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## Fishing world grows greener

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LAS VEGAS, Nev. — In winning ICASTS' 2007 Best of Show Award, e21's Carrot Stix rods signalled a big green wave rolling through the fishing industry. Environmentally friendly products can also be found in the sinker (South Bend Eco Weights) and lure (FoodSource Lures) categories.

"I've been in this industry for 35 years," said Luke Dallis, vice president of sales & marketing for FoodSource Lures. "I believe we have exactly the right product at exactly the right time.

"I don't think the stars are alligned like that very often in any business."

The Carrot Stix rods are litterally made from carrots, specifically the cellulose fibers of carrots.



"Carrots are a good vegetable because of their abundance of cellulose," said e21 representative Peter Savoia. "But we could have used anything with a high volume of cellulose."

The Carrot Stix rods from e21 are litterally made from carrots.

In playing on the carrot theme, many of the rods are bright orange. But 2007 Bassmaster Classic champion Boyd Duckett has added his input on a "Classic Gold" model that is dark brown in color and Carrot Stix also come in green.

The significance of the Carrot Stix is more in how they are made, rather than what they are made of. Carrots are processed into nano level fibers, then mixed with a water-based resin to create a composite used to mold the rod blank. (A nanometer is one billionth of a meter, or about the amount a man's beard grows in the time it take him to raise the razor to his face, according to one common analogy.)

"Because the rod blank is molded and not rolled (as with graphite, for example), we can made a rod from butt to tip that has zero hot spots," said Savoia.

A "hot spot" would signal a weak point in special photo analysis of the material. Areas of stress show red in the photo; no-stress levels are blue.

"Carrot Stix are blue from butt to tip," said Savoia.

And Carrot Stix are considered green because they're made from more environmentally-friendly materials.



However, fishing rods laying on the bottom of U.S. rivers and lakes are far from the biggest environmental concerns in the fishing industry. There's no doubt what is No. 1 — lead. California's "no lead law" now requires a warning label on every product sold there that contains lead.

As the health hazards of lead have become known over the years, it has been taken out of gasoline and paint and just about every other product possible in the U.S. But the fishing industry has had no real substitute for lead, other than less dangerous but more expensive metal substitutes like tungsten, bismuth and brass.

South Bend's Eco Weights appear to be a solution to this decades-long problem. Working with a company in Australia headed by Sandy Corrie, South Bend now offers worm-, egg- and bell-shaped sinkers that are made from highly-pressurized iron oxide. The worm weights come in 1/16-ounce to 1/2-ounce sizes; the egg sinkers from 1/8th-ounce to 6 ounces; and the bell or "bank" sinkers from 1/2-ounce to 6 ounces.



Not only are the Eco Weights lead-free and similar in size and density to lead weights, they will dissolve over time in the water. Degradation time in one test was four years, but it could be less or more depending on conditions like freshwater or saltwater and water currents or lack thereof.

**Not only are the Eco Weights lead-free and similar in size and density to lead weights, they will dissolve over time in the water.**

"They are as close as you can get to the size and density of the lead weights on the market today," said Frank Bruno, marketing director for Maurice, which is working with South Bend on the Eco Weights.

Eco Weights have passed the strictest test in the U.S. — California's Proposition 65, the no-lead law. Eco Weights aren't required to carry a warning label there.

Corrie and his Australian company have been working on this process for years. It's obvious there will be no retreat from the lead bans in various countries throughout the world, including his homeland. It's this emphasis on "green" that has investors willing to dig deep in their wallets for product development.

And if you buy shotgun shells containing lead shot, you know that strictly from a price standpoint lead is an increasingly expensive option.

According to Corrie, the price of lead has increased 420 percent in recent years, mostly due to an increasing appetite for it in China and other developing countries that have no laws regulating its use. Just in the last year, lead has increased from \$0.80 per pound to \$1.40.

That also allows Eco Weights to be priced "slightly higher" than lead weights in the U.S. And in continuing the green theme, they are packaged in recyclable plastic.

The only drawback to the Eco Weights on the market now is there's no split shot equivalent, but Corrie's company is working on a solution to that.



Another fishing product has created a growing environmental concern - soft plastic lures, which often end up on the bottom of our rivers and lakes. Not only are soft plastics, like worms, grubs and leeches, made from environmentally unfriendly PVC (polyvinyl chloride) and phthalates (another possible health hazard, which is added to PVC to make it supple), soft plastic lures don't dissolve over time. In fact, they only grow larger when left in water.

FoodSource Lures has literature showing a plastic worm growing from 4.25 inches in length to 6 inches in six months. And it never stops looking like something a fish might want to eat.

One angler has suggested there's enough soft plastic on the bottom of Lake Okeechobee to pile up and cushion an Army tank when dropped from a plane. That may be an exaggeration, but there's no doubt that discarded soft plastics are a growing environmental concern.



**FoodSource Lures claims to be made 100 percent from a protein rich food that attracts fish.**

FoodSource Lures, which is based in Birmingham, Ala., came about in 2003 as the result of a partnership with Auburn University researchers. It was at Auburn where years of extensive testing produced a real food substitute for soft plastic.

FoodSource Lures claims to be made 100 percent from a protein rich food that attracts fish. Through testing at Auburn, it was demonstrated that fish could grow and thrive on the FoodSource concoction, which is said to have more nutritional value than a fish's typical diet.

But the bottom line with FoodSource Lures is that they catch fish. Offered in various shapes, sizes and colors to match most of the soft plastics used today and priced in line with soft plastics, too, last year "Field & Stream" magazine named the FoodSource Minnow among its "50 Best Lures of All Time."

In the article, John Merwin wrote: "These lures might be the future of fishing... FoodSource lures are environmentally friendly — and they catch fish."

FoodSource has further emphasized its dedication to the environment by associating itself with the Freshwater Land Trust. A portion of the profits from particular lures are donated to the FLT, which "protects river and the life living therein."

In a further testament to the fish catching ability of the lures, which leave a scent trail in the water, Dallis noted that one of the top anglers on the crappie tournament circuit has credited his success this year to FoodSource products.

Dallis said that the environmental movement isn't going away in the U.S., and predicted it will only grow stronger over time.

"We will not pollute anything," Dallis said of FoodSource. "And we are also giving back."