

producebusiness

MARKETING • MERCHANDISING • MANAGEMENT • PROCUREMENT

25
YEARS
INITIATING
INDUSTRY
IMPROVEMENT



23rd ANNUAL Marketing Excellence Awards

Winners Circle

20 Well Rounded Campaigns
Garner Industry Recognition

INSIDE:

THE PUNDIT LOOKS AT WAL-MART'S LOCAL PROGRAM • TRADE PACKAGING
WASHINGTON APPLES • COLORADO PRODUCE • TAILGATING • ONIONS
FALL AVOCADOS • MUSHROOMS • FRESH-CUT PRODUCE
REGIONAL PROFILE: CHICAGO • ORGANIC BANANAS • RAISINS
ETHNIC GUIDEBOOK: MERCHANDISING TO ETHNIC CONSUMERS



Introducing **NEW DOLE® Salads!**

Dole's unique new kits and new distinctive blend add fresh varieties to our line. Inspired by growing restaurant trends and backed by an exciting marketing campaign, these products are sure to fly off the shelf!



NEW!

DOLE® All Natural Salad Kits—**Endless Summer™** and **Spinach Cherry Almond Bleu**—bring together ingredients and flavors that have broad appeal for your shoppers.

For today's sophisticated salad lovers, Dole's **Arugula** blend satisfies a unique consumer need. With increasing popularity in foodservice and retail, **Arugula** offers an exciting opportunity to profit from this fast-growing market.

NEW!

For more information, contact your Dole Sales Representative or visit www.dole.com/salads



To receive product information, recipes, pairings and nutritional information, simply scan the QR code with your smartphone or text **SALAD** to 47170.

Standard message and data rates may apply.





COVER STORY

- 19 MARKETING EXCELLENCE AWARDS**
 Twenty Well Rounded Companies
 Garner Industry Recognition

COMMENTARY

- 12 THE FRUITS OF THOUGHT**
 A Financial Precipice
- 110 RETAIL PERSPECTIVE**
 Timely And Excitable
- 112 EUROPEAN MARKET**
 Can U.S. Small-Box Stores
 Achieve UK Success?

IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 THE QUIZ**
- 6 WASHINGTON GRAPEVINE**
- 8 TRADE SHOW CALENDAR**
- 10 RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES**
- 11 COMMENTS AND ANALYSIS**
- 14 PRODUCE WATCH**
- 106 FLORAL WATCH**
- 113 INFORMATION SHOWCASE**
- 114 BLAST FROM THE PAST**

p. 82



FEATURES

- 36 PACKAGING FOR TRANSPORT AND DISPLAY**
 Efficiency, sustainability and marketability are just a few of the benefits offered by properly designed RPC and corrugated packaging options.
- 42 WASHINGTON APPLES: VARIETY REPORT**
 Growers and marketers alike are constantly on the hunt for “the next big thing,” but in the meantime, they are making the most of an expanding apple category.
- 51 FREIGHT ADVANTAGE, DIVERSITY DRAW BUYERS TO COLORADO CROPS**
 Colorado continues to prosper from an advantageous location and a bounty of high-quality crops.
- 57 FRESH IDEAS FOR TAILGATING**
 Keep produce top of mind for sports fans looking to entertain during the big game.
- 64 FIVE WAYS TO MAXIMIZE FALL AVOCADO SALES**
 Continue to grow the category with savvy cross-merchandising, a steady supply and a mix of ripeness levels.

DEPARTMENTS

MERCHANDISING REVIEWS

- 72 A Fresh Perspective On Merchandising Onions**
 By overcoming challenges, stocking appropriate varieties and effectively merchandising, retailers can give the onion category a boost.
- 82 Mushrooms: The New Superfood**
 Bursting with goodness, mushrooms take their rightful place on the American table.

FRESH CUT MARKETING

- 87 Speaking Frankly About Fresh-Cut Fruit**
 National distributors offer retailers convenience and profits with pre-packaged fresh-cut fruit.

ORGANIC PRODUCE MARKETING

- 100 Selling Organic Tropicals And Bananas**
 The category remains strong as consumers focus on health and well being.

