

SPROUTS OPENS NEW STORE, GAINS SILVER EPA AWARD

Sprouts Farmers Market has opened a new store in Carmel Mountain Ranch, Calif., and immediately decorated it with an environmental award from the EPA's GreenChill Partnership.

The store qualified for a silver award from GreenChill, which works with supermarkets to reduce emissions of refrigerants that damage the earth's protective ozone layer and contribute to climate change.

Keilly Witman, manager of the partnership, presented the silver plaque at the store's opening on March 31.

"Sprouts Farmers Market shares the EPA's commitment in decreasing refrigerant emissions through innovative refrigeration design and leak tight practices in all existing and future stores," said Jerry Stutler, Sprouts Farmers Market Vice President of Construction and Facility Engineering.

To achieve silver certification, a store must meet stringent environmental criteria, including the following:

- use refrigerants that do not damage the Earth's protective ozone layer;
- reduce the size of its refrigerant charge by at least 50 percent from the industry average;
- reduce annual refrigerant emissions to 15 percent or less of total store capacity;
- test refrigeration systems for adherence to GreenChill's leak tightness guidelines.

Witman, the GreenChill manager, hailed Sprouts for being "off and running to reduce the company's impact on the Earth's ozone layer and on climate change." A company store in Round Rock, TX, received a gold certificate earlier this year. Both Sprouts certificates were achieved with help from Hussmann Refrigeration Equipment and Systems, Stutler noted.

Just 28 of the nation's 35,000 grocery stores have received partnership certification so far.

By meeting or exceeding GreenChill criteria, Sprouts is helping to prevent deterioration of the Earth's protective ozone layer and is combating climate change, the EPA says. Ozone in the upper atmosphere protects the planet from harmful ultraviolet radiation, which can cause skin cancer, cataracts and other ailments. But even refrigerants that don't damage the ozone layer can contribute significantly to global warming. That's why reducing store emissions is doubly important, the EPA adds.

Sprouts, which has 47 stores in four states, joined the GreenChill partnership last May.