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Rutgers Food Innovation Center to use AiroCide PPT

KES Science & Technology Inc. in Atlanta announced that the Rutgers Food Innovation Center will be the first food business incubator program in the country to include the NASA-developed AiroCide PPT air sanitation technology for use in its facility.

The center celebrated the grand opening of its 23,000-square-foot food business incubator facility in Bridgeton, NJ, Oct. 17.

The purpose of the center is to showcase food-processing innovation and to provide opportunities for processors to benefit from the full spectrum of capabilities that exist at its U.S. Department of Agriculture- and U.S. Food & Drug Administration-inspected food incubator. Because airborne cross-contamination poses a threat to food safety, the chemical-free AiroCide system, which kills airborne mold, fungi, bacteria and viruses, in addition to removing volatile organic compounds, provides added protection to enhance quality assurance in the food processing environment.

The Rutgers Food Innovation Center has provided business and technology expertise to over 1,000 startups and established food agribusiness companies since its founding in 2001. Its new business incubator facility will greatly expand its capabilities and enable the design, development, marketing, analysis, commercialization and ongoing manufacture of food products for sale to retail and foodservice markets.

The center has been recognized globally, nationally and throughout New Jersey for the effectiveness of its economic development programs.

KES Science & Technology became a part of the Rutgers FIC Industry Partners Program during the planning stages of its new food incubator facility. "KES was honored to be included as an industry partner with this prestigious institution," John Hayman III, president and chief executive officer of KES, said in a statement. "Food safety is a most prominent issue for both food handlers and consumers. Preventing airborne cross-contamination is an important element to consider in the food processing environment."

Lou Cooperhouse, director of the Rutgers Food Innovation Center, said in the statement, "As we developed plans for our new food business incubation facility, we wanted to implement best practices in all aspects of our operation. It is well recognized in industry that minimizing the potential for airborne contamination is an important component of an effective food-safety program, as this can minimize the potential incidence of product contamination by pathogens. Furthermore, the minimization of airborne microorganisms will generally result in an extension of raw material shelf life, and result in improvements in quality and a reduction in food waste. We are extremely pleased to partner with KES and grateful for the generous donation of this equipment, which we will be pleased to demonstrate to our clients."

The AiroCide system is installed in the microbiology and chemistry labs, the test kitchen, food-processing rooms and in the perishable food storage areas of the Rutgers FIC facility.

The AiroCide technology is not a filter and complements results of filtration systems like HEPA/MERV. The patented technology, integrated with photocatalytic oxidation, works to destroy harmful airborne microbes and dismantle volatile organic compounds. Clinical studies show a six-log kill rate for microbials and up to 99 percent removal for VOCs. The AiroCide technology is an FDA-listed class II medical device that is also used in health care settings. The "plug-and-play" technology is also energy-efficient, as it was originally designed for the NASA space station program that successfully conducted astroculture experiments that required air free of mold spores and ethylene gas.

The FIC facility includes a product development test kitchen, focus group and sensory analysis capabilities, microbiology and chemistry analytical laboratories, state-of-the-art distance learning and education equipment and a complete production area for shared-use food processing.