DRIED FRUIT AND NUTS

- 103 Raisins: The Solar-Powered Grapes Of The Produce Department**
 A year-round, healthful snack, raisins have a multitude of uses and work best merchandised with fresh produce.

FLORAL AND FOLIAGE MARKETING

- 107 Dressing For Success**
 Fashion-forward retailers know the value of accessorizing a floral department with a variety of containers that go from basic to fabulous.

p. 59

SPECIAL FEATURES

- 16 FROM THE PAGES OF THE PERISHABLE PUNDIT**
 Pretending To Buy Local: Why Is Wal-Mart Ashamed Of Its Important Role In Bringing The Produce Of The Country And The World To Its Customers At A Reasonable Cost?
- 59 ETHNIC GUIDEBOOK**
- 91 REGIONAL MARKET PROFILE: CHICAGO**
 Spotlight On The Windy City



Change Service requested: POSTMASTER: Send address changes to PRODUCE BUSINESS, P.O. Box 810425, Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425.

PRODUCE BUSINESS (ISSN 0886-5663) is published monthly for \$58.40 per year by Phoenix Media Network, Inc., P.O. Box 810425, Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425.

THIS MONTH'S WINNER



Mark Christianson
Fruits & Vegetable Dairy Category Manager
Gordon Food Service
Grand Rapids, MI

As the manager for the fruits, vegetable and dairy categories at Gordon Food Service (GFS), Mark Christianson stays busy writing ads and looking at new product ideas for new vendors, among other things. "It's similar to what a buyer would do, but I find it interesting as I deal with fresh, canned and frozen product. It's a varied mix that keeps me busy," he says.

GFS sells basic produce in bulk, targeted both at the foodservice market and private consumers. "We have 144 stores, all open to the public, with no membership neces-

sary," adds Christianson.

Christianson has been with GFS for five years. "Prior to that, I was a produce buyer for Meijer stores in Michigan. I've been in the produce business since 1975," he adds. "I like the industry because of the constant change, the seasonality of our product and the fact that there is always something new on the horizon. It's a lot of fun!"

PRODUCE BUSINESS helps Christianson find new packaging ideas and new shippers for the stores. "I picked up the magazine working at Meijer or at PMA one year; I don't quite remember. But I have been hooked ever since."

pb

How To Win! To win the PRODUCE BUSINESS Quiz, the first thing you have to do is enter. The rules are simple: Read through the articles and advertisements in this issue to find the answers. Fill in the blanks corresponding to the questions below, and either cut along the dotted line or photocopy the page, and send your answers along with a business card or company letterhead to the address listed on the coupon. The winner will be chosen by drawing from the responses received before the publication of our October issue of PRODUCE BUSINESS. The winner must agree to submit a color photo to be published in that issue.

WIN A GPS DEVICE

The Magellan Road Mate will get you where you need to be in no time at all, finding the shortest and most direct route to your destination. A one-touch "favorites" menu offers personalized bookmarks to your favorite places and searches; lifetime traffic alerts, which provide real-time traffic conditions, and a AAA tour book, offering rating and descriptions of places to stay, play, dine and save.



QUESTIONS FOR THE AUGUST ISSUE

- 1) What size packages of cranberries are available from The Cranberry Network? _____
- 2) What upcoming holiday does Sunlight International Sales promote with special POS materials? _____
- 3) What is the contact number for CMI? _____
- 4) What Web site is designed especially for children by PBH? _____
- 5) Name three varieties of onions carried by Curry & Co. _____
- 6) What is the address of Sun-Maid Growers of California? _____

This issue was: Personally addressed to me Addressed to someone else

Name _____ Position _____
 Company _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ Fax _____

Photocopies of this form are acceptable. Please send answers to:
AUGUST QUIZ PRODUCE BUSINESS • P.O. Box 810425 • Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425

AUG. 2011 • VOL. 27 • NO. 08 • \$9.90

P.O. Box 810425 • Boca Raton • FL 33481-0425
 Phone: 561-994-1118 • Fax: 561-994-1610
 producebusiness@phoenixmedianet.com

PRESIDENT & EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
 James E. Prevora
 JPrevora@phoenixmedianet.com

