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Sandy Jahnke, V.P. of Esprit Miami inspecting a sea container at PRO Institute.

Esprit Miami Attends PRO Institute

Miami, Florida, April 21, 2006 -- Esprit Miami joined floral industry leaders in Volcano, CA on February 26 - March 1, 2006 for the fifth PRO Institute, focusing on postharvest and marketing issues.

Led by Dr. George Staby, president of Perishables Research Organization and founder of the PRO Institutes and Chain of Life Network® (www.chainoflifeflora.org) and Dr. Michael Reid, Professor, University of California, Davis, participants addressed the latest advances in floral and plant care and handling, quality, production and postharvest. In a relaxed environment, companies came together to share information and experiences.

A key topic at the PRO Institute was Sea Containers. Unlike standard sea containers, those in testing by floral importers, and those widely used in the produce industry are refrigerated. While taking longer to transport than air-cargo, flowers shipped by sea containers maintain the Cold Chain and are showing favorable results. Flowers do not go through the stresses of non-refrigerated air transport and transfers at airports, which can translate to longer vase life for the end consumer.

"Two main reasons to ship flowers in this manner are reduced transportation costs (about 40-50% less from Ecuador to California) and maintaining the cold chain. Preserving the cold chain is mainly responsible for the often-observed improved flower quality over methods involving air transport. In addition, both dry and wet pack shipments are not only cost effective but available inventories are known days in advance," Dr. Staby explains.

Dr. Staby further offers, "Shipping and storing non tropical flowers at their proper temperatures (32-33°F) can decrease all of the following: respiration (heat production), ethylene production, ethylene sensitivity, disease problems (Botrytis), water loss, wet flowers, flower and leaf fall, leaf yellowing, and stem bending. The above results in increased vase life, consumer satisfaction, purchasing, and profits."

Testing of refrigerated sea containers is ongoing and is too soon to tell whether this will be a viable transportation alternative for floral products.

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ABOUT ESPRIT MIAMI, INC.

Esprit Miami, Inc. is a leading provider of fresh cut flowers, bouquets and consumer bunches to the Wholesale Florist and Mass Market industries. Esprit imports its products from around the world including Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Italy.

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