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South Florida Produce and Floral Handler's Trade Advantage:

The Clean Air Connection to Food Safety and Quality Assurance

With the surge of economic growth influencing trade opportunities with South America for tropical produce and flowers, South Florida perishable handlers look to technology to safely navigate the cold supply chain. Florida Gold Coast industry leaders like Chiquita Fresh, Del Monte Fresh Produce, The Produce Connection and Esmeralda Farms use a NASA-developed technology to clean the air of pathogens responsible for causing perishables to deteriorate and trigger cross contamination problems. The AiroCide® PPT air purifying systems remove mold spores, bacteria and volatile organic compounds like ethylene gas that cause millions of dollars worth of loss per year and present food safety challenges.

The culinary and lifestyles media spotlight is also fueling the demand for tropical fruit, vegetables and flowers causing a robust category growth with economic benefits for South Florida. Due to the heightened consumer interest in point of origin logistics and food safety issues, both economic growth and media attention also call upon South Florida perishable industry leaders to be proactive in their quality assurance programs. Using technologies like AiroCide purifiers brings fresher produce and beautiful flowers to the marketplace by scrubbing the air of spoilage contaminants.

The AiroCide technology is used in a wide-range of floral and produce processing applications from Ft. Pierce to South Miami. Most recently, Coral Gable's Del Monte Fresh Produce implemented the technology in all avocado storage and is expanding to processing areas after performing an ethylene gas reduction trial with the AiroCide system that showed a 99.9% reduction in 72 hours. Del Monte Vice President of Quality Assurance Ross McKenney said, "the trial field test showed a dramatic and rapid ethylene reduction, with a fringe benefit of [airborne] microbial reduction."

South Florida is the port of entry for most of the South American grown roses and other flowers that retailers offer from coast to coast. Flowers can benefit by extending shelf life in the presence of AiroCide-treated air. Mold and ethylene gas ravage flowers. Removing these contaminants post harvest allows flowers to be held for a much longer time and reduces costly shrink. Industry studies estimate post harvest loss from 25-46% at extremely low ethylene concentrations. According to Nick Trujillo of Miami's Equiflor Corporation, "The AiroCide process is an affordable way to add consumer value to Rio Roses."

Other South Florida companies that employ the technology are; Big Red Tomato Packers Sun City Produce, Virgin Farms, Gemini Floral Partners, Fullei Fresh Sprouts and Whole Foods Market. The AiroCide air purifying process will not jeopardize organics, because it does not use or emit any chemicals or ozone. The technology was developed for use in space-based plant experiments to eliminate airborne contaminants with design specifications dictating energy efficiency and healthy environmental considerations. All AiroCide-protected facilities can display the Seal of Air Security certificate to let their customers know they have provided advanced air quality to enhance quality assurance for their perishable products.

AiroCide PPT technology is manufactured and distributed by Atlanta-based KES Science & Technology, Inc. For over 20 years, KES has supplied the supermarket; produce distribution, food processing, wineries and the floral industry with perishable preservation technologies. For more information and case studies please visit www.airocide.com or www.KesScience.com.