We claim:

1. A method of handling bananas comprising the steps of

(a) exposing said bananas to an atmosphere that contains one or more ethylene-active compound selected from the group consisting of ethylene, ethylene release agents, and compounds with high ethylene activity, and

(b) after said step (a), exposing said bananas to an atmosphere that contains one or more cyclopropene compound while said bananas have color stage 2 to 6 on the seven-stage scale,

wherein said bananas are kept in a modified-atmosphere package for a time period that includes at least a time interval that lasts for 1 hour, wherein said time interval begins between the conclusion of said step (b) and 72 hours from the conclusion of said step (b), and

wherein said modified-atmosphere package is constructed so that the transmission rate of carbon dioxide for the entire package (PCT) is from 2,400 to 120,000 cubic centimeters per day per kilogram of bananas.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said modified-atmosphere package is constructed so that the transmission rate of oxygen for the entire package (POT) is from 2,000 to 100,000 cubic centimeters per day per kilogram of bananas,

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the ratio of said POT to said PCT is from 1:1.05 to 1:3.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein 10% to 100% of the surface area of said modified atmosphere package is polymeric film, and wherein the portion of the surface area of said modified atmosphere package that is not said polymeric film effectively blocks diffusion of gas molecules.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein said polymeric film has composition that, if it had thickness of 30 micrometers, would have inherent gas transmission rate of carbon

dioxide of 4,000 to 150,000 cm^3/m^2-day and inherent gas transmission rate of oxygen of 1,000 to 60,000 cm^3/m^2-day.

6. The method of claim 4, wherein said polymeric film is perforated, wherein the perforations have mean diameter of 5 micrometers to 500 micrometers, and wherein the total area of the perforations in said polymer film is 50,000 to 6,000,000 square micrometer per kilogram of bananas.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said step (b) is conducted while said bananas have color stage 2.5 to 3.5 on the seven-stage scale.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein said step (b) is conducted by placing said bananas into an airtight container and providing an atmosphere in said airtight container that contains concentration of cyclopropene compound of 0.5 ppb to 100 ppm.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein said bananas are present in said modified-atmosphere package prior to said step (b), and wherein said bananas remain in said modified atmosphere package from the time they are placed therein until 48 hours or more after the conclusion of said step (b).

10. The method of claim 1, wherein said step (b) is conducted while said bananas are not in a modified atmosphere package, wherein said bananas are placed into a modified atmosphere package after the conclusion of said step (b), and wherein said bananas remain in said modified atmosphere package from the time they are place therein until 48 hours or more after the conclusion of said step (b).

We claim:

1. A method of handling bananas comprising

(a) exposing said bananas to an atmosphere that contains one or more ethylene-active compound selected from the group consisting of ethylene, ethylene release agents, and compounds with high ethylene activity,

(b) after said step (a), exposing said bananas to an atmosphere that contains one or more cyclopropene compound at a concentration of 0.5 ppb or higher while said bananas have color stage from 2 to 6 on the seven- stage scale,

(c) reducing the concentration of said cyclopropene compound in the atmosphere surrounding said bananas to below 0.5 ppb; and

(d) after step (c), keeping said bananas in a modified-atmosphere package for at least one continuous hour

wherein said step (d) begins up to 72 hours from said step (c), and

wherein said modified-atmosphere package is constructed so that the transmission rate of carbon dioxide for the entire package (PCT) is from 2,400 to 120,000 cubic centimeters per day per kilogram of said bananas.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said modified-atmosphere package is constructed so that the transmission rate of oxygen for the entire package (POT) is from 2,000 to 100,000 cubic centimeters per day per kilogram of bananas,

3. The method of claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the ratio of said POT to said PCT is from 1:1.05 to 1:3.

4. The method of any one of the preceding claims, wherein 10% to 100% of the surface area of said modified atmosphere package is polymeric film, and wherein the portion of the surface area of said modified atmosphere package that is not said polymeric film effectively blocks diffusion of gas molecules.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein said polymeric film has an inherent gas transmission rate of carbon dioxide of 4,000 to 150,000 cm ^{3}/m^2 -day and inherent gas transmission rate of oxygen of 1,000 to 60,000 cm^3/m^2-day at a thickness of 30 micrometers.

6. The method of claim 4 or claim 5, wherein said polymeric film is perforated, wherein the perforations have mean diameter of 5 micrometers to 500 micrometers, and wherein the total area of the perforations in said polymer film is 50,000 to 6,000,000 square micrometer per kilogram of bananas.

7. The method of any one of the preceding claims, wherein said step (b) is conducted while said bananas have color stage 2.5 to 3.5 on the seven-stage scale.

8. The method of any one of the preceding claims, wherein said step (b) is conducted by placing said bananas into an airtight container and providing an atmosphere in said airtight container that contains concentration of cyclopropene compound of 0.5 ppb to 100 ppm.

9. The method of any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein said bananas are present in said modified- atmosphere package prior to said step (b), and wherein said bananas remain in said modified atmosphere package from the time they are placed therein until 48 hours or more after said step (c).

10. The method of any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein said step (b) is conducted while said bananas are not in a modified atmosphere package, wherein said bananas are placed into a modified atmosphere package after said step (c), and wherein said bananas remain in said modified atmosphere package from the time they are place therein until 48 hours or more after said step (c).

11. The method of any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein said step (b) is conducted while said bananas are not in said modified-atmosphere package, wherein said bananas are placed in said modified-atmosphere package within 12 hours of step (c), and wherein said bananas are removed from said modified-atmosphere package 24 hours or more after step (c).

12. The method of any one of claims 1 to 7 or 9, wherein step (b) or steps (a) and (b) are conducted while said bananas are in said modified-atmosphere package.

13. The method of any one of claims 1 to 8, 10 or 11, wherein said step (b) is conducted while said bananas are not in said modified-atmosphere package, and wherein step (d) is begun within 12 hours of step (c).

14. The method of any one of the preceding claims, wherein step (d) is conducted immediately after step (c).

15. The method of any one of the preceding claims, wherein after step (c), said bananas are kept in a modified-atmosphere package for at least 12 continuous hours.