

Research can be used to increase consumption

By Pamela Riemenschneider

(Oct. 19) HOUSTON — Science and industry were brought together in the name of advancing the consumption of fruits and vegetables at the FAV Health 2007: the International Symposium on Human Health Effects of Fruits and Vegetables.

The symposium, held Oct. 9-13, was coordinated by the Vegetable and Fruit Improvement Center at Texas A&M University in College Station and was chaired by Bhimu Patil, director of the center.

The purpose of the seminar, Patil said, was to bring scientists who research all areas of fruits and vegetables, from production to nutrition to cancer prevention, together with the produce industry that uses that research to promote consumption.

“Consumers need to really understand the science behind fruits and vegetables,” Patil said. “If we do not provide the science, then I do not think we are doing a very good job communicating with consumers.”

More than 300 people from 38 countries attended the conference. Sponsors included several familiar names in the produce industry, including Edinburg, Texas-based J&D Produce Inc.

“It’s a great concept to get all of these people together,” said J&D Produce president and owner Jimmy Bassetti. “It’s information that, as a grower and a marketer of our products, I find valuable. We have to find ways to be more convenient and more informative to the consumer.”

Ray Prewett, president of Mission-based Texas Citrus Mutual and the Texas Vegetable Association, was involved with the seminar through the Vegetable and Fruit Improvement Center.

Retailers frequently request nutritional information, Prewett said, so it is important to know what’s going on in the scientific world.

The first two days of the conference involved presentations of research in progress, followed by two days of marketing presentations.



Bhimu Patil, director of the Vegetable and Fruit Improvement Center at Texas A&M University, College Station, says more than 300 researchers, growers and marketers from 38 countries attended the FAV Health 2007 Symposium held Oct. 9-13 in Houston.

Other corporate sponsors included The Kroger Co., H.E. Butt Co., Green Giant, TexaSweat Citrus Marketing Inc., the U.S. Apple Association, the California Dried Plum Board and Sunkist Growers.

Patil said organizers plan to put speaker presentations on the FAV Health 2007 Web site, <http://favhealth2007.tamu.edu>.