COMMERCIAL METHYL BROMIDE RECAPTURE

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The first California Methyl Bromide Recapture System is up and running at Well•Pict, Inc. in Watsonville. Well•Pict uses the system to reduce emissions from pre-shipment fumigations of strawberries, raspberries etc. destined for markets in the Far East. The Recapture System reduces the vent stream methyl bromide concentration to 500 ppm max., and recaptures 80% of the methyl bromide charged. In general, the amount of methyl bromide that can be recaptured depends on fumigation conditions. Low temperature and high adsorbtivity for methyl bromide by the commodity, for instance, reduces the amount that can be recaptured.

Great Lakes Chemical Corp. supplied the Well•Pict system. Well•Pict operates under a joint air permit from the Monterey County Unified Air Pollution Control District (MBUAPCD) and the Santa Cruz County Commissioner of Agriculture. The system could just as easily be used for quarantine fumigations, since the operating conditions meet the USDA-APHIS-PPQ requirements. The key APHIS requirement is an "air-turnover-time" in the fumigation enclosure of 7 minutes or less during ventilation. At Well•Pict, the "turnover-time" is 3½ minutes during the recapture phase, which ends when the concentration reaches 500 ppm. The "turnover-time" is less than 1 minute during the final ventilation phase to atmosphere, which starts at 500 ppm and ends when the enclosure reaches 5 ppm.