

Coles Supermarket Frost/ice Affected 'fresh' Veg and Recalcitrant Management

by shopper *Thursday, Jul 18 2013, 12:09am*

international / prose / post

Before proceeding we should first establish that the American modelled Coles supermarket chain seems to be the only outlet in Oz that displays ice intolerant (easily frost damaged) fresh produce on ice-filled display trays over extended periods; a routine that drastically damages stock by reducing nutrients, quality and storage life. With the exception of broccoli and brussels sprouts, which are shipped in ice, almost all other fresh vegetables on sale in Oz supermarkets are frost/ice INTOLERANT, which simply means that contact with frost/ice severely damages the product - this particularly applies to the now popular Asian varieties.



I had occasion to visit my local Coles outlet in Eastgate, Bondi Junction during a peak shopping period yesterday and by chance bumped into the duty manager next to the ice tray displays. I informed him that staff were removing fresh produce hours before closing and thereby disadvantaging late night shoppers, an issue we had previously discussed and I had raised with head office in Melbourne.

As we conversed I happened to glance at the Asian vegetables on the ice display trays and easily perceived the deleterious effect the frost/ice was having on the Asian vegetables -- the normally slender and straight leaves of the vegetables were shrivelled and discoloured from direct contact with ice. I pointed this out to the duty manager who childishly attempted to deflect from the issue (frost damaged stock) by referring to turnover and other irrelevancies, saying that stock was refreshed daily -- which does not compensate for customer purchased (damaged) stock with a greatly reduced storage life at home! However, I did not pursue the matter at the time as I had business to attend to, but returned later that evening to discuss the issue further and do my regular shopping.

Shoppers are aware that Coles ALSO has frost/ice free climate controlled open display CABINETS for fresh produce, which, ironically houses the broccoli and brussels sprouts among other produce.

As I wished to draw the attention of head office to this PERSISTENT PROBLEM and not compromise local management if possible, I asked the same duty manager if it was upper management policy or store management discretion that determined which vegetables were displayed where. To my slight shock the manager took on a defiant tone and challenged me to ring and complain, as the entire issue, "was not my responsibility," he said. So naturally I sought clarification and asked directly, "is it your managerial responsibility, a policy decision or determined by floor staff haphazardly where Asian vegetables, various lettuces and other frost/ice sensitive produce are displayed?" A very

simple question, one would think, but again one met with an irate, defensive response -- he refused to answer the question but responded aggressively with comments like, "I don't care what you do, ring and complain to them!"

Now it would seem obvious that a simple problem, very easily rectified, was becoming a major issue for no good reason.

Of course, head office in Melbourne will be duly informed and are welcome to review all security video footage of my two visits and discussions with management on the day, the visuals tell it all!

In the meantime I must say that both Melbourne and local management have been extremely uncooperative in view of these easily remedied matters especially issues relating to disadvantaging late shoppers (fair go please) and drastically reducing quality and storage life of popular varieties of vegetables - one would hope 'unintentionally' at this stage, but in view of these extraordinary responses by management, one wonders!

American Style Management

American and Japanese branches of a multi-national corporation decided to engage in a competitive boat race.

Both teams practised hard and long to reach their peak performance. On the big day they felt ready.

The Japanese team won by a mile.

Afterward, the American team was discouraged by the loss. Morale sagged. Corporate management decided that the reason for the crushing defeat had to be found, so a consulting firm was hired to investigate the problem and recommended corrective action. The consultant's finding: The Japanese team had eight people rowing and one person steering; the American team had one person rowing and eight people steering!

After a year of study and millions spent analysing the problem, the firm concluded that too many people were steering and not enough were rowing on the American team. So, as race day neared again the following year, the American team's management structure was completely reorganised.

The new structure: four steering managers, three area steering managers and a new performance review system for the person rowing the boat to provide work incentive.

The next year, the Japanese won by two miles.

Humiliated, the American office laid-off the rower for poor performance and gave the managers a bonus for discovering the problem.