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Modified Atmosphere Packaging Expert to attend FRUIT LOGISTICA 2011

PBI-Dansensor, a world leader in gas analysis for modified atmosphere packaging (MAP), will for the first time attend the prestigious Fruit Logistica exhibition to be held in Berlin on 9-11 February.

PBI-Dansensor's presence at the event demonstrates the increasing importance of MAP in the fresh fruit and vegetable sector. There is a growing trend to add value to fresh produce by preparing it as a convenient and healthy ready-to-eat food item. Typical products include salad leaf and prepared fruit salads.

A modified atmosphere within the packaging can radically improve the shelf-life of such products. For a packet of mixed salad, for example, a typical packaging atmosphere might consist of 5 per cent oxygen, 15 per cent carbon dioxide and 80 per cent nitrogen. This could increase the shelf life of the product to as long as eight days, whereas under air it would be lucky to remain fresh for four or five days due to natural spoilage processes.

A modified atmosphere can also have a dramatic effect on the browning of cut fruit and vegetables such as potatoes and apples, which is a result of an oxidation reaction brought about by enzymes that are released when the flesh is damaged. In these cases, having a mixture of carbon dioxide and nitrogen in the packaging, with no oxygen, can prevent browning for several days, as opposed to just a few minutes or hours in air.

Ensuring that the correct gas mixture is present in the package is crucial, and PBI-Dansensor provides a range of technologies to monitor the mixture either manually or automatically, as well as to detect leakage from sealed packages.

"Many companies in the fresh fruit and vegetable sector are new to MAP and need expertise to set up the appropriate quality control and quality assurance systems," says PBI-Dansensor's sales and marketing manager Karsten Kejlhof. "For example salads are often packed on a flow-packaging machine where the gas is flushed into the packaging. If the machines are not equipped with an automatic flow regulation system, a lot of gas can be wasted."

PBI-Dansensor will be on hand to offer advice to companies new to MAP, as well as to those who already use MAP, to highlight ways in which their processes could be made more efficient.

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