

More manufacturers of bags embrace environmental effort

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CARROLLTON, TEXAS — Among bag makers, the quest for officially rated, environmentally sound facilities is gaining steam and the introduction of environmentally friendly products is revving up.

During a recent tour of Heritage Bag Co.'s headquarters in Carrollton, officials touted BioTuf bags, the firm's solution for turning organic trash into compost. Heritage handles compounding of the biodegradable resins at a facility in Carrollton, feeding its film plants on both coasts from its business known as Heritage Plastics Inc.

The majority of the compounds are used captively, officials said, but Heritage Plastics has started outside sales recently.

Bag sales in the first seven months of 2006 have nearly doubled over the firm's sales for all of 2005, said Scott Hoeft, vice

president of marketing and customer fulfillment.

"The pieces are in place for continued growth in compounding and in the bag side of the business," Hoeft said, citing facts like two-thirds of trash that is generated is compostable.

In addition, there are emerging changes, Hoeft said, such as a shift from landfill to composting facilities. Heritage is seeing activity in the Northeast, Northwest and West Coast.

"These composting facilities are being built and the infrastructure is being put in place," he said.

Heritage Bag's facility in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., also is one of the latest in a string of plastic bag-making facilities that have been rated under the Environmentally Preferred Rating program, which was developed by the California Film Extruders and Converters Association and officially in-

troduced in 2005.

"We went ahead and got EPR rating in California as a feather in our cap to document how cautious we are and how concerned we are about the environment," said Frank Ruiz, technical director of Heritage Bag.

At Crown Poly, which also recently became certified, General Manager Catherine Browne said the company will introduce a 6-micron bag under its Pull-N-Pak brand to support source reduction.

"We're putting the source-reduction logo and the EPR logo on the bag," she said. "At some point, we'll be trying to educate customers about source reduction and the EPR program as well."