

## Press Releases

### California Strawberry Commission's UC-Davis Study Shows Corrugated Common Footprint Performs Better than RPCs

#### Faster Cooling, Less Bruising, Lower Shipping Costs

**INDIANAPOLIS, IN (August 2, 2002) -**

A new research study conducted by UC-Davis showed that strawberries packed in 5-down Corrugated Common Footprint containers cool faster, suffer less bruising, and can fit more product per pallet than in RPCs.



The study was co-sponsored by the Reusable Pallet and Crate Coalition (RPCC) and the Fibre Box Association (FBA), on behalf of the California Strawberry Commission, and conducted by the University of California - Davis. Its purpose was to compare the effects of packing strawberries in 5-down RPCs vs. 5-down Corrugated Common Footprint containers and vs. 6-down industry standard corrugated trays. This is important as grocery retailers continue moving toward adoption of standardized 16x24 containers for fresh produce.

These independently generated results sharply contradict the "conventional wisdom" contention that all products cool faster in RPCs with their open, fully-vented design.

Strawberries were packed in plastic clamshells, then placed in shipping container alternatives (5-down corrugated Common Footprint and 5-down RPCs, as well as the traditional 6-down corrugated tray as a control). They were placed on pallets in a cooling tunnel where pressure drops were measured and controlled to industry standard conditions. Five temperature probes in each pallet layer continuously measured the temperature drop within each pallet. Tests were conducted with the air moving through pallets in both side-to-side (40") and end-to-end (48") directions.



Results showed:

- Strawberries packed in the Corrugated Common Footprint containers cooled statistically and significantly faster than in RPCs. (The 5-down corrugated containers cooled in 54-60 minutes, compared to 68-75 minutes in RPCs.) The study suggests that because corrugated containers can be designed to place vent holes strategically for individual commodities and interior pack configurations, the cooling air may be channeled more directly through the vent holes of the interior clamshell containers than in open-vented RPCs.
- In simulated truck, air-ride suspension transportation testing, all of the Corrugated Common Footprint boxes generated statistically and significantly less fruit bruising than the RPCs.
- For the industry standard single-layer strawberry flat, all corrugated containers tested allowed more strawberry clamshells to be packed on a pallet than any of the RPCs evaluated.

Brian O'Banion, vice president of the Fibre Box Association, said, "We're very pleased with the results of this FBA/RPCC jointly funded test. This is the first cooling study that I know of that included use of primary strawberry packs and also controlled the cooling tunnel pressure drops carefully. It shows that thorough statistical analysis is needed to assess performance comparisons before conclusions can be drawn based on 'conventional wisdom' - sometimes the physics perform differently than originally assumed."

Dwight Schmidt, executive director of the newly-formed Corrugated Packaging Alliance, added, "Faster cooling time, optimized pallet loads, and reduced bruising as measured by an independent, objective third party, all provide credible, reliable evidence that the Corrugated Common Footprint is the best standard package alternative for strawberries. We're committed to promoting the Corrugated Common Footprint based upon reliable data, where its advantages can be proven, as in this test. More studies will be done in the future as needed."