

Green INVENTORY

GREENER PRODUCT PICKS
FOR HOME AND PANTRY

BY KRISTIN V. MONTALVO



Kermit the Frog once said, "It isn't easy being green." Being green may have been difficult for Kermit, but not for the sustainability-conscious consumers who now number some 35 million people, or 16 percent of the adult American population, according to the Natural Marketing Institute (NMI) annual LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability) Consumer Trends Database. But get ready — 43 percent of consumers anticipate a greener future within the next five years. Not only are shoppers thinking green, they're willing to spend more green to achieve environmental goals — up to a 20 percent price premium for cleaner, greener products.

"I believe that 'green' will be a significant part of the consumers' decision-making process going forward," explained Mark Delaney, director, home improvement, for The NPD Group, Inc., a leading provider of consumer and retail information. "The past decade or so has been all about 'time saving' and while that certainly isn't going away, I think consumers are beginning to ask more questions now than they have in the past." At the top of consumers' minds, Delaney noted, is the subject of how products are made or disposed of, such as the use of plastic grocery bags and the issues with toys made in China.

"In the next five years, if two products are nearly identical except for the 'green' component, the consumer will choose the 'green' product — if only to make themselves feel that they are in some way helping the environment," he predicted.

Consumers Get Greener With Age

Whether motivated by the aim for a heightened environmental consciousness or healthier products, The NPD Group report also underscores the fact that calls for sustainability cut across every consumer age group. Though contrary to assumptions that the focus on sustainability is a more youth-oriented phenomenon, NPD Group data shows that older consumers — especially those over age 55 — are actually more likely to purchase environmentally friendly home products. Major appliances were seen as one of most important eco-friendly products by those consumers.

"The information in the report is somewhat contrary to the belief that it's the younger generation who is more concerned about going 'green.' It may be that the older generation is now looking to leave the planet in better shape for their children and grandchildren," said Delaney.

Consumers Want to Go Green . . . At a Price

While consumers are willing to join the "green" crusade, price is still an important factor in their purchase decisions. In fact, according to the NPD Group survey, 38 percent of consumers say they are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products. But what about the other

62 percent? Respondents tell NPD they want to purchase "green" products, but are unwilling to pay substantially more for them, especially in the current economic climate. NPD also found respondents have a "healthy skepticism" about products claiming to be "green."

"Over time, we have seen other designations such as 'organic' create a buzz in the marketplace without any real standards around what could be marketed as 'organic,'" Delaney explained. "This has led, and still leads, to confusion on behalf of the average consumer." According to Delaney, without any real standards as to what can be sold as 'green,' consumers are finding yet another area where they really need to be careful as they navigate the aisles.

"The issue here is education. Manufacturers and retailers need to take the time to educate the consumer on the benefits and long-term savings of eco-friendly products; only then will these consumers become less skeptical and feel more confident about purchasing 'green' today," he said.

Delaney offered some sound advice on ways retailers can help educate consumers on "green" home products, as well as effectively add "green" merchandise to their product mix:

- Consumers are very pragmatic and are looking for direct correlations between product and benefit. If you're claiming that a product will save money, illustrate that with examples as often as possible — this helps consumers make a more informed decision and that will create a positive image for your brand or store.
- Be consistent in your messaging. By that I mean don't put a "green" claim on a product and then pack it in plastic or foam. Consumers are looking for companies to "walk the walk" and are more cognizant than you may think regarding making the planet a better place for our children.
- Don't overwhelm the consumer by aggressively cutting back on other products — "green" is a movement versus a fad, and consumers don't want to feel "forced" into it.
- Explain to your consumers what your criteria were in bringing in these products using signage and literature in store. If there are significant price differences between the "green" products and the alternatives, communicate that as succinctly as possible.
- Consider a rating program that "grades" products according to a widely communicated standard.

Since consumers are walking the walk (saving energy in the process) and talking the talk with respect to the environment, it's crucial for manufacturers and retailers to take note of the issues that are near and dear to your customers' hearts. This will not only improve your image, but you will earn their loyalty as well. Here are some eco-friendly tips and products you can incorporate into your store to help your customers with their shopping and environmental efforts. Also be sure to check out this month's Editor's Choice column on page 24 for more great "green" products.

