

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



## 2008 BANNER YEAR FOR MUSHROOMS

*Retail sales, volume up following boost in produce preference*

**March 04, 2009** — Sales for fresh mushrooms were up 4.3 percent in 2008 and volume remained positive, according to IRI Food Store Sales Research for period ending December 28, 2008. While many produce staples struggled to gain retail sales momentum, mushrooms remained resilient, showing strong results.

The data revealed that fresh mushrooms were the fourth largest growth category in produce with positive sales in 2008 and were among six of 20 categories to demonstrate positive volume in what was one of the toughest economic years since the Great Depression.

These results are in line with a May 2008 Rose Research survey that showed that consumers pointed to mushrooms as their **third favorite vegetable**, ahead of top performers corn, asparagus and carrots.

“During a year when consumers are paying attention to how they spend their money, there was a resounding and growing demand for mushrooms,” said Bart Minor, president and CEO of the Mushroom Council. “This growth highlights the fact that consumer demand for fresh mushrooms is strong, making them a reliable value generator for the produce department.”

In fact, studies have shown that mushrooms are a key contributor to overall store sales – consumers who shop for mushrooms have shopping baskets more than double the value of a non-mushroom shopper. Gaining in popularity for their variety, versatility and nutritional value, mushrooms have quickly become the hidden treasure in any produce department.

Key drivers of ‘08 results were:

- Brown mushrooms grew by **nearly 12 percent**
- Sliced white, brown and specialty mushrooms **increased by 3 percent**
- Sales of specialty mushrooms **increased by 7.4 percent**

“Fresh mushrooms are a tasty and healthy meal option for consumers, and they are quickly becoming the produce department superfood,” said Minor.

### **About The Mushroom Council:**

The Mushroom Council is composed of fresh market producers or importers who average more than 500,000 pounds of mushrooms produced or imported annually. The mushroom program is authorized by the Mushroom Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act of 1990 and is administered by the Mushroom Council under the supervision of the Agricultural Marketing Service. Research and promotion programs help to expand, maintain and develop markets for individual agricultural commodities in the United States and abroad. These industry self-help programs are requested and funded by the industry groups that they serve. For more information on the Mushroom Council, visit [mushroomcouncil.org](http://mushroomcouncil.org).

###