



#### Upcoming Events

United FFVA '99 - February 6-8 - San Diego, CA

NY State Vegetable Conference - February 9-11 - Liverpool, NY

PMA's Annual Produce Conference - March 13-16 - Fort Myers, FL

Int'l Fresh-cut Produce Association Conference - April 15-17 - Tampa, FL

*I'm sure 1999 will be another challenging year in the fruit and vegetable arena.*

*Weather continues to be one of the biggest question marks and one of the most difficult factors with which the industry must deal. We are happy to be able to provide packers, shippers and end-users with a tool that impacts your bottom line in a positive way. There are enough things in this business to worry about without having to worry about premature ripening and mold problems.*

*We want to help keep your worries to a minimum.*

#### President's Corner



## Cecelia Features High-Tech Production

ORANGE COVE -- Cecelia Packing Corporation, a cutting-edge packing house nestled among the citrus groves near Orange Cove in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley, has been evolving over the past five years into one of the industry's leaders.

"We've made a number of important technological advancements in our operation," said David Roth, president of Cecelia. "Now our goals are to increase our volume and become a more substantial player in citrus industry."

Cecelia is expanding into the Bakersfield/Maricopa and Delano/McFarland areas of Kern County. The company recently purchased 1,500 acres there and will be planting more citrus soon.

Cecelia Packing was founded in 1978 and after slightly more than a decade of operation was purchased by Jim Cotter of Los Angeles in 1989. That is also when Roth joined the Cecelia team. Cotter now owns some 1,500 acres of citrus in the Orange Cove area. Plus, he is a partner on another 1,500 acres and manages 450 more acres.

In the 80's the company shipped about a half million cartons annually. Now that volume has been increased three times, to 1.5 million packages a year of navels, Valencia's and mineolas. Cecelia has about 50 grower members representing approximately 4,500 acres from Bakersfield to Clovis.

Packing, management and office staff amounts to more than 100 individuals and during harvest, picking crews total between 150 and 200.

Over the past five years, Cecelia has modernized and computerized its operation, adding a high-tech pressure washer, a new optical grader and state of the art optical fruit sizer. During this technical renovation, Cecelia also constructed an additional 2,000 square-foot office for sales staff, field representatives and office personnel.



In an effort to keep their packing and shipping operations at the highest standards, Roth and his team also tackled the minor decay problems they were experiencing with some of their export shipments.

"Anything shipped in excess of 12 to 18 days was questionable," he said. "We tried different waxes and chlorine washes, but didn't see our decay problems disappear until we started putting Ethylene Control sachets in each carton of citrus bound for the export market."



Originally, Roth experimented with EC sachets in approximately 20,000 cartons of citrus that Cecelia shipped to Hong Kong. He reported that all the packages of fresh fruit arrived in "excellent" condition. Cecelia Packing ships about 120,000 cartons to Hong Kong and another 80,000 cartons to Japan every year.

"For the past two years we've had 'zero' claims when we used the sachets in our Hong Kong shipments," he said. "We are very pleased with all our export arrivals and there are no side effects."

"Ethylene Control sachets have become a valuable asset and that's why we continue to use them. Besides, now that our customers have seen the difference, they request that we include Ethylene Control sachets in all their shipments," Roth said.

## Cleveland Restaurateur thinks Healthy & Fresh

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- If you happen to be visiting Cleveland, you've got to eat at Richard J. Baribault's TeaHouse Noodles, a "Nu Asian Diner" that is attracting people who want fast food, but want to eat healthy. Not only does he prepare tasty and healthy Asian-inspired dishes, but also has learned how to keep his produce the very freshest.

Three years ago, Baribault and his wife Kathy opened their tiny TeaHouse Noodles, probably the only noodle house in Cleveland. They plan on opening in several mall locations where he sees a need for fast, healthy food.

Baribault, who traveled extensively around Asia two decades ago, patterned his noodle house after those he saw in every Far East village. "Everywhere I went -- Singapore, Japan, Thailand -- there were noodle shops on practically every corner," he said. "You could see exactly what you were getting, and the food was easy, quick, and good."



To keep good health and freshness at the forefront of his TeaHouse Noodles operation, Baribault discovered Ethylene Control filters and sachets, which keeps produce as fresh as possible. "Occasionally I had problems with produce in the cold box turning brown. However, since using the Ethylene Control filters and packets I've been able to stretch the freshness of our produce well into the week," Richard said. "On Mondays, I routinely prepare a large supply of vegetables to be used in the restaurant during the week. I put them in their own storage containers with a couple Ethylene Control sachets in each container and that maintains their freshness for at least four days. As we expand to other locations, we will prepare our produce for all our restaurants at one location and send the bins of fresh vegetables to each location without worry of losing the edge on freshness."

The basic dish of the house is a blend of crisp, freshly steamed bok choy, nape cabbage, snow pea pods, carrots, onions, bean sprouts, and jicama, loaded onto mounds of nutty California brown rice or firm Thai rice noodles caressed by Baribault's original sauces. Vegetarians love the menu and carnivores can add chicken or shrimp to their noodle or rice bowl. He relies on a lot of fresh produce and only steams his vegetables -- no oils or flames.

The diner's juice bar offers a selection of hot teas, freshly squeezed juices and cold smoothies made of yogurts, banana and various fruit juices.

Baribault says he went into the noodle business after deciding Clevelanders needed a place to get healthy food. Many of his customers are "regulars" who return time and again for the healthful foods and lively atmosphere.

## Responses To Ethylene Gas

UC, Davis researchers say the removal of ethylene gas is "critical to prevent...injury." Note the following commodities: (1) Lettuce: Iceberg lettuce is extremely sensitive to ethylene. (2) Carrots: Ethylene exposure causes bitter flavor from isocoumarin formation. Thus, carrots should not be mixed with ethylene-producing commodities. (3) Broccoli: Extremely sensitive. Floret yellowing is the most common symptom. (4) Cucumbers: Highly sensitive. Accelerated yellowing and decay will result from low levels, 1-5 ppm. (5) Tomatoes: Moderate ethylene producer. Avoid storage or shipment with other sensitive commodities. (6) Snap Beans: Causes loss of green pigment and increases browning at low levels.



## US Army Uses Ethylene Control to Stretch Shelf Life

According to a research paper issued by the US Army Natick Research, Development and Engineering Center, it is clear from their studies that ethylene absorbing blankets containing alumina coated with potassium permanganate should be used in all fruit and vegetable storage areas in order to ensure maximum shelf life at an affordable cost. Many ships and commands in the Navy are successfully using the blankets.

One of the simplest ways to remove ethylene from the atmosphere is to absorb and oxidize it with potassium permanganate.

In one test, a shipment from Alameda to South Korea via surface vessel, the atmosphere in the shipping container was tested. The container with the ethylene absorber blanket had a 1.8 ppm ethylene. The container without had 29 ppm. In most cases, the vegetables shipped with EC absorbers only showed about a 1 to 3% decay factor. The control van had from 11% to 100% decay. In another test, plums and apples were kept at 40 degrees for 10 weeks. The test chamber recorded 44% spoilage, but the control chamber without any ethylene filters had 100% spoilage. Fruit with ethylene absorbers lasted more than twice as long before spoiling, the Army reported. Copies of the report are available by calling our office, (800) 200-1909.



## What People Are Saying



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**Richard Baribault, owner**  
**TeaHouse Noodles**  
**Cleveland, Ohio**

*"For the past two years we've had 'zero' claims when we used the sachets in our Hong Kong shipments,"*

**David Roth, President**

**Cecelia Packing**

**Orange Cove, CA**