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%.