IN THE HOME

1. Switch to Nontoxic Cleaners

A clean home is a healthy home. Unfortunately, many modern cleaning products on the market today contain harmful irritants and dyes that pose numerous health and safety concerns. Some conventional household cleaning products contain known and suspected carcinogens and hormone disrupters, and many can induce asthma and other respiratory illnesses. Even air fresheners have gotten a bad rap. The standard-issue air freshener usually contains a roundup of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), such as acetone, isobutane, propane, petroleum distillates, and sometimes ozone. Besides being harmful to the environment, VOCs can cause lung, respiratory tract and sensory irritation.

With manufacturers offering more “green” options these days, it’s becoming easier to buy environmentally sensitive cleaners — it just involves being a little label-savvy. Look for products that are made from plant



sources rather than petroleum and products free of chemicals that can irritate (such as chlorine) or pollute (such as phosphates).

Be sure to communicate to your customers that the latest chemical-free alternatives are not only effective and smell good, they are economical, easy to use and, most importantly, safer for both family and environment. The following cleaning products and air fresheners score high marks on being both clean and green:

Howard Naturals cleaning products are free from petroleum distillates, ammonia, bleach, silicone oils and other chemicals. Specialized blends of essential oils such as Lemongrass-Lime are used to provide a touch of aromatherapy. The line includes a Granite and Marble Cleaner, Kitchen Cabinet Cleaner & Polish, and a Stainless Steel Cleaner & Polish. MSRP: \$9.99–\$11.99. www.howardnaturals.com.

Caldrea's line of cleaning products are made with essential oils, biodegradable ingredients and soothing fragrances. The line includes everything from a Green Tea Patchouli All-Purpose Cleanser

that uses naturally antiseptic birch bark extract for added cleaning potency to Citrus Mint Ylang Ylang Stainless Steel Spray that's completely free of petroleum distillates. For more information, visit www.caldrea.com.



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Green Inventory

Bayes Premium Cleaners from **Lab-Clean, LLC** are made with natural oils, are nonabrasive and nontoxic, and are never tested on animals. And with the spray nozzle, they are simple to use. The line includes a Stainless Steel Cleaner, Granite Countertop Rejuvenator and more. In fact, Bayes is the first Stainless Steel Cleaner to display the EPA's "Design for the Environment" logo (www.epa.gov/dfe). MSRP: \$12.99, 16 oz.. For more information, visit www.bayescleaners.com.



Mrs. Meyer's Clean Day makes cleaners that are biodegradable and environmentally friendly, phosphate-free and cruelty-free. They're also made with natural essential oils like lavender, lemongrass, peppermint, clover and geranium. Products range from an All Purpose Cleaner to a Dish Soap, to anything else you can think of to clean your home. For more information, visit www.mrsmeyers.com.



Fresh Wave Odor Neutralizing Spray is a product that uses a proprietary blend of natural extracts like aniseed, clove, cedarwood, lime and pine needle to eliminate household and pet odors. When activated by airflow, this blend attracts, captures and neutralizes odor molecules. Biodegradable and nontoxic, it's perfect for the naturally green home. MSRP for the 8-oz. size is \$9.95; for the 2-oz. travel size, \$4.50. For more information, visit www.fresh-wave.com



Magic Sheets are biodegradable sheets infused with a proprietary organic blend that helps pull the food and debris away from the surface of pans and dishes. What sets them apart is that they are completely organic, nontoxic and will biodegrade 100 percent in just 21 days. A packaged box of 40 sells for \$5.95 and is available at www.magicproductsllc.com.



2. Use Energy-Efficient Appliances

When it's time to replace a household appliance, choose a product with an Energy Star label. Sponsored by the EPA and the Department of Energy, the Energy Star program rates products from light bulbs to kitchen appliances. The label guarantees that products are energy-efficient. For example, a refrigerator with an Energy Star logo will use 10 percent to 50 percent less energy and water than standard models. In fact, a household with Energy Star products uses about 30 percent less energy than the average household — an annual savings of about \$570. You may even be eligible for a tax credit when you purchase an Energy Star product. More information is available at www.energystar.gov.



