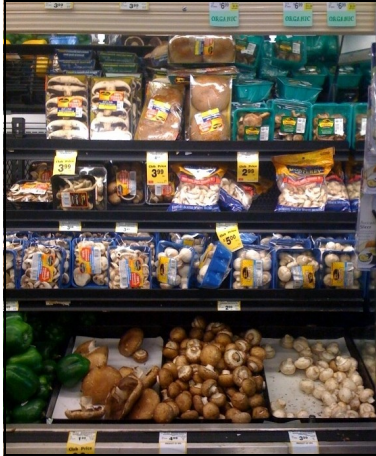


the mushroom marketplace



Let's Move! Advocates a Moving Message for Retailers



Last month, First Lady Michelle Obama launched her campaign, *Let's Move!*, committing to combat the epidemic of childhood obesity within one generation. Although the program is in its initial stage, the nationwide initiative could offer retailers many opportunities to promote fresh mushrooms.

With an estimated one in five children ages 6 through 17 considered overweight, the Obama administration is striving to bring healthier food options to what Michelle Obama terms the country's "food deserts," or areas with low accessibility to healthy foods. In fact, the government has earmarked \$400 million to open more grocery stores and healthy food outlets in underserved urban and rural areas over the next seven years.

Retailers have an opportunity as part of the *Let's Move!* campaign to ensure current stores and expansions offer a variety of healthful foods such as fresh mushrooms, which her campaign suggests experience limited supply and higher cost in underserved areas.

A recent survey by Rose Research found that mushrooms rank as consumers' third favorite vegetable. And as consumers increasingly recognize the health benefits of mushrooms, growers and retailers can work together to ensure this superfood is more widely available in food stores everywhere.

Beyond accessibility of healthful foods, other elements of the First Lady's campaign include:

- **Healthy choices** – providing access to simple tools, support and information to help parents make healthier choices for their family.
- **Healthier schools** – ensuring kids have access to healthy meals and nutrition education in schools.
- **Physical activity** - increasing opportunities for kids to be physically active, both in and out of school and creating new opportunities for families to be moving together.

For additional information on *Let's Move!*, please visit www.letsmove.gov.

2009 Super Sales for the "Superfood"

Despite the weak economy, fresh mushroom sales climbed 6% in 2009 for the second year in a row as consumers continue to recognize the vegetable's "superfood" qualities.

Moreover, fresh mushroom sales dollars growth in 2009 outperformed not only the total produce category, which was flat, but every top 20 produce category as well. In pounds, mushrooms recorded a nearly 8% increase, while total produce rose 6%, according to FreshLook Marketing for the 52 weeks ending Dec. 27.

Front-of-pack labels that highlighted mushrooms' natural vitamin D levels, unique recipe ideas and promotional efforts such as going pink in October for Breast Cancer Awareness month increased consumers' awareness of the category and contributed to increased demand. In fact, the pink partnership with City of Hope proved to be the industry's largest movement of mushroom sales in any time period.

Additionally, the Mushroom Council released updated industry research that highlighted the benefits of marketing fresh mushrooms through secondary displays, assortment, promotions and cold-chain management. The report found that properly marketing mushrooms could contribute to increased overall retail sales by at least 6.1%.

A closer examination of 2009 sales showed:

- White button mushrooms grew 3.6% in dollars and 5.8% in pounds.
- Brown mushrooms increased 10.6% in dollars and 12.3% in pounds.
- Specialty mushrooms rose by 6.7% in dollars and 8.7% in pounds.
- Sliced mushrooms led the growth in pounds, with white pounds up 7%, brown pounds up 1.6% and specialty pounds up 14.8%.

Nearly 1 billion
people globally are
vitamin D-deficient.

- Michael F. Holick
M.D., Ph.D.

Enthusiastic Interest in Vitamin D Continues

2010 is an important year for vitamin D as consumers, the scientific community and the media continue to show growing interest in this 'sunshine vitamin' and its potential effect on health issues.

Throughout 2009, several noteworthy developments were made, including:

- The Institute of Medicine (IOM) convened a committee on calcium and vitamin D to determine if the current intake recommendations should be increased.
- A scientific panel of vitamin D experts held a meeting at the University of California and recommended increasing vitamin D intake to 2,000 IU from all sources for healthy adults.
- The Albert Einstein College of Medicine released a report concluding that an estimated 70% of U.S. children have low levels of vitamin D.



Additionally, the National Institute of Health, Office of Dietary Supplements suggests vitamin D may have a positive impact on some leading health conditions, including cancer, type 1 and 2 diabetes, hypertension, glucose intolerance and multiple sclerosis among other medical conditions.

This is only the beginning of the discussion. In late 2010, the IOM will issue a report that could recommend an increased Dietary Reference Intake for vitamin D and calcium. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is also expected to address vitamin D in its 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

With sales of vitamin D supplements increasing by 127% in 2008 and 117% for the first quarter of 2009^[1], it's clear that interest has surged. Show customers that you're following the trends by promoting healthful vitamin D foods in your store. Offer point-of-sale displays highlighting mushrooms' as a natural source of vitamin D and stock displays with the top three best-selling mushroom varieties – white button, crimini and portabella.

[1] Frost & Sullivan, Vitamin D: Health Unlimited, March 18, 2010

Case Study: Customer Point-of-View

It's no surprise that a mushroom display that's well cared for and culled can help increase sales, but what do shoppers really look for in a mushroom display? The Mushroom Council recently took to the social media "streets" through an online contest to find out just what consumers are attracted to when it comes to mushroom displays. Participants were asked to submit a photo of their favorite display, which was then voted on by other consumers – and the results are in.

The findings from this contest show that:

- Consumers have an affinity towards fresh mushroom displays that include bulk mushrooms.
- The most popular displays included an assortment of fresh mushroom varieties.
- The photos that received the most votes by other consumers were of well stocked displays.

Implications from this contest are in line with the Mushroom Council's report that recommends four best practices that can help retailers see a lift in overall store sales of up to 6.1%. These include:

- The best performing stores offer bulk mushrooms in the well, which create a positive customer image for the category.
- Bulk white, brown and specialty mushrooms play a small, but key role in driving superior category performance.
- Mushroom displays should be dominated by white mushrooms (70% of the display) as they remain the foundation for a strong category; popular brown mushrooms should occupy 20% and specialty, value-added and dried mushrooms should each be given 5% of shelf space.

When planning a promotional strategy, remember that packaged and bulk mushrooms should be promoted together and bulk white mushrooms can be priced higher than packaged white mushrooms without damaging performance. And to further drive consumer interest in the category, maintain a balanced, well stocked variety of fresh options.

The Mushroom Marketplace is a publication of the Mushroom Council for professionals in the grocery industry.

For more information visit www.mushroominfo.com/retail

