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ISU, ScanTech Sciences working together to revolutionize food

By Cydney McFarland cmcfarland@journalnet.com Nov 24, 2015



Cydney McFarland/Idaho State Journal

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Dolan Falconer, the CEO of Scantech Sciences Inc., stands in front of the commercial grade electronic cold pasteurization operation at the RISE Complex in Pocatello.

POCATELLO — Idaho State University has teamed up with ScanTech Inc. at the Research and Innovation in Science and Engineering (RISE) complex to commercialize a new, chemical free treatment process for produce and meat.

The process is called electronic cold pasteurization and has been used to sterilize medical equipment and treat cancer. However, ScanTech, an Atlanta-based tech company, is planning to use it to sanitize and extend the shelf life of food.

“We’re looking at double, triple and quadrupling shelf life,” said ScanTech CEO Dolan Falconer. “It also means we can stop using harsh chemicals on our food.”

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According to Falconer, instead of being treated with chemicals, the produce is showered with electrons that have been accelerated using a linear accelerator. The process works as pest control, pathogen control and extends shelf life by removing all bacteria, mold and fungus that contributes to the decay of food.

The RISE Center has served as the research and development facility for ScanTech as its prepares to open its first commercial facility in McAllen, Texas.

“ISU supplied the facility and the brain power,” said Falconer.

To carry out testing, ScanTech brought in \$4 million worth of equipment and infrastructure to the RISE complex, which has been available to graduate students from ISU, according to Falconer.

Aside from an opportunity for students to work with new technology, Falconer said this collaboration is also great exposure for the university.

According to Falconer, this new technology could revolutionize the food industry, which will bring ISU recognition on a global scale. It also puts the university in a good position to get grants from the US Department of Agriculture for more research projects and partnerships.

This technology may also bring some new opportunities for Idaho by allowing Idaho potatoes to be shipped further without rotting or sprouting.

There are no plans for a second commercial facility as of yet. However, based on consumer demand and value, Falconer said ScanTech would be open to discussing a facility in Idaho or in major shipping hubs on the Pacific coast.

Electronic cold pasteurization is not a new technology, but its use in food production is relatively new.

“We haven’t invented how we’re getting the results that we’re getting,” said Falconer. “We just invented the device that does it best.”

The process is already backed by the USDA as an ideal way to make our food safe for consumption.

“If anything is contaminated beforehand, we can stop that at the facility,” said chief supply chain officer Jaymie Forrest. “Organic products can be treated as well since there is no chemical additive.”

According to Falconer, ScanTech has taken it a step farther by figuring out exactly how much radiation they can zap the food with to kill big and bacteria but not compromise the quality of the food.

Forrest said their system — which will fast tracks food across the US/Mexico border and move food straight from the facility to grocers — is more efficient on a number of levels.

“There are efficiencies throughout the entire chain,” said Forrest. “Longer shelf life allows for better replenishing plans for retailers and moving it straight from the facility to retailers makes the risk of contamination lower but also makes a contamination easy to track.”
