



MUSHROOMS LEAD THE WAY AS BEST PERFORMING VEGETABLE IN 2009

Sales rise despite continued recession

San Jose, Calif., — March 4, 2010 — Fresh mushrooms were the best performing vegetable among the top 20 retail produce categories in 2009, with **sales up six percent** compared to overall produce sales that came in flat. In pounds, **mushrooms were up nearly eight percent** with total produce only up six percent, according to FreshLook Marketing for period ending [December 27, 2009](#). This continued growth propelled retail sales nationwide to **nearly 800 million dollars** for the year.

While many produce categories came in flat or saw a decline in sales, retailers enjoyed positive sales in terms of mushroom tonnage. Furthermore, consumers purchased more mushroom pounds per unit in 2009 than in 2008 despite the continued recession.

“2009 was significant for fresh mushrooms, as many consumers moved into or expanded within the category because of the many nutritional benefits and meal options they offer,” said Bart Minor, president of the Mushroom Council. “Consumers became more aware of mushrooms’ nutritional benefits in part due to front of pack labels that highlight their natural vitamin D levels, recipes and promotional efforts like going pink in October for Breast Cancer Awareness month.”

Additional sales highlights from 2009 include:

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

In 2009, the Mushroom Council released updated industry research which highlighted the benefits of marketing fresh mushrooms through secondary displays, assortment, promotions and cold chain management. Additionally, the industry partnered with City of Hope in the fall of 2009, to pink its tills at supermarkets nationwide in support of breast cancer research. This promotion led the industry’s largest movement of mushroom sales in any time period.

“This could be the decade for mushrooms,” said Minor. “Over the past few years, the mushroom industry has focused on emerging scientific research proving mushrooms are a true superfood.”

[Research](#) has shown that mushrooms are the only produce item with natural vitamin D and the ability to increase vitamin D levels. They’re also an excellent low calorie option that is fat-free, cholesterol-free and very low in sodium while providing several nutrients, including riboflavin, niacin and selenium. Additionally, mushrooms have become a whole food of interest among scientists in ongoing breast and prostate cancer research.

For more information on fresh mushrooms or the Mushroom Council, please visit www.mushroominfo.com.

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.

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