

# Ryan Instruments

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**MARKET:** Highly perishable produce, particularly strawberries.

**CUSTOMER:** Sunset Strawberry Growers, Santa Maria, Calif.

**PROBLEM:** Sunset Strawberry Growers was unable to collect full payment from a broker in Salinas, Calif.-- about \$11,000 -- for one of its strawberry shipments. Strawberries are very perishable food items and sensitive to temperature abuse. The broker refused to pay Sunset Strawberry because, when he received shipment, the strawberries were mushy and unfit to sell. As a result, Sunset filed a claim for full payment from the broker with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

**APPLICATION:** Sunset Strawberry Growers -- to ensure the quality of its product while in-transit -- followed the practice of placing a Ryan time/temperature monitor (TTM) on each strawberry shipment. During Sunset's hearing against the broker, the USDA allowed Sunset to submit, as evidence, the time/temperature charts from the disputed shipment. That's because Ryan tests and calibrates TTMs before and after each trip, and keeps a permanent record of all temperature information from microprocessor-based TTMs.

**BENEFIT:** By using the TTM records, Sunset was able to document its claim against the broker. The temperature records showed that the strawberries were frozen in-transit by a third-party carrier after leaving Sunset, which caused them to spoil when they thawed.

**CONCLUSION:** Sunset wasn't responsible for the shipment's spoilage, so the USDA ruled in Sunset's favor. Sunset collected \$11,228.65 from the broker. "We won the case because Ryan showed that the shipment had frozen for so many hours," says John Coelho, a partner in Sunset Strawberry Growers. "We have a lot of receivers and buyers that request Ryan Instruments. Ryan has a good reputation."