

Honeybear launches sustainability program

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Apple marketer Honeybear Brands has launched a new program focused on environmental sustainability.

TruEarth is a series of best practices for Elgin, Minn.-based Honeybear's grower partners aimed at guaranteeing high-quality, healthy fruit that preserves the land it's grown on, according to a news release.

The program was developed with the Integrated Pest Management Institute of North America.

"We eat the same fruit we offer to retailers who then sell to their customers," Fred Wescott, president of Wescott Orchards and Honeybear Brands, said in the release. "We are very deliberate about every single improvement in the way we grow and market our produce because everything is still very personal to us. TruEarth is the latest step in our ongoing quest to do best by the land, our growers and apple lovers everywhere."

Growers who adopt the TruEarth program submit to an annual audit by the Integrated Pest Management Institute and follow the following practices:

- GMO-free growing
- Prohibition of high toxicity pesticides
- Cleaner water by reducing soil erosion
- Energy conservation
- Water conservation in our orchards and the packing facilities
- Ongoing recycling of all waste
- Protection of biodiversity, including beneficial insects and wildlife

TruEarth protocols also will help protect the natural habitat of the threatened honeybee by mitigating the use of pesticides that are toxic to bees before or during bloom. Bee populations also will be monitored and surveyed for abundance and diversity, according to the release.