

Temperature control crucial for vaccine distribution

By Cindy Fitton

Vaccines require storage within a defined temperature range. Even slight departures from recommended storage temperatures will reduce potency and could result in inadequate immune response. Each time vaccine is exposed to excessive heat or cold, the potency deteriorates; and once potency is lost, it can never be restored. The worst case is that patients unknowingly receive a vaccine that provides no protection at all.

It is anticipated that more than 300 million doses of injectable COVID-19 vaccine will be made available in the U.S. in the upcoming months, and the safe storage of vaccines is a crucial component of protecting patients against this virus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued guidelines and recom-

mendations related to vaccine storage and handling and is encouraging all providers to move toward implementing these guidelines as soon as possible. Vaccine appearance is not a reliable indicator that the vaccine has been stored under appro-

- Train staff on routine and emergency SOPs.
- Designate a primary vaccine coordinator.
- Use purpose-built or pharmaceutical-grade units designed to either refrigerate or freeze.

Follett's freezers and refrigerators provide uniform temperatures.

priate conditions, and the CDC Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit outlines best practices from Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommendations, product information from vaccine manufacturers and scientific studies. These best practices include:

- Develop and maintain clearly written, detailed and up-to-date storage and handling standard operating procedures (SOPs).

- Use a "digital data logger" or other appropriate temperature monitoring device.

- Store vaccines in their original packaging with lids closed until ready for administration.
- Check and record storage unit minimum and maximum temperatures at the start of each workday.

Major retailers are part of Operation Warp Speed, a collaboration of drug makers, distributors, pharmacies and federal agencies to develop and test vaccines, get them approved by the Food and Drug Administration and make them available to all Americans. With a long history of providing flu shots to customers, many retailers al-

ready have pharmacists trained to provide immunizations. Millions of Americans will get vaccinated against COVID-19 at their neighborhood pharmacy or grocery store, and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is working with national and regional retail chains to serve as vaccination centers.

Do you have enough temperature-controlled capacity to meet this exploding need for vaccine storage? Do your current refrigerators and freezers meet the demanding criteria to maximize the efficacy of vaccines to conquer this pandemic? Now is the time to invest in the equipment that will help restore a sense of normalcy to the country.

Follett, the market leader in high-performance pharmacy refrigeration and known for precise temperature control, has a full range of refrigerators and freezers available in the sizes and configurations to meet all your vaccine storage needs. Engineered for quick recovery after door openings and uniform cabinet-wide temperatures, Follett purpose-built, medical-grade refrigerators and freezers feature heavy-duty compo-



An array of configurations will fulfill storage needs.

nents and full stainless steel construction for exceptional reliability.

More information on how Follett can help ensure you are prepared can be found at www.follettice.com/areyouready.

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Pandemic drives PLMA to all-digital trade show

NEW YORK — In another sign of the times, the Private Label Manufacturers Association (PLMA) will launch its first all-digital trade shows for the U.S. at the start of 2021. The announcement of the virtual events marks an unprecedented move in 40 years of hosting major industry trade shows internationally.

Over the course of five days, Monday, February 1, through Friday, February 5, PLMA Live! presents Private Label Week will introduce a succession of category-focused online exhibitions featuring leading suppliers of store brand food and nonfood products to American retail chains.

Earlier this year, PLMA was required to postpone its enormously popular in-person annual event, so the association pivoted to offer the event online by accelerating completion of a digital trade show platform that had been in development for years, according to PLMA president Peggy Davies.

PLMA unveiled plans for the event last summer as the association announced the cancellation of its 2020 Private Label Trade Show, which was to have taken place this November in Chicago.

"So many unforeseen challenges resulting from the pandemic continue to disrupt the retail marketplace and supply chain, requiring retailers and manufacturers alike to search out novel and innovative avenues for their businesses. PLMA has had to innovate as well," says Davies. "We knew we had to deliver for the sake

of members who have the same needs as before to keep on building their business under these most extraordinary circumstances. The same is true for retailers. Their need for reliable sources of every kind of product doesn't disappear. Quite the contrary. And when the market environment changes, the capabilities of PLMA members are not easily replaceable. Everyone knows the show must go on and it will go on — virtually."

The virtual event will run February 1-5.

From exhibitors on PLMA's virtual trade show floor, featured categories will include all types of nonfood products: health and beauty, cosmetics, over-the-counter drugs, personal care, housewares, household supplies, and more. Among the consumables, fresh, frozen and refrigerated food, dry grocery and beverages will also be offered.

The digital event will afford visitors located anywhere unparalleled opportunities to discover new products 24/7, and then establish live connections with leading suppliers for face-to-face video chat. Participants may exchange virtual business cards during and outside the scheduled show hours to request a call back when available or when most convenient for them.

Emerson initiative recognizes trend

WAYNE, Pa. — A broader consumer interest in health and wellness continues to drive an acceleration in the demand for natural products. As shopper trips continue to shift and be more selective, natural brands must have an omnichannel presence to meet the consumer's needs along their health and wellness journey.

In light of that, the Emerson Group has created Emerson Naturals, designed to service the dynamic natural channel and provide an opportunity for natural brands to reach consumers shopping in this unique and trendsetting channel. Expanding upon the best-in-class retail partnerships that Emerson is known for; it believes Emerson Naturals will not only be a valuable solution for natural brands but a valued partner for natural channel distributors, retailers and the overall industry.

In addition to traditional sales management, Emerson Naturals brings value-added capabilities such as data and category analytics, category leadership and turnkey order to cash logistics solutions that Emerson is known for. This offering will be unique in the market, providing clients an opportunity to partner with one organization for all their sales and logistics solutions across the natural, mass, drug, grocery, club and value-discounter channels and e-commerce.

To lead the initiative, Kimberly Weld has been named general manager of Emerson Naturals. Weld has spent her career in the natural products industry and brings a tremendous passion and enthusiasm for the channel and brands represented by Emerson. Her roles have encompassed product formulation, sourcing and manufacturing through successful market launch, sales and general management. Most recently, she served as North American GM for H&H Group, with brands



Kimberly Weld

'The demand for natural products will only expand.'

including Swisse Wellness, the leading Australian supplement brand, as well as organic baby food brand Healthy Times. Prior to that, she spent nine years as the North American vice president at PharmaCare U.S., part of the original team that successfully relaunched Sambucol in the U.S. market, along with supplement brands Real Health and Promensil.

"We are confident that the breadth of Kimberly's experience will provide a depth of knowledge to support our natural brands in all stages of their growth," says Emerson.

Weld says, "Natural brands

have an omnichannel presence, and we are excited to expand the breadth of services we offer to include natural retailers and distributors. As importantly, this expansion will offer tremendous value to our traditional retail partners as we proactively identify emerging trends and opportunities. Simply, as shopping behaviors are changing and channel lines are blurring, we want our natural brands to be available wherever consumers are shopping, and work with our retailers to help create a tailored offering.

"The demand for natural products, transparent marketing and better-for-you solutions will only expand, and we intend to continue in a leadership role with the brands we work with. Authenticity of message will be paramount, as we work to create the same trust with our natural retailers we enjoy with our traditional retail partners."