



# R • E • V • I • E • W

A Family Company  A Fresh Choice!

A Newsletter by and for the Associates of Rockview Farms

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## WSJ ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS CRATE LOSS CRISIS

Congratulations to **Bill Kroese** for an article recently printed in the *Wall Street Journal* (June 6, 2006; Page B1) entitled, *Police Ask: Got Milk Crates?*

Bill provided valuable insight into the current crisis facing our industry and was quoted in the article numerous times. The article mentioned that Rockview Farms lost 424,000 milk crates in 2005, up from 350,000 in 2004. Replacing them cost the dairy \$1.6 million. This year, losses continue to rise – and we blame most of it on theft.

As oil prices have climbed, so too have prices for the petroleum-based resin used in milk crates. Resin prices jumped more than 40% after Hurricane Katrina. Today prices are still nearly double what they were just three years ago.

Theft is a national problem and one that



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impacts

not just the dairy industry but also the bakery and soft drink industries as well. In 2003, Detroit police recovered \$245,000 of stolen bakery trays, milk crates, pallets and other plastic in one day from three recycling plants.

While no national figures on crate theft are available, it is estimated that yearly monetary losses due to theft are likely in the millions of dollars. Eventually, those costs get passed on to consumers. Rockview Farms' crate tracking program that has been set up with some distributors and retailers is helping to get the costs under control.

## CUSTOMER PROFILE: WEST CENTRAL PRODUCE *by Gary Ericks*

West Central Produce has been a loyal partner with Rockview Farms over the past several years and they do a great job distributing a wide variety of our products to their impressive customer base. Equally impressive as of late, is how they have found a way to become very effective in returning the plastic milk crates that are used in delivering our products to them. They are now returning 90% or more of the crates, which is up by about 35% from previous months.

We spoke with Alex Perez to get a little insight into their

success. He credits the fact that they have consistently informed and instructed the warehouse workers, transportation manager, and the drivers on the importance of picking up crates wherever and whenever possible. Another key to this improvement is that the crates, unless absolutely necessary, do not go on their delivery trucks. They purchase as much of our products as possible in corrugated boxes and they re-pack some of the milk from the crates into corrugated boxes themselves before loading it on their trucks. We appreciate their efforts and look forward to working with West Central Produce long into the future.



### SAVE THIS DATE!

Rockview Farms' bi-annual employee Christmas party will be held **Saturday, December 2nd** at the **Carson Community Center**. Be sure to save this date. Plans are underway for a fun evening to include dinner, dancing, casino, and entertainment. Additional details will follow.