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## Mushroom sales grow despite economy

By Jim Offner

Organics tend to be among the first victims hit by any recession, and organic mushrooms are no exception.

However, the category still continues to grow, sources said.

"It's affected them a little bit, but there are more and more people coming on organically," said Dylan Anderson, president of Oceanside, Calif.-based shipper Kinoko Co. "We'll be able to see sales increase dramatically when the economy turns around."

The San Jose, Calif.-based Mushroom Council said the economy hasn't slowed the category's growth by much.

"There is certainly a market for products like organic mushrooms," said Laura Fries, a council spokeswoman.

Sales of organic mushrooms, from October 2007 to October 2008, increased 19% in the U.S., Fries said. Organic white mushrooms sales were up 5%, while organic brown mushroom sales were up 52%, she added.

"Clearly, brown mushroom sales are growing significantly and organic whites are growing at the same rate as the overall mushroom category," Fries said. "Organic mushrooms accounted for 3% of overall mushroom sales."

Gary Schroeder, president of Kennett Square, Pa.-based Oakshire Mushroom Farm Inc., and Greg Sagan, senior vice president of sales and marketing for Avondale, Pa.-based Modern Mushroom Farms, said their company's organic mushroom sales have been fairly flat.