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NEW CERTIFICATION PROGRAM FOR FLAVOR-RICH PRODUCE ANNOUNCED

In an initiative aimed at building back consumer confidence in the flavor attributes of fresh produce, Scientific Certification Systems (SCS) launched its third-party Flavor Management and Flavor Rich Certification programs at the 2005 PMA Fresh Produce Summit.

Under these programs, SCS combines the latest discoveries in flavor research with direct sensory evaluation and chemical/physical product analysis to help growers and shippers optimize the flavor of key fruits and vegetables and provide retailers with systematic approach for improving the flavor quality of the products they sell.

Retailers have begun using the service to establish flavor specifications for specific produce categories, compare labels and augment their field inspector flavor evaluations. The Flavor Rating Service, a key component of SCS's flavor management approach, offers retailers a systematic method for measurably upgrading the flavor quality of key fruits within the produce department over time.



"We believe that through these programs, it will be possible to increase the flavor ratings of key produce categories from 20 percent to 50 percent within 12 to 18 months of implementation, depending upon the sophistication of the retailer's label selection process," said Wil Sumner, SCS technical director of food and agriculture services. "This would represent a distinct competitive edge for retail participants." Sumner described SCS's flavor management approach as providing the tools needed to refine and sort labels, including cost-effective sensory analysis.

Sumner said seed companies and breeders expressed interest in the program to identify specific varieties that offer the best flavor characteristics.