3. Choose the Right Appliance for the Job

A small appliance is more efficient than a big one. For cooking modest portions or heating leftovers, a microwave or toaster uses less energy than an oven or stove. An electric kettle eats less power than heating water on the stovetop. Pressure cooking reduces cooking times up to 70 percent — a tremendous conservation of energy. If you're really looking to save a bundle on energy, check out the hottest (literally) and greenest trend in cooking — portable induction burners. The new portable induction burners cook 50 percent faster than gas or electric

cooktops, using 90 percent of the energy produced.

Similar to many of the standard induction features of a built-in induction cooktop, the portable versions recognize the base of cookware, rapidly and directly heating only the diameter of the pot, so very little energy is wasted.

The **Waring Pro** Professional Induction Cooktop delivers professional quality performance with added convenience features like easy-to-use touch controls. Signature features include seven temperature settings that range from low to high, and a 99-minute blue LED timer display. Induction cooktops create heat through magnetic energy. The Waring Pro™ Professional Induction Cooktop has a burner area with a glass surface that allows magnetism to pass through and heat food. By generating heat inside a pot or pan, induction cooktops provide even heating and use up to 70% less energy than conventional cooktops. The end result is a cooler kitchen and a lower utility bill. This new unit has an everyday price of \$169.00. For more information, visit www.waringproducts.com.



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The advertisement features a large, stylized "PARTNERS" logo in white on a dark green circular background. Below the logo, a variety of Partners Crackers products are displayed on a wooden surface. The products include boxes of All-American Crackers (Lightly Salted), All-American Cookies (Vanilla), Stoned Wheat Crackers, Blue Star Farms, Sweet Onion, Low Fat Wisecrackers, and Gourmet Granola. A bowl of granola is also visible in the foreground.

CLICK 275

Green Inventory



When design meets convenience, that's

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Its time to make a bold statement in your kitchen scale assortment. The Salter model 1051 features sleek, black aluminum styling with a brilliant and bold backlit readout. Plus, all the quality and features you expect from Salter.

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For customer service call: 1.800.289.0944.

The new Portable Induction Cooktop unit from **Fagor America Inc.** is elegantly designed with a durable Eurokera glass top and stainless steel trim. The touch control digital panel features a child lock, six power levels with temperatures ranging from 190° to 430° F, auto-pan detection, and a 180-minute timer. MSRP: \$200.00. The company has also recently reintroduced a more energy-efficient, induction-compatible Stainless Steel Paella Pan. MSRP: \$49.99. For more information, call 201-804-3900.



Fissler products reduce energy use through their patented CookStar All-Stove Base, tight-fitting interactive lids and induction capability. When Fissler pots with CookStar bases are used, home cooks can experience an energy savings of 350 percent when compared to inefficient lidless cooking. MSRP ranges from \$120-\$325. For more information about Fissler cookware, visit www.fisslerusa.com.



Kuhn Rikon's pressure cookers can help your customers not only prepare a great meal, but save on their energy bills. A recent independent laboratory test compared conventional cookware to cooking with a pressure cooker. The pressure cooker won out against conventional cookware in both electrical and gas stove applications, using 40 percent less gas and 50 percent less electricity. These scientific tests performed by Gaines Labs used potatoes on the stove top. Tests were also performed in the oven using meat (beef) and the results were even more impressive for the pressure cooker. Energy used for the oven includes preheat time. The results show a pressure cooker uses 75 percent less than both an electric or gas oven. Kuhn Rikon offers a broad line of pressure cookers with suggested retail prices from \$169 to \$399. For details, go to www.kuhnrikon.com.



4. Get With Glass

Noxious chemicals from plastics manufacturing contribute to water, air and soil pollution, affecting not only ecosystems but human health as well. While many types of plastic can be recycled, they're all made from petroleum, a nonrenewable resource. And Americans recycle just 5 percent of all plastics. Many experts agree that the best way to diminish these unfavorable effects is simply to cut down on plastics' use. Rather than store leftovers in plastic, try old-fashioned Pyrex or glass covered dishes, ceramic, or stainless-steel containers.

