

From the pages of [Produce Business UK](#)

[Apeel Sciences](#) is in the final administrative stages of regulatory authorization with the European Union (EU) to apply its plant-derived food waste prevention technology to a number of fruits, including avocados and citrus. Already available in the USA, the breakthrough product has the ability to reduce food waste for both consumers and retailers. With the issue high on the agenda in the UK, *PBUK* catches up with the California-based company ahead of exhibiting at [The London Produce Show and Conference](#).

A World Economic Forum Technology Pioneer and one of *Time* magazine's 50 Genius Companies, Apeel claims its product is unique in being the only commercially available solution that is both plant-derived and a true end-to-end shelf-life extension solution that maintains harvest quality from the supplier, through distribution, to the retailer, and all the way to consumers' homes.

Subject to approval, the firm anticipates making its solution available by mid-2019 for avocados sold in the UK and the EU by [Nature's Pride](#), one of the region's leading distributors, on the back of [a partnership announced earlier this year](#).

"The partnership will bring Apeel Avocados — avocados with double the edible shelf-life on average — to European households for the first time," Natalie Shuman, Director of Industry Marketing at Apeel, tells *PBUK*.

"The EU and the UK represent the second-largest import market for avocados, so we see great potential to help stakeholders in this supply chain unlock the value that Apeel's shelf-life extension technology brings.

"Europe is a natural next step for us considering the large population of customers and consumers seeking more sustainable food options. We are anticipating clearance by mid-year, and are working with supply and retail partners to determine the optimal time to enter the market upon approval."



Extending usage beyond avocados

Apeel has been working behind the scenes to establish relationships with avocado industry leaders in the UK and the EU in preparation for its 2019 commercial launch.

Beyond that, Apeel intends to expand its usage into other categories in both the UK and the EU. Organic produce that is treated in the US with Apeel's organic formulation can be imported into the EU and the UK also.

And that's just the beginning - Apeel claims its technology has [proven to be effective at improving the quality and shelf-life of more than two dozen types of fruits and vegetables](#).



“While Apeel will be focusing on a commercial launch with avocados in the EU, we anticipate regulatory clearance on a number of other fruits such as citrus, mangoes, and more, giving us the runway to expand into other categories,” Shuman comments.

“The demand for Apeel in new categories and new markets is very strong. We're working around the clock to expand the availability of our solution so we can make an even bigger dent in the fight against food waste.”

In the US, Apeel is currently available for application on avocados, asparagus and limes, which are [sold at major US grocery stores](#), including Kroger, Costco, Harps, Martins, with fruit supplied by Del Rey, Horton, Eco Farms and Nature's Pride. Further strategic partnerships are due to be announced shortly.

Three important benefits

On average, the firm says it is seeing in the US at least a 50% reduction in shrink, 5-10% sales growth, significant margin expansion and reduction in shopper product returns; thereby demonstrating a “real” return on investment in both profitability and shopper satisfaction.

“We launched Apeel avocados [in the US] last summer with the likes of Kroger, Costco and Harps, and from there we have seen significant retail and supply programme expansion and consumer demand,” Shuman explains.



“If the results we are seeing in the US are any indication, buyers in the EU and the UK will see three important benefits: a massive reduction in shrink, a significant increase in profitability and the ability to be a leader making a real difference in the global fight against food waste.”

The key to the product’s added value is the extended shelf-life it provides, since this gives more time for all stakeholders in the supply chain from the farm to the kitchen.

Shuman says more time for suppliers means easier inventory management, a better arrival rate and superior quality associated with their brand.

“Retailers can merchandise and increase space allocation with confidence, and can deliver a longer lasting product that will increase shopper satisfaction and loyalty,” she points out.

“The majority of food waste happens in the home, and Apeel helps resolve the number one pain point that consumers have with produce - wasting good food and hard earned money.”

[WRAP research](#) shows that the UK throws away 7.1 million (m) tonnes [in 2015] of household food

waste a year in the UK, compared to 8.1m tonnes in 2007. Of that total, [WRAP](#) estimates that almost three quarters (70% of the total) is food we could have eaten (5m tonnes), worth around £15 billion.

Apeel was founded with a mindset that the solution has a global reach and multiple benefits; from helping small holder farmers in remote areas overcome the lack of cold chain infrastructure to feed more people, to solving one of the biggest pain points for large retailers and the end consumer.

“Every day we are learning new ways the solution can unlock value in different commodities and for different parts of the food distribution system,” Shuman reveals. “What we love most is that we looked to nature for inspiration and found the answer to address food waste reduction - one of the most crucial challenges we face as a society.”

How the solution works

Apeel is plant-derived coating applied post harvest that essentially creates a second edible ‘peel’ that minimises water loss and oxidation - the two primary causes of spoilage. This creates an optimal micro-climate in every piece of produce that lasts from the time it is applied, through to consumption.

The coating is made from lipids and glycerolipids that exist in the peels, seeds, and pulp of all the fruits and vegetables that we already eat. Apeel says it works hand-in-hand with its supply partners to customise its formulation for the unique characteristics of the particular fruit or vegetable variety and its growing regions to ensure the ultimate success of the product.

The fact that the coating is plant-derived is part of the solution’s successful reception among consumers too.

“We are finding that because we are essentially using food to protect food, consumers are not only receptive to Apeel produce, but have a high purchase intent as indicated by the thousands of online store locator searches we're receiving,” Shuman reveals.

“In the US, we have a very proactive consumer marketing effort to educate consumers about the benefits of Apeel, what it is made of and how it works. We plan to proactively engage consumers in the EU and UK markets ahead of our launch.”

Seeing is believing - The London Produce Show

To support its European launch, Apeel will be exhibiting at The London Produce Show on 5-7 June, 2019.

As well as presenting product demonstrations, members of Apeel’s senior team, EU retail relations department and marketing personnel will be on hand to discuss partnership opportunities.

“Interested suppliers and distributors can visit us at our booth at The London Produce Show, or visit our website at apeel.com to submit a business inquiry,” says Shuman.

“The timing and setting of The London Produce Show line up perfectly with our expansion timeline, and it provides an intimate setting that allow for more quality time and productive conversations with our retail and supply contacts.

“The results we’re getting are so astounding that they really need to be seen to be believed, so trade shows like The London Produce Show provide the perfect stage for people to witness the power of our product firsthand.”

Register [here](#) to attend The London Produce Show 2019.

The three-day event takes place on 5-7 June at The Grosvenor House Hotel on Park Lane.

[All stories](#)