



Produce Marketing Association

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NEWSFLASH

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New PMA Research Finds 80% of Produce Sold at Retail Carries Labeling

Newark, Del. -- In a recent survey of U.S. retailers to gauge current labeling practices in the produce department, the Produce Marketing Association has found that nearly 80% of all bulk and packaged produce sold to consumers carries a label of some sort. The survey was conducted to determine how much produce is labeled – particularly as the association works on packaging issues and industry standards and technology initiatives. The survey of 64 supermarket operators, representing 17,000 stores (57% of all U.S. retail stores), was conducted by Opinion Dynamics Corporation for PMA. The results are statistically valid within a 6% margin of error and carry a 95% confidence level.

Two-thirds of the produce marketed in the stores, by both volume and sales, is merchandised in bulk. One-third of the produce is packaged (all of which carries a label). The survey found that 71% of bulk produce sold carries a Price Look Up (PLU) sticker or other label on the product itself, while 29% does not.

The widespread prevalence of PLU labeling in the industry is due in part to the work of the Produce Electronic Identification Board, an industry-wide organization focused on improving the electronic collection and communication of sales data for fresh fruits and vegetables. The board consists of leaders from all areas of the produce industry supply chain. The PEIB is managed by PMA staff.

“The PLU number is a valuable tool as it relates to both the classification and identification of fresh food commodities. This does not only apply to produce, but to other fresh food products as well. Until such time retailers have the need to identify loose commodities with unique item numbers (similar to the UPC for packaged good products), the PLU number will continue to provide a very efficient solution for

identifying fresh produce items,” said PMA Vice President of Industry Technology Gary Fleming.

In addition on its ongoing PLU efforts, PMA is also working on an Industry Product Database Service, which will provide the framework for e-commerce to work more cost effectively in the produce industry. The IPD Service is expected to be available in 2004, with service providers and others being certified to the IPD standards.

The Produce Marketing Association (PMA), founded in 1949 and based in Newark, Delaware, is a not-for-profit global trade association serving over 2,400 members who market fresh fruits, vegetables, and related products worldwide. Its members are involved in the production, distribution, retail, and foodservice sectors of the industry. PMA's core purpose is to sustain and enhance an environment that advances the marketing of produce and related products and services.

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