

# Ultrasonic mist keeps fruit and vegetables fresh

**They are already in supermarkets in France and Germany: mist generators which wrap fresh produce such as fruit and vegetables in a magical mist. 'Consumers love it', says Jan Verschoor from Food & Biobased Research. 'And that is reflected in the sales. But just as important is that these installations keep the fruit and vegetables fresh for longer.'**

A mist generator consists of a vibrating plate that comes into contact with water in a reservoir. The ultrasonic vibrations cause the water to separate into fine droplets.

An air stream generated by a ventilator carries the fine mist away via pipes and blows it over the produce. Which remains fresh for longer. Verschoor and his colleagues in Wageningen researched among other things its effect on the shelf life of fruit, vegetables and salads for Contronics, a Dutch producer of spray generators. With good results. There are already a couple of supermarkets in the Netherlands with mist generators, and if it is up to Contronics, many will follow. The results of the research from Wageningen were less positive for the catering sector.

'Catering companies may only display fresh products in salad bars for two hours', says Verschoor. 'They must then throw them away in accordance with legal guidelines.' With this restriction the conserving effect of spray generators is negligible. However that will not say that the catering industry cannot use spray generators. 'Spray increases the appeal of the product', says Verschoor. 'It attracts people.'

Supermarkets which store fruit and vegetables have less strict storage times and can quite noticeably prolong their shelf life with spray.

Verschoor cannot say exactly how much longer. 'That depends on the product and the conditions. But a bunch of carrots which would have become withered within two days remains fresh thanks to a spray.'



*Trial arrangement for research into the conserving effect of spray*

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