PUBLISHER/EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
 Ken Whitacre
 KWhitacre@phoenixmedianet.com

SPECIAL PROJECTS EDITOR
 Mira Slott
 MSlott@phoenixmedianet.com

ASSISTANT EDITOR
 Jennifer Leslie Kramer
 JKramer@phoenixmedianet.com

CIRCULATION MANAGER
 Kelly Roskin
 KRoskin@phoenixmedianet.com

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
 Fran Gruskin
 FGruskin@phoenixmedianet.com

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR
 Diana Levine
 DLevine@phoenixmedianet.com

PRODUCTION LEADER
 Jackie Tucker

PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT
 SUNSHINE GORMAN
 FREDDY PULIDO

TRADE SHOW COORDINATOR
 Jackie LoMonte
 JLoMonte@phoenixmedianet.com

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
 Meredith Auerbach, Nicole Brayshaw Bond,
 Carol Bareuther, Julie Cook Ramirez,
 Paula Hendrickson, Bob Johnson, Lisa White

ADVERTISING
 Eric Nieman, Associate Publisher
 ENieman@phoenixmedianet.com
 Sandy Lee
 SLee@phoenixmedianet.com

Bill Martin
 Martinmedia45@peoplepc.com

Colleen Morelli
 CMorelli@phoenixmedianet.com

Ellen Rosenthal
 ERosenthal@phoenixmedianet.com

FLORAL DEPARTMENT MARKETING
 E. Shaunn Alderman
 SAlderman@phoenixmedianet.com

Send insertion orders, payments, press releases,
 photos, letters to the editor, etc., to
 PRODUCE BUSINESS, P.O. Box 810425
 Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425
 PH: 561.994.1118 FAX: 561.994.1610

PRODUCE BUSINESS is published by Phoenix Media Network,
 Inc. James E. Prevora, Chairman of the Board
 P.O. Box 810425, Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425.
 Entire contents © Copyright 2011
 Phoenix Media Network, Inc. All rights reserved.
 Printed in the U.S.A.
 Publication Agreement No. 40047928



What's in a Name?

MORRIS OKUN

- 85 Years of Building Strong Relationships with Growers/ Shippers and Customers
- 21 Units on the Hunts Point Market to Serve You Better
- Dedicated Team of Produce Professionals
- Home of the Sunbeam Brands

**MORRIS
OKUN
INC.**
1926
TOMATO HOUSE OF NY

718.589.7700 • FAX: 718.589.0797

WWW.MORRISOKUN.COM • UNITS 205 - 220, 429 - 433 NEW YORK CITY TERMINAL MARKET • BRONX, NEW YORK 10474



GFVGA'S HALL: THROUGH GEORGIA IMMIGRATION BILL, A LESSON FOR THE PRODUCE INDUSTRY (PART I OF II)

Conducted by Patrick Delaney,
Communications Manager,
United Fresh Produce Association

On May 13, Georgia Governor Nathan Deal signed House Bill 87, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Enforcement Act of 2011, which set in motion a series of changes in the state that have serious ramifications for Georgia's fruit and vegetable industry. Charles Hall, executive director of the LaGrange-based Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, is at the forefront of the immigration and farm labor debate in Georgia and nationwide as a member of the United Fresh Government Relations Council. In Part I of a two-part series, Hall shares the details of the legislation, his thoughts on the controversy and how the Georgia ag community is dealing with the repercussions.

United Fresh: Can you explain a little about the process that went into creating this bill? Was it a long time in the works?

Charles Hall: No (laughs). What happened was in the 2010 state legislature, there was a study commission appointed to look at the immigration problem we have in Georgia. I don't know that anybody knew that commission was appointed, and we understand there were two hearings held that summer in Atlanta at the capitol to receive information about the situation. I don't know of any ag organizations that were invited to the table. There could've been, but I don't know of any. Out of those two hearings, the legislation for House Bill 87 was developed. There was a companion bill in the Senate that was similar, and the end result was a bill that contained two things: an E-Verify component and an enforcement component.

We found out about it in the fall of 2010, and we had our first industry meeting about it that November. During that meeting, we gathered industry groups