

RFF Retailer

OGIES FOR HEADQUARTERS EXECUTIVES

Changes in the Mind at Walmart

ite label and 'win-play-show'
center stage.



Store No. 1, Rogers, Ark.

www.rffretailer.com  PUBLICATION



INSIDE:

IRI Data

Cheese

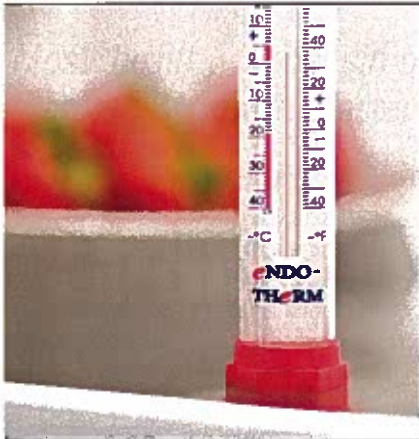
Soup

Ice Cream

Indian Foods

Bread & Pastry

Can New Thermometer Cut Shrink and Refrigeration Costs?



Looking to reduce shrink and cut your refrigeration costs? Draper, Utah-based RefrigeratorSaver says it has just the product for you – a new generation of thermometers that has already proven itself in Europe and is now available in the United States.

The EndoTherm thermometer looks like a garden-variety thermometer, but it reports the temperatures of products – rather than the air around them. Spencer Freedman, managing partner of RefrigeratorSaver, says interest from retailers on this side of the Atlantic has been strong. In addition to its offices in Utah and London, England, the company will be opening offices in New York and Toronto in early March.

Travis Waller, director of food safety for Associated Food Stores, Salt Lake City, says the thermometers have been tested in the refrigerated departments of one of the company's independent retailers, who was favorably impressed with them. He's considering rolling them into some corporate stores for further tests.

"They help in cases that run marginal temperatures, such as in the deli, where doors are also always being opened and closed," says Waller. "They give you added security, know-

ing the product temperature is 41 degrees or less in the deli cases when the air temperature could fluctuate."

Traditional thermometers, Freedman points out, can be unreliable given the vagaries of air currents and the constant opening and closing of doors. Even laser probes of packaging surfaces can be inaccurate because of reflections off clear-wrap plastic.

The EndoTherm is a standard glass and alcohol thermometer – immersed in a patented silicone gel food substitute. When placed alongside refrigerated or frozen foods, it reads the temperature of the food, not the air.

Freedman says the new thermometers can help retailers determine if refrigeration equipment is working properly, and doesn't have a blocked condenser or insufficiently sized fans, for example. The devices help retailers keep cases accurately set to the

proper temperature, thus keeping foods at the ideal temperature and preventing over- or under-refrigeration. Variations of only a degree or two can hasten food spoilage and endanger food safety, or cause energy-intensive equipment to run more than necessary, he notes. Freedman estimates it would cost between \$1,500 and \$2,000 to have the EndoTherm thermometers throughout all the refrigerated and frozen food areas in the average-sized store.

According to the company's website (www.refrigeratorsaver.com), Prof. Timothy Jones of the University of Arizona has noted that in 2005 (the most recent year where data is available), America's supermarkets, convenience stores and restaurants threw away 27 million tons of food – most of it due to improper refrigeration. ■

Softer Prices Coming? Stored Goods Are Up

If the rules about supply and demand still work in this crazy economy, you might expect to see some softness in various commodity prices in the months ahead.

Frozen food stocks in refrigerated warehouses on Dec. 31, 2008 were greater than year-earlier levels for turkey, pork, cheese and chicken, among others. That's the word from (hang onto your hat!) the National Agricultural Statistics Service, Agricultural

Statistics Board, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.

Here's a quick chart to summarize the highlights:

Commodity	% Chg. Vs. Month Ago	% Chg. Vs. Month Ago
Butter	1%	23%
Red Meat	4%	10%
Pork	7%	20%
Pork Bellies	54%	-6%
Poultry	-1%	16%
Chicken	-6%	3%
Turkey	10%	53%

Like we said, this data is for the period ended Dec. 31 of 2008. You can get a lot more detail (and we mean a lot more) at www.nass.usda.gov.