



## LIFT INDIVIDUAL RETAIL SALES BY 6.1 PERCENT WITH PROVEN MUSHROOM BEST PRACTICES

*Report finds mushrooms are a produce department value generator*

**April 20, 2009** — Marketing fresh mushrooms correctly can pump an additional \$44 million into the U.S. retail industry, representing an increase in sales at an individual store of at least 6.1 percent, according to Encore Associates January 2009 Retail Best Practices study commissioned by the Mushroom Council. Retailers can potentially grow mushroom sales and improve profits in their stores by implementing four simple and proven best practices.

“Produce managers can exercise some control over consumers’ view of their produce department through the quality and assortment of products they keep on their shelves,” said Bart Minor, president and CEO of the Mushroom Council. “The results from this study demonstrate the halo effect that mushrooms have on the entire produce department and role they can play in generating retail sales.”

Fresh mushrooms are one of the highest profit per square-foot items in the entire produce department, according to an AC Nielsen study, and consumers who purchase fresh mushrooms have a basket size that is more than double the value of a shopping basket without mushrooms.<sup>1</sup> By leveraging the following best practices with mushrooms, retail stores may see a significant lift in their overall sales.

### **Placement:**

Retailers should **offer secondary displays** of fresh mushrooms in locations adjacent to complementary food items to stimulate impulse purchases. By adding a display of fresh mushrooms - low in calories and a natural source of Vitamin D - to other sections of the store, retailers can capitalize on consumers’ health and wellness desires and offer tasty and healthy meal alternatives. Examples of this include placing portabella mushrooms in the soy/veggie burger section or white mushrooms alongside bagged salads.

### **Assortment and Display:**

Proper assortment based on customer desires can translate into increased sales and volume. **Mushroom displays should be dominated by white mushrooms (70 percent)** as they remain the foundation for a strong category, with brown mushrooms occupying **20 percent** and specialty, value-added and dried mushrooms each given **five percent** of shelf space.

### **Promotions:**

To fully realize sales potential, **produce managers should promote fresh mushrooms at least eight times per quarter and discount them by more than 25 percent each time.** Packaged and bulk mushrooms should be promoted together, but packaged whole and sliced mushrooms should not be promoted together at the same price point. Additionally, multiple mushrooms should be featured in in-store advertisements and should include a white mushroom in the same ad when promoting brown, specialty and dried mushrooms.

### **Cold Chain Management:**

Proper care and culling can improve the quality of fresh mushrooms and extend their shelf life both in-store and after purchase. **Temperature is one of the leading factors affecting the freshness of mushrooms, and by keeping them cold and dry – at temperatures less than 35 degrees throughout distribution and in the store cooler – produce managers can stem a premature decline in freshness.**

“Mushrooms are a top showcase category among other leading produce categories, and these findings indicate that they can significantly impact the overall image of the produce department, and ultimately drive overall store sales,” said Minor.

For additional information or to view initial findings from the January 2009 Retail Best Practices study, visit <http://www.mushroominfo.com/retail/newsletters.html>.

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<sup>1</sup> ACNielsen, Differentiation with Mushrooms, 2004

**About The Mushroom Council:**

The Mushroom Council is composed of fresh market producers or importers who average more than 500,000 pounds of mushrooms produced or imported annually. The mushroom program is authorized by the Mushroom Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act of 1990 and is administered by the Mushroom Council under the supervision of the Agricultural Marketing Service. Research and promotion programs help to expand, maintain and develop markets for individual agricultural commodities in the United States and abroad. These industry self-help programs are requested and funded by the industry groups that they serve. For more information on the Mushroom Council, visit [mushroomcouncil.org](http://mushroomcouncil.org).