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**Stemilt Gears Up for Rave® Apple Season and
Encourages Retailers to do the Same®**

WENATCHEE, Wash. – While summer stone fruit takes up grocery store shelves, Stemilt is gearing up for this year's Rave® apple season and encouraging retailers to do the same. Stemilt's Brianna Shales shares how Rave® apples will be a jumpstart to the apple category and will provide a special limited-time opportunity to boost apple dollars through volume.

"Rave® kicks-off the apple season with flying fuchsia colors and can impact the apple category in a way other varieties can't because of its limited time availability," states Stemilt's Marketing Director, Brianna Shales. "Rave®'s outrageously juicy flavor and refreshing, snappy zing has yet to be discovered by many consumers and will present the opportunity to offer them something new."

Harvest starts for Rave® in early August this year, with shipping to follow soon after. As the variety comes into production, Rave® volumes have been growing, giving retailers the opportunity to bring it in, sell it out, and keep it a quick season between August and September. Tight summer supplies from the 2021 apple crop, and a later start to Washington's 2022 apple crop harvest, make Rave® an ideal apple for retailers to bring in. Stemilt will also be supporting the apple with experiential marketing activities in multiple city locations in August.

"Retailers that get behind the limited time offering of Rave® have successful seasons that drive dollars and volume to their apple category," said Shales. "Stemilt has had success in the past with experiential marketing activations around Rave®, and retailers who bring it in for the limited time will get a boost from the consumer marketing we will be doing."

Creating a unique story experience around this variety will resonate with consumers and help build lasting fans for a longer time. Since the very beginning, Stemilt has positioned Rave® as the "social/word-of-mouth" apple and the consumer marketing activations fall right in line with that.

"Because Rave® is still emerging with consumers, we have to create a display destination for it," explains Shales. "We ship it in these high-graphic boxes which will be perfect for building displays at retail. With so many new apples out there, having a unique experience with the variety they are trying will resonate with them and encourage future purchases."

In August, especially when the produce department hasn't quite turned into its fall sets where apples are more prominent, building out a secondary location for Rave® and drawing people's

eye to it will really help those impulse sales. Important elements like using signage to educate people and telling them Rave® is outrageously juicy will make their buying experience easier.

“Ads are still the most effective way to make sure consumers are trying Rave®,” states Shales. “Rave® ranked as the #1 club apple and the #6 apple overall at one regional retailer in the first six weeks of apple season with nearly 100 lbs. sold per week. A really big key for retailers to understand is that Rave® can have category impact because of its limited season that other apples can’t. When you stretch out the season of a variety, it’s not going to show the pound or dollar impact of that variety.”

Stemilt expects bulk sizing to be the main promotion angle for retailers. Because it’s an early season apple, it’s really essential that retailers work Rave® into their plans now and start running back-to-back promotions as soon as they can.

“It is a Honeycrisp successor born through natural cross-pollination methods at the University of Minnesota’s apple breeding program,” says Shales. “It’s part Honeycrisp and part MonArk giving it the fracture of the beloved Honeycrisp and the refreshing zing of a MonArk.”

Stemilt supports and promotes Rave® through various digital efforts including on-site experiential marketing activations that will help build relationships with consumers and help drive sales of Rave® apples.

“We’re very excited to see what this year’s Rave® season will bring as this variety comes back to its season,” says Shales enthusiastically. “It’s a beautiful apple with great eating qualities that will take retailers’ apple category to new levels in the early fall.”

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About Stemilt

Stemilt is a family-owned grower, packer, and shipper of tree fruit. Owned and operated by the Mathison family, Stemilt’s mission is to cultivate people and delight consumers with its World Famous Fruits. Stemilt is a leader in sweet cherries and organic tree fruits, and a key supplier of apples and pears. The company stewards an environmentally sustainable and socially responsible business through its Responsible Choice® program, which has been in place since 1989. For more information about Stemilt, visit www.stemilt.com.