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Five ways to ignite your banana sales

How to manage displays and inventory to keep customers coming back

PHILADELPHIA, June 20, 2016 – With bananas at the top of most supermarkets' register rings, it pays for distributors and produce managers to keep their banana inventories and displays in top-notch form.

"The banana category is historically the largest retail produce category. Since bananas are available year-round, an effective prominent display draws customers into your produce department," said Kevin Frye, a banana merchandising expert who has spent more than nine years working with wholesale distributors and retailers in the produce industry. Frye is currently the North American Sales Manager for Ripelock™ Quality System at AgroFresh Solutions, Inc.

"If the banana display looks appealing, customers will likely buy more bananas, and they'll feel confident in the quality and freshness of the other fruit in the store," he said.

Frye offers five tips for making the most of your banana program:

- 1. Strive for perfect color.** Retailer experience shows that consumers prefer to purchase and eat bananas at color stage 5 or 6, when bananas have bright yellow peels and firm pulp. "If bananas are too green or too ripe, customers will likely pass by the display or purchase fewer bananas because they'll be afraid the fruit will not taste good or go bad too quickly," said Frye.

One way to achieve and hold perfect color is through the RipeLock Quality System. RipeLock works with the banana's natural ripening process to maintain optimal color three to five days longer than conventional bananas. That means, without increasing shrink, produce managers can consistently offer bananas with the ideal color that can lead to higher sales and repeat customers.

- 2. Right-size your displays.** If the banana display table is too large, fruit doesn't turn over fast enough to maintain freshness. Yet a table that is too small will require too-frequent restocking. Also consider the traffic flow in the produce department, since good-looking bananas can tempt an impulse buy as well as a planned purchase.

"Regardless of display size, RipeLock helps keep bananas longer at optimal color, without frequent restocking or extra deliveries," Frye said.

- 3. Consider display surfaces.** Since bananas bruise easily, a soft padded surface is best. Be sure to display bananas in a single layer with the stems up.
- 4. Manage inventory.** Accuracy in sales forecasting is another key to a successful banana program – or a potential headache for the produce manager.

“If the sales forecast is too high and the bananas don’t sell fast enough, the manager can’t hold them to sell later. Unlike potatoes or apples, bananas won’t last a few days, let alone into next week,” Frye said. “On the other hand, if the sales forecast is too low, the store may run out of yellow bananas and have to display fruit that is too green for customer acceptance.”

The RipeLock Quality System reduces that stress by giving managers a broader window of freshness and more inventory flexibility – even for stores with less frequent deliveries or no weekend deliveries. With RipeLock, bananas last longer at the consumer-preferred yellow color, both in the store and in the home.

- 5. Don’t forget the back room.** An effective banana display starts while fruit is staged for stocking. If the back room is unrefrigerated or not air conditioned during hot weather, stored bananas will continue to ripen — potentially beyond the optimal color stage. “In most back-room environments, RipeLock eliminates the need to open bags and reduces the need to ‘air stack’ boxes,” Frye said.

“Your banana program is an essential component of a produce department that can deliver loyal customers. Be sure you have bananas available in the right color to meet consumer expectations and the proper inventory to maximize your sales,” he said.

For more information about the RipeLock Quality System, visit AgroFresh.com/RipeLock or contact Kevin Frye at kevinfrye@agrofresh.com.

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About AgroFresh

AgroFresh Solutions, Inc. (NASDAQ: AGFS/AGFSW) is a global fruit and floral industry leader, providing a portfolio of innovative products and specialty services to maintain the freshness, quality and value of fresh produce and flowers. Its core products include SmartFresh™, the proven post-harvest freshness protection technology for produce; Harvista™, the advanced pre-harvest technology for apples and pears; and RipeLock™, the innovative post-harvest quality system for bananas. AgroFresh currently operates commercially in more than 40 countries and employs more than 170 people worldwide. For more information, visit www.AgroFresh.com.

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