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Westfalia Fruit trials exclusive technology targeting food safety and sustainability

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Current industry practice is to manually deep clean avocado ripening rooms to maintain high levels of food safety and eliminate residue from naturally occurring fruit mould. Westfaliaâ??s new method uses a probiotic uniquely distributed within a water mist circulated throughout ripening room, delivering several clear benefits.

Andrew Mitchell, Head of Innovation at Westfalia Fruit, explains, â??Our innovative probiotic liquid is similar to that found in yoghurts which can help with the natural balance of our digestive system. This type of probiotic is also very good at attacking yeasts and moulds. We have developed the application of this natural probiotic further as a liquid, Westfalia Fruit is the only avocado supplier able to do this.â?•

In an initial study, there was a 65 percent reduction in micro levels in the trial room compared to the control room. The study also found that mould on the individual fruit was significantly reduced. Avocados that had been treated with the probiotic remained mould free for up to fifteen days, which resulted in a reduction of internal rot of around 20 percent. Using this method also has several other clear benefits â?? it eliminates the need for chemical cleaning materials, avoids the need to shut down ripening rooms for cleaning, and can also be applied to hard-to-reach areas such as ventilation ducts and fans.

Westfalia is conducting a second trial, applying the probiotic liquid from the roof of the ripening room, and expects this to achieve a 90 percent reduction in micro levels compared to the control room. Fruit quality will be continuously monitored over a four-week trial in preparation for initial rollout across Westfaliaâ??s UK facilities.

â??From there, we will be managing a role out to our European operations and extend trials across a range of products including citrus and mango. Looking even further ahead with the benefit of Westfaliaâ??s integrated supply chain, the unique misting technique can be applied within shipping containers, giving fruit the benefit of the probiotic application before reaching its final destination, Andrew continues. This project is a clear example of how Westfalia continues to ensure consistent high-quality avocados are available for consumers to enjoy 365 days of the year.

We are very excited about this breakthrough, as well as the immediate benefits we anticipate a further reduction in potential waste product whilst successfully and naturally maintaining food safety, all of which directly aligns with our ambitious sustainability goals.â?•