

RD Fresh expands product line for transportation

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Armed with testimonials from foodservice operators and chefs, the RD Fresh Distributing company took its produce preservation product to the streets this year, literally, with the launch of Transport Fresh for use in refrigerated trucks and trailers.



Tyvex packets of a proprietary mix of minerals and coconut shell carbon are the secret behind produce preservation and shelf life extension offered by RD Fresh. This year the company expanded its product line to the transportation industry, offering installation in refrigerated trucks, trailers and intermodal containers to reduce shrink from spoilage. Transport Fresh, like the foodservice and consumer versions of RD Fresh, is a proprietary mix of three zeolites — aka naturally occurring minerals — and coconut shell carbon packed in Tyvek pouches, said Steve Gerson, RD Fresh developer and founder.

Amco Produce, Leamington, Ontario, began using Transport Fresh in April, Gerson said, and is seeing less decay of its fresh greenhouse vegetables during shipping. For refrigerated trucks, trailers and intermodal containers, the RD Fresh mineral pouch is placed in a cardboard holder referred to as a pallet topper. It can also be placed between stacked pallets or tucked between rows of pallets.

Small packets of RD Fresh can also be placed in individual clamshells destined for retail produce aisles. A consumer version of the product, Veggie Fresh, is available for use in home refrigerators.

The Transport Fresh line also includes a cardboard panel that can be attached to the ceiling of a refrigerated truck or trailer. Each panel holds up to three 12-ounce RD Fresh packets that work for three to four weeks to absorb humidity and “grab and hold” ethylene gas emitted by fresh produce. “At restaurants in walk-in coolers we have documented 60% bacteria reduction in the first day and 50% over the first four days,” Gerson said, who began working to develop a way to reduce fresh produce shrink when he was a food and beverage director at various resorts in the Caribbean.

Gerson worked for two years to develop the optimal mix of coconut shell carbon and three naturally occurring minerals, clinoptilolite, chabazite and montmorillonite. He began marketing it in 2008. The minerals were selected because they are microporous solids referred to as molecular sieves. Unwanted molecules of gases and odors adhere to the minerals while others pass through unaffected.

Dozens of restaurants, retailers, schools, institutional foodservice operators and resorts are listed on the RD Fresh website as customers.

Video testimonials from chefs and other customers describe how they have seen decreased humidity in coolers and increased shelf life and overall freshness of produce when RD Fresh is in place. For foodservice operations the company installs and maintains the RD Fresh packets for a monthly fee.