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By Fred Searle

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It's Fresh! signs major Ecuador deal



Agreement with Ecuadorian banana association Acorbanec will see shelf-life tech introduced across 28 growers and exporters in the country

British shelf-life tech firm It's Fresh! has signed a deal with Ecuadorian banana association Acorbanec that it says will "help transform" the country's banana trade.

Through the deal, It's Fresh! technology will be introduced to the association's 28 affiliate growers and exporters in Ecuador, which is the world's leading exporter of bananas, sending \$3 billion worth of the fruit to 71 countries worldwide.

The UK company's filters, which can be used both in transit and in store, absorb the ripening hormone ethylene from fresh fruit and vegetables and have been proven to prolong the green life of bananas throughout the supply chain.

It's Fresh! representatives will travel with Acorbanec around the key Ecuadorian regions of Guayaquil and Machala to meet with associates, company owners and other exporters to present the filters and offer free training programmes on the benefits of ethylene control.

The company reported that Acorbanec is currently working on reducing costs and sees It's Fresh! as "a tool to save money by delivering better arrivals and longer green life".

Industry standards require bananas to remain green during shipment and distribution, meaning that any bananas that have ripened in transit are rendered unsaleable and go to waste. There is therefore big pressure on banana growers and exporters to avoid this eventuality.

Research conducted by Dr Manuel Madrid in 2018 demonstrated that the use of It's Fresh! filters doubled banana green life to an average of 70 days or more when used in a modified atmosphere.

Acorbanec's executive director Richard Salazar said: "Extending the green life of bananas is vital – not just for business but also for addressing the global food waste crisis. We think the It's Fresh! technology could be a real game changer for our affiliates and look forward to introducing them in the coming months."

Managing director of fresh produce advisory Fruit Profits Dr Manuel Madrid added: "It is clear that the carbon footprint of our banana consumption must be addressed and the new technology developed by It's Fresh! provides a means of ensuring far more bananas make it to our shelves."

It's Fresh! said it was keen to replicate this type of agreement with other fresh produce associations across Latin America and worldwide.

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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