

# It's in the bag

Morris Packaging holds Kirkland Signature dog food together

by MARK RAY



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**W**hen you buy a 40-pound bag of Kirkland Signature™ dog food at Costco, you aren't just buying protein, vitamins and probiotics. You're also buying a bag with recycled content that was engineered to keep the product safe and intact throughout its journey from the production line to the warehouse pallet to your home.

Morris Packaging, which produces the bags for Kirkland Signature dry pet foods and other Costco products, is working hard to reduce its carbon footprint.

"Nobody wants green initiatives and sustainability more than I do, I can assure you," says president and owner Jim Morris, a member of the Cherokee Nation. "My heritage speaks for itself in regard to that."

Most Kirkland Signature dry pet food bags contain 30% recycled content (Morris is working towards 50%), which is projected to divert 2 million pounds of plastic from landfills in 2020 alone. Morris Packaging's no-landfill plants use heaters and dryers that run on heated forced air channeled from the press operations (instead of natural gas), and

workers reprocess excess ink, reducing hazardous waste by more than 80%.

As another example, Costco wanted to redesign the traditional 40-pound dog food bag dimensions to minimize overhang on pallets, which would help reduce damage and waste. The change required a 9-inch side panel, something packaging machinery is not set up to accomplish. Morris made it happen.

"They're the only facility we know of that can do this, and it's because their own engineers at the company figured out ways to custom-create the packaging line," says Tom Whalen, Costco buyer.

Morris, a former pro football player, attributes his company's success to his employees, whom he calls teammates. "I'm a big believer that no one person is ever responsible for greatness; there's so many people that contribute to it," he says. "And there's so many people that I think have helped contribute to make Morris Packaging very successful." ■

Costco member Mark Ray is a freelance writer based in Louisville, Kentucky.

## COMPANY INFO

### Company

Morris Packaging

**Founded** 2004

**President** Jim Morris

**Employees** About 400

### Headquarters

Bloomington, Illinois

**Website** [morrispkg.com](http://morrispkg.com)

### Quote about Costco

"Costco's cutting-edge in what they do, and we believe we're on the cutting edge as well, so it's a really good partnership. They're constantly challenging us, saying, 'If we could change everything to make it perfect, what would be the process?' I love that challenge."

—Jim Morris,  
president/owner



## Packaging hope

As a youth, Jim Morris only got to college because of an athletic scholarship. To help other disadvantaged young people succeed, he

helped create and fund Kansas State University's Morris Family Multicultural Student Center, which works to advance student success, diversity, inclusion and social justice. Spencer Wood, the

president of the Kansas State Faculty Senate, calls it "a vital component of our welcoming and inclusive vision and future of K-State as a transformative university for all of our students."—MR