5. Renew With Sustainable Hardwoods

From cutting boards and serving trays to bowls and plates, the tabletop category has exploded with natural, sustainable and renewable hardwoods. Manufactured from exotic resources such as bamboo, acacia and mango wood, these are cost-effective and ecologically responsible alternatives to the widespread clear cutting of our world's precious timberland.

Pacific Merchants' Acaciaware® Wave bowl is hand-carved from one solid piece of Acacia hardwood, a fast-growing wood species. The wood sources do not harm the environment by using "slash and burn" methods of harvesting trees. The harvesting method of the Acacia tree is sustainable in that the tree is cut so the base and roots remain intact for regrowth. All wood is "Harvested With Care," meaning that the trees used are harvested legally



from privately owned lands. MSRP is \$49.95. www.pacificmerchants.com.

Available through **Harold Import Company (HIC)**, Elizabeth Karmel's Grill Friends Bamboo Pizza Peel with Foldable Handle features eco-friendly bamboo fashioned into a 13 x 14 pizza peel. Large enough for family-size pizzas, this peel easily slides under a freshly baked pizza to remove it from the oven with panache. The 11-inch handle folds for

easy shipping and storing. The matching Serrated Pizza Wheel with Bamboo Handle has a weighted handle that feels really good in your hand and is the only (and first) serrated blade for cutting through the crust of a pizza. The wheel is 3-inches in diameter and made out of stainless steel. MSRP is \$24.99, Pizza Peel; \$12.99, Pizza Wheel. www.HaroldImport.com.

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The Moso variety of bamboo used in these stunning cutting boards from **Enrico Products** is the hardest of the bamboo family; harder even than rock maple. It is also extremely durable and moisture-resistant, making it perfect for kitchen implements. Bamboo Cutting Boards are offered in clean, natural Blonde and rich, dark Caramel (also called carbonized). All laminated bamboo designs use a high-strength, food-safe glue that plays an important role in the durability of the products. The varied laminations mean that no two pieces are the same. Shown: Grande Bamboo Cutting Board, \$37.95; Medio Bamboo Cutting Board, \$19.95; and Piccolo Cutting Board, \$13.95. www.enricoproducts.com.



Available in three styles: organic flatweave, waffleweave, and herringbone. MSRP: \$7.50 each. www.nowdesigns.net.

6. Go Organic With Kitchen Towels

According to research from Specialists in Business Information (SBI), sales of organic and environmentally friendly home textiles will continue on a strong upward track with global sales for these textiles' products rising from \$1.1 billion in 2006 to \$6.8 billion in 2010. Organic cotton towels for the kitchen, in particular, are a great option. Cotton is the second-most pesticide-laden crop in the world after coffee and before tea, and conventional cotton production is one of the heaviest consumers of toxic chemicals. Organic cotton, on the other hand, is raw cotton that is grown without harmful pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers, and no chemicals or dyes are used in processing or manufacturing organic cotton products. Offer these eco-friendly options to your customers and your planet will thank you.



We discovered the Organic Kitchen line of textiles by **John Ritzenhaller Co.** at the Atlanta Gift Mart in January. Not only are these super-soft, absorbent and made with 100 percent organic cotton, they're packaged in 100 percent recycled materials. Available in six colors — sans any synthetic dyes — that coordinate with any eco-chic kitchen. Call 610-825-9321 for prices.

The Pure Kitchen Organic tea towels from **Danica/NowDesigns** are made from 100 percent certified organic cotton. They are the perfect size for cleaning and drying dishes, besides adding an organic peace of mind. Even the tag is printed on 100 percent recycled paper.



8. Light up Your Life With Soy Candles

Candles made from soy wax have an obvious advantage over paraffin, a petroleum product, since soy is a renewable resource. Soy candles do not emit the soot and toxic fumes that are characteristic of paraffin candles. Soy wax also has a much lower melting point compared to paraffin wax. Therefore, soy candles burn slower and last 30 to 50 percent longer than paraffin candles of the same size.

These all-natural, biodegradable and environmentally friendly candles are a great way to lift your customers' spirits and fragrance their home:

Organically grown American soybeans, essential oils, recycled glass and paper are just a few of the natural ingredients in **Dirt Candles**. Not only are these candles soot-free, but they smell divine and are offered in 20 unique, complex aromas. The company gives a portion of each sale to selected charitable causes. MSRP: \$24. www.dirtcandles.com.



Hillhouse Naturals' Living Green Collection is a home fragrance line made with the environment in mind. The candles feature a 100 percent natural soy wax blend and are fragranced with plant-derived essential oils. In addition to using "green" ingredients, the company used wind power to create the packaging for the collection. Available in four unique fragrances: Sprout, Flora, Red Currant Nectarine and Orange Leaf Amber. MSRP for 5-oz. Soy Candle in Tin, \$11.90; 8-oz. Soy Candle in Glass, \$24.00. Call 800-993-2767.



Energy-Saving Kitchen Tips

- Be sure to place the faucet lever on the kitchen sink in the cold position when using small amounts of water; placing the lever in the hot position uses energy to heat the water even though it may never reach the faucet.
- If you need to purchase a natural gas oven or range, look for one with an automatic, electric ignition system. An electric ignition saves natural gas because a pilot light is not burning continuously.
- In natural gas appliances, look for blue flames; yellow flames indicate the gas is burning inefficiently and an adjustment may be needed. Consult the manufacturer or your local utility.
- Keep range-top burners and reflectors clean; they will reflect the heat

better, and will save energy.

- Use a covered kettle or pan to boil water; it's faster and it uses less energy.
- Match the size of the pan to the heating element.
- Use small electric pans or toaster ovens for small meals rather than a large stove or oven. A toaster oven uses one-third to one-half as much energy as a full-sized oven.
- Use pressure cookers and microwave ovens whenever it is convenient to do so. They will save energy by significantly reducing cooking time.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. Visit www.eere.energy.gov/consumers/tips/

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Green Inventory

IN THE PANTRY

1. Think Local

Typical grocery store produce travels nearly 1,500 miles before it ends up on the dinner table. All this traveling burns fossil fuels and results in carbon emissions. Buying from local farmers means you're not only getting the freshest food possible, you're also saving energy. Local food is also perceived to be healthier and fresher. Conscientious supermarkets like Whole Foods, Wild Oats and Trader Joe's show a strong commitment to local communities by sourcing food from local vendors. To find farmers nationwide, visit localharvest.org, sustainabletable.org, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture at www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/map.htm.

2. Be Wise About Bottled Water Use

Most folks drink their bottled water on the go and, unfortunately, there aren't many convenient ways to recycle the plastic bottles. That adds up to about 40 million bottles a day going into the trash or, even more unfortunately, becoming litter. These bottles take up valuable landfill space, leak toxic additives into the groundwater and take a whopping 1,000 years to biodegrade, if ever. Some plastics — such as polycarbonate or those with recycling code 7 found in commercial containers and baby bottles — leach toxins after repeated use and exposure to high temperatures.

While we're not telling you to stop drinking bottled water altogether, just be

more conscientious of the three R's: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. If you're interested in learning about some earth-friendly alternatives to drinking from plastic bottled water, here are our suggestions:



Kaiser Bakeware presents the environmentally smart ISO Bottle from Alfi Carafes, an 18/10 stainless steel vacuum bottle that is a green alternative to using and disposing of plastic water bottles. This bottle features an easy one-hand-operation lid for pouring and sipping. It is lightweight and easy to clean. The ISO bottle is the way to go for the health of the body and the planet. MSRP is \$35. www.alficarafes.com.

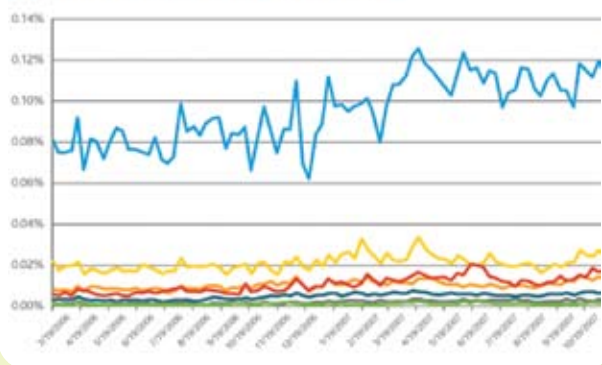


Think "reusable" instead of "disposable." Pour your filtered tap water into a stylish **SIGG** Swiss Metal Water Bottle. They are lightweight, durable and dishwasher-safe. The special interior coating of SIGG bottles is water-based, extremely resistant, hygienic and taste-neutral. SIGG is also a member of 1% For The Planet. MSRP: \$19.99. www.mysigg.com.

Procter & Gamble's PUR Flavor Options enables consumers to flavor water in Raspberry,



The Buzz on Sustainability is Increasing



The Buzz on Sustainability

Internet chatter is a timely leading indicator of popular concerns. By tracking blog mentions of keywords from March 2006–2007, Nielsen BuzzMetrics was able to measure a 110 percent increase in references to “sustainable” or “sustainability.” Another suggestion that sustainability has transitioned from the purview of activists to that of average consumers is the fact that sustainability blogs now rank among the top 50 blogs overall. That’s some serious chatter. More information can be found at <http://nielsenbuzzmetrics.com>.

Strawberry or Peach flavors as it comes out of the tap. Insert a flavor cartridge into a redesigned PUR pitcher or onto the faucet-mounted version, and use a button to vary the concentration of flavor in the water dispensed. It has no calories and no artificial colors or flavors. MSRP is \$29.99, with faucet mounts at \$49.99, and cartridges — which are sold in packs of two — at an MSRP of \$9.99. www.purwater.com.

3. Stock up on Fair Trade Products

Fair Trade Certified coffee — the most widely produced Fair Trade product — has more than doubled in the past two years, making it the fastest-growing segment of the \$11 billion U.S. specialty coffee market, with retail sales soaring from less than \$50 million in 2000, to an estimated \$750 million in 2006. Other products are also booming. Tea grew 187 percent in 2005, and cocoa grew 110 percent in 2006. Fair Trade Certified products combine a fair price for farming families with rigid environmental standards. Buying Fair Trade Certified products give farmers a chance to sell their goods at a fair price, which means they can cover their costs, support their families, and invest in a better future. For more information on Fair Trade, visit www.transfairusa.org.

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In 2004, **Honest Tea** became the first bottled tea manufacturer in the U.S. to market a Fair Trade certified product, their Peach Oo-la-long. Subsequently, they've added Kashmiri Chai, Just Green and Just Black teas to their list of Fair Trade offerings. Peach Oo-la-long combines the smoky taste of Fair Trade Certified organic oolong tea with the brightness of peach puree. www.honesttea.com.



All **Divine** Fair Trade chocolate is made with the best Ghanaian cocoa, pure cocoa butter and real vanilla to ensure a fine chocolate taste that truly is Divine. Their critically acclaimed 70% Dark Chocolate is great for eating and gourmet recipes. It's also suitable for vegans. MSRP for the 1.5-oz. bars is \$1.50 and for the 3.5-oz. bars, it is \$2.95. www.divinechocolateusa.com.



4. BYOB - Invest in Reusable Shopping Bags

San Francisco and nearby Oakland enacted the first U.S. plastic bag bans last spring. Just recently, the New York City Council passed a bill requiring large stores and retail chains to collect and recycle the plastic bags they give to shoppers. And Whole Foods vowed to sack plastic bags in all of their stores by Earth Day. You can do your part and choose to reuse by investing in the latest durable canvas or string bags every time you shop. They last for years, and can be washed with your clothes.

From **Organic Cotton** and **Harold Import Company (HIC)**, the new crocheted market bags are handmade and will easily fit into a purse. An eco-friendly alternative to plastic bags, they hold a heavy load of groceries. 14" x 11" with 14" handles. 100 percent organic cotton, exclusive of handle. MSRP: \$9.99. Call 800-526-2163.



Envirosax multi-purpose reusable bags feature bold prints in a range of lively colors. These eco-chic reusable shopping bags are lightweight, portable, waterproof and each one holds the equivalent of two supermarket plastic bags thanks to reinforced seams. MSRP: \$8.50. www.usa.envirosax.com. [GR](#)



Comments? kmontalvo@gourmetretailer.com