points out. He adds that the containers also prevent damage from forklifts and to the products inside, and can translate into better relationships with Wild Flavors' customers.

Each week, a number of the containers are delivered to the Wild Flavors plant in Erlanger from CAPS' Cincinnati service depot for filling on single-lane **Mettler Toledo Hi-Speed (www.hispeedcheckweigher.com)** equipment. Operators first set up the sidewalls and lock them into place with their corner posts, inserting the film liner and activating the filling system. The containers are equipped with an identification label, 3 of 9 linear bar coding and a passive radio-frequency identification (RFID) tag embedded into the base that can be scanned by wireless, hand-held scanners.

The data is uploaded into CAPS' Internet-

based CAPS-TRAC™ tracking/inventory-management system database. Thus, Wild Flavors can account for shipment history, damage, loss and other factors as it follows the IBCs throughout the supply chain.

After the IBCs are filled, they're scanned and shipped to customers. Once emptied by customers who discard the liners and collapse the container, each IBC is picked up by CAPS for repositioning to a nearby service center. The CAPS depot then scans, cleans, inspects and stores them until they're needed for shipment again. CAPS says it works with the customers to ensure a timely return of the containers.

Wild Flavors began using the 300-gal size in January 2006. Each container measures approximately 48×44×44.4 in. OD. Haase says labor and maintenance savings are being evaluated, but the IBCs have reduced filling times: "We've had no damage or loss of product and have improved efficiencies. They do have a favorable impact on our customers' disposal costs. We're very pleased with the containers."

More information is available:

Container and Pallet Services (CAPS),
734/542-9150. www.useCAPS.com.
CDF Corp., 888/593-2212.
www.cdf-liners.com.
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