

## PIETRO INDUSTRIES

Kennett Square, Pennsylvania

# Improving Sustainability and Mushroom Quality with HydraFiber<sup>®</sup>

Founded in 1938, Pietro Industries has been growing white and brown mushrooms for three generations and produces approximately 20 million pounds of mushrooms annually. With two cultivation systems in place, a traditional Pennsylvania double system and a modern Dutch growing system, Pietro Industries is always looking for innovative ways to improve crops and growing processes.

Faced with dwindling peat moss supply, the Pietro team needed a reliable substrate alternative and reached out to sales partner Glenn DeSantis and the Profile<sup>®</sup> Products team for support.



“I’ve got 30 years of experience with Glenn DeSantis,” said president of Pietro Industries Chris Alonzo. “His word is golden. We trust that he won’t bring us something if it’s not worthwhile, something that we need. When he introduced HydraFiber, I was willing to give it a try.”

HydraFiber<sup>®</sup> is a premier growing media component designed to improve air porosity and water availability to crops. Pietro Industries trialed HydraFiber at inclusion rates of 10%, 20% and 30%, finding 20% met their needs with minimal changes to their growing practices.

“When we got to 20%, we said ‘Hey, this is great,’” Alonzo said. “We were able to offset 20% of our peat moss usage and that’s a good thing, so we’re going to use it.”

With two cultivation systems in place, a media mix that excels in both environments was key. Pietro Industries continues to trial various media mix combinations to determine the best formula for their needs, including Sphagnum, limestone and black peat. With each blend, the HydraFiber inclusion rate remains at 20%.

Pietro Industries began incorporating HydraFiber EZ Blend 40-pound bales into their mixing lines in 2021. Using a bulk chopper to separate the compressed bales, the Pietro team alternates peat and HydraFiber into the mixer to ensure a uniform blend. With continued success, Pietro is considering incorporating HydraFiber’s specialized processing equipment. These machines are designed to fit easily into existing mix lines and turn the highly compressed bales back to their fibrous state to maximize yield, requiring less time than a bulk chopper and better combining the mix components. The upgrade will ensure predictable, consistent, high-quality media to ensure mushrooms thrive.

“Profile Products has been awesome. Very straightforward, very direct with the conversation. When something’s good, they say it. When something has taken a detour, they speak up. Profile Products has been excellent at communicating and very proactive.”



**Chris Alonzo**, President  
Pietro Industries

## HYDRAFIBER HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Reliability** – OMRI-listed HydraFiber improves casing material consistency, making it easy to refine watering schedules.
2. **Proximity** – Profile's HydraFiber manufacturing facility is less than an eight-hour drive from Pietro Industries, which equates to significantly less time for product deliveries compared to alternative substrate suppliers.
3. **Reusability** – HydraFiber enables growers the opportunity to reuse spent compost.
4. **Cost and Space Savings** – HydraFiber is packaged in compressed bales, allowing more product to fit, requiring fewer truckloads and storage space.
5. **Predictability** – HydraFiber is never frozen, enabling predictable transportation and freight rates during winter months.



## PIETRO INDUSTRIES' GROWERS FAVOR HYDRAFIBER

After a short learning curve and a few small adjustments to their watering regimen, the growers have noticed significant improvements in water retention and mushroom quality since introducing HydraFiber to their media mixes.

"The growers feel that it gives them the ability to water and rehydrate a little bit more quickly and it releases the right amount of water when the mushroom wants it," Alonzo said.

HydraFiber is manufactured with a patented Thermally Refined® process using renewable southern yellow pine and bark that would otherwise be discarded, reducing unnecessary waste while providing an environmentally friendly substrate option.

"HydraFiber is excellent because from a sustainability standpoint, it's better than peat," Alonzo said. "Not relying wholly on Sphagnum peat moss is a benefit and a direction we think is very important to follow to ensure our future."

Along with the support of DeSantis and Profile, Alonzo and the Pietro Industries team wholeheartedly believe in the positive impact HydraFiber has had on their operation and plan to continue using it even if peat supply stabilizes.

"Culturally, now that my growers have adapted to using it, they like it," Alonzo said. "They don't want to go back to straight Sphagnum, so it's going to be a long-term part of our formula."

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Our thanks to Chris Alonzo for talking with us about Pietro Industries. If you're a grower interested in adding HydraFiber to your mixing lines, visit [HydraFiber.com](https://HydraFiber.com) or reach out to us at [hydrafiber@profileproducts.com](mailto:hydrafiber@profileproducts.com) or 800-496-0955.



750 W. Lake Cook Rd., Ste. 440, Buffalo Grove, IL 60089  
[hydrafiber.com](https://hydrafiber.com) | [profileproducts.com](https://profileproducts.com)  
Email: [hydrafiber@profileproducts.com](mailto:hydrafiber@profileproducts.com)  
Toll Free: (800) 496-0955 | International Calls: +1 (847) 353-2148

