

Emerging Refrigeration Trend: Glass Door Cases for Merchandising Fresh Meat

Over the past few years, retailers have increasingly begun using reach-in door cases for medium temperature applications like dairy, produce, deli meat, and more. Recently, some innovative grocers have begun using them to display fresh meat, including beef, pork and chicken products—and the response has been overwhelmingly positive.

Not only do glass door cases preserve fresh meat up to 2-3 days longer than open cases, but the cases deliver a more even temperature throughout, helping to keep the meat consistently fresh in every area of the case, while also holding color longer. Additionally, retailers report that one glass door case in particular helps to reduce shrink by as much as 50%.

“In the past, merchandisers have feared that glass door cases would deter shoppers, creating a physical barrier between them and the food,” explains Carl Petersen, marketing and advertising manager at Zero Zone, Inc., a leading manufacturer of refrigerated display cases. “Instead, we are seeing the opposite today. Shoppers actually perceive that glass door cases keep products fresher and safer. In terms of using reach-ins for fresh meat, our customers are seeing great results with our Crystal Merchandiser. They’re telling us it has enhanced the shelf life of their product, they’re saving money, and their customers are getting a fresher product—not to mention they are selling more meat.”

Zero Zone has the data to back up shoppers’ preference for glass door cases. In a 2008 survey, 94% of respondents stated they did not mind opening doors to get to the products inside; 86% stated it is more comfortable to shop door cases; when asked if they would spend more time in the frozen food/dairy aisles if doors were on all the cases, 75% said yes; and when asked, “In regard to food safety and quality, would you rather shop an open case or a door case?,” 86% responded in favor of door cases. In addition, in a controlled research study recently released by ASHRAE, comparing sales and energy use of open cases versus door cases, the researchers concluded that glass doors do not impede sales. And, of course, the energy savings between the open and closed cases were found to be significant.

Other benefits of reach-in doors include a substantial decrease in energy bills when compared to traditional cases—in fact, the Crystal Merchandiser from Zero Zone uses up to 84% less energy than multi-decks and up to 45% less energy than competitive reach-ins. The Crystal Merchandiser's 74-inch CoolView Doors increase product visibility of the Crystal's extra facings and capacity. In fact, the Crystal Merchandiser allows for up to 35% more product facings and up to 25% more cubic capacity. And its narrow design saves 5 to 7 inches of valuable floor space over multi-decks, widening aisles for a more comfortable shopping experience.

I feel your readers would be interested in learning more about the move toward reach-in cases for displaying fresh meat. I've attached a photo of the Crystal Merchandiser and more are available upon request. Please contact me for more information about the product or to set up an interview with Carl Petersen. Additional information also can be found at www.zero-zone.com.