

Robinson Fresh, part of C.H. Robinson, will collaborate with food system innovation firm Apeel to introduce Mexican limes with a plant based coating to extend shelf life into European markets starting in June.

In a statement, Apeel said that its plant based coating extends the shelf life by keeping moisture in and oxygen out, and can be applied to a variety of fruits and vegetables. In trials, Apeel said that compared to traditional waxed limes, its solution brought on 33% more bright green limes and 91% fewer shriveled limes over the approximate time a lime would last in a consumer's kitchen.

"From consumer research, we know that European shoppers look for greener and firmer limes at the point of purchase," says Erich Klawuhn, SVP Product at Apeel. "With longer-lasting limes retailers can give consumers what they are looking for, and can confidently build bright, abundant displays while reducing waste. Additionally, consumers can buy more with confidence that the limes they purchase are fresh and will last longer."

The European expansion of longer-lasting limes is a continuation of a successful partnership with Robinson Fresh, which has distributed Apeel-protected limes to retailers throughout the U.S. since 2020. In 2021, Robinson Fresh and Apeel prevented an estimated 1.5 million limes from going to waste at retail, avoiding 110 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions and conserving 19 million gallons of water.

"We are excited to continue building on our ongoing commitment to reduce waste and make the food ecosystem more efficient, while also offering differentiated ways for retailers to meet their own quality and sustainability needs," said Michael Castagnetto, President of Robinson Fresh. "By expanding our capacity with Apeel, we're able to open up new markets and trade routes around the world and deliver the benefits of longer-lasting sustainable produce to even more retailers and consumers."

The quality and performance of Apeel-protected limes in the U.S. to date represents a solid indication of the impact the produce will soon have throughout Europe. Data over the last couple of years in the U.S. shows that Apeel-protected limes maintain freshness and green color for around 14 days more than untreated limes, which helps prevent waste and avoid environmental impacts.

This has provided U.S. retailers with evidence that Apeel's technology can serve as a key component of their sustainability initiatives, while giving their customers more time to help them waste less.