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## **The Soil Center: A Groundbreaking Partnership Between CMI Orchards and Royal Family Farming**

**Wenatchee, WA** – CMI Orchards (CMI) and Royal Family Farming (RFF) proudly unveil The Soil Center, a groundbreaking initiative born from a landmark partnership deal. Spearheaded by the Allred family, who are co-owners of CMI Orchards and sole proprietors of Royal Family Farming, this endeavor marks a significant step forward in sustainable agriculture. The Soil Center is committed to revolutionizing the sector with innovative soil health solutions. Its core mission involves transforming byproducts from orchards, row crops, dairy, and beef operations into high-quality soil amendments, thereby merging innovative fruit production with the principles of regenerative farming.

CMI, a leading grower and shipper of apples, pears, and cherries based in Wenatchee, WA, brings its expertise in fruit production to the table. This expertise is complemented by the sustainable farming methods of Royal Family Farming, headquartered in Royal City, WA. The joint venture aims to supply agricultural soil amendments and supplies not only to the owners and network of growers associated with CMI and RFF but also to the wider agricultural community.

At the heart of The Soil Center's mission is the development of the world's largest worm farm and a comprehensive waste processing system. This system is designed to transform a variety of byproducts into valuable soil amendments. The goal is to produce unique products that revolutionize traditional agricultural practices, turning waste into eco-friendly solutions to farm regeneratively at scale.

### **Leaders Share Their Vision for The Soil Center:**

Dr Jon Cox, appointed President, and a soil health expert at The Soil Center, said, *"This project is a game-changer in the way we think about byproducts and waste streams. We are committed to finding innovative methods to repurpose waste from our farming and packing operations and enhancing soil health. This initiative is crucial in bringing the importance of soil function to the forefront of the agricultural community and beyond. Healthy crops and sustainable agriculture truly start from the ground up."*

Bob Mast, President of CMI Orchards, discussed the broader impact of the initiative: *"CMI is steadfast in its commitment to a carbon-negative fruit industry. Our partnership with The Soil Center reflects this commitment. We are focused on creating a model that helps the entire*

*agricultural sector, extending these advantages to all growers. Our efforts are aimed at enhancing the global agricultural environment sustainably, and our customers and end consumers deserve to be served by companies passionately devoted to the highest standards of land and animal stewardship. This project isn't just a mission; it's a promise of that commitment in action brought together by a family whose dedication has transformed what it means to farm with the future in mind."*

Austin Allred, President of Royal Family Farming, spoke passionately about the evolution of their mission: *"What began as a personal endeavor to support our family's farming efforts has blossomed into one of the largest regenerative farms operating at scale. We're taking the intimate, red barn farmer's market approach and expanding it, proving that sustainable practices can be successfully implemented on a larger scale. Rethinking our approach to carbon is imperative in this journey. Our goal is to significantly increase soil carbon, a critical factor for cultivating healthier crops and fostering a more resilient agricultural ecosystem. A major part of our mission is to educate consumers and shift the general perspective on carbon. It's not just about reducing carbon in the atmosphere; it's about enhancing carbon in the soil, where it can do the most good for our planet."*

The Soil Center also plans to collaborate with local communities, academic institutions, and industry experts to expand its influence and advocate for a more sustainable future in agriculture.

### **Product Rollout Timeline:**

The Soil Center, a visionary project in sustainable agriculture, is set to break ground by Q2 2024 in an inaugural ceremony that will mark a new era in environmentally responsible farming. This cutting-edge facility will start supplying its innovative soil amendment products to the CMI grower network by Q3 2024, showcasing a blend of scientific research and regenerative farming practices. By Q1 2025, The Soil Center aims to broaden its impact, extending these revolutionary products to the wider agricultural community. This expansion symbolizes a crucial step in proliferating sustainable and resilient farming practices, reinforcing The Soil Center's commitment to transforming the landscape of modern agriculture.

### **About CMI Orchards:**

Based in Wenatchee, WA, CMI Orchards is recognized as one of the largest growers of apples, pears, and cherries in the United States. Renowned for its innovative approaches to fruit sales and merchandising, CMI is a leader in the industry, constantly pushing the boundaries to enhance its offerings. The company is committed to sustainable and ethical growing practices, ensuring that customers across the USA and globally receive only the highest quality, responsibly cultivated fruit. This dedication to excellence and sustainability positions CMI as a respected and forward-thinking player in the agricultural sector. CMI is owned by McDougall & Sons, Columbia Fruit Packers, Double Diamond and Yakima Fruit.

### **About Royal Family Farming:**

Nestled in Royal City, WA, Royal Family Farming stands as a pioneering force in sustainable agriculture. Spanning over 15,000 acres, it hosts one of the world's largest worm farms, a testament to its innovative approach in processing waste byproducts. The farm seamlessly integrates cattle and dairy operations with row crops and orchards, creating a harmonious agricultural ecosystem. Royal Family Farming is actively working towards carbon neutrality, with a longer-term goal to be carbon negative across all operations within the decade. This remarkable achievement underscores its commitment to environmentally responsible farming practices and a sustainable future.

### **Media Library:**

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/5mt7v7q4msrejbo88vc8r/h?rlkey=25qy3r3aq1wcf0oieh1x72xkl&dl=0>

### **Captions:**

- Instead of burning orchard waste, which releases stored carbon back into the atmosphere, removed wood is processed through an industrial wood grinder. This innovative approach converts the wood chips into valuable worm food and other soil amendments, effectively creating regenerative products for large-scale agricultural use. This method aligns with our commitment to keeping carbon in beneficial forms, contributing positively to soil health and environmental sustainability.
- Michael Hebdon, Adam Milne and Jon Cox stand in front of the new wood grinder machinery.

### **Contact:**

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