



IFCO SYSTEMS

TITLE	Reusable plastic containers (RPCs) for fresh produce transport
COMPANY / ORGANIZATION	
FOOD CHAIN AREA	1. Raw material transportation
KEYWORDS	reusable plastic containers, RPC, transport, shipping, fresh produce, temperature control
ISSUE ADDRESSED	Fresh produce shrink occurs due to physical damage and quality loss from inadequate temperature control. During transport from grower-shippers to retail stores, approximately 10-15% of produce is rendered unsalable.
SOLUTION	<p>Reusable plastic containers (RPCs) reduce fresh produce shrink by increasing temperature control and reducing physical damage. A smooth interior reduces mechanical damage while ventilation allows for faster cooling and field heat removal. Containers are easy to assemble, ergonomic, and reduce the need for box cutters and staples. A patented wave-bottom design maximizes pack-out while strong sidewall support increases sturdiness. Pallets can also be cross-stacked, further increasing their stability.</p> 
EXPECTED BENEFITS	<p>Increased temperature control: Product in RPCs was better hydrated and in better condition than product in wax boxes. Removal of field heat was twice as fast compared to cardboard.</p> <p>Reduced physical damage: Studies show that 0.8% more produce arrived damaged in disposable packaging vs. reusable packaging.</p> <p>Improved resource efficiency: Compared to cardboard box systems, RPCs produce 82% less solid waste; 39% lower total energy requirements; and 29% less greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>Reduced supply chain costs: Savings of up to \$1 per case have been identified. In particular, the ergonomic and stackable design of RPCs drives 20-40% labor reductions in distribution centers.</p>
CASE LINK	<p>http://www.rpkiosk.com/pdf/waste-reduction-with-ifco-rpcs-november-2013-1.pdf</p> <p>http://www.ifco-us.com/america/na/en/biz_rpc/grower/index.php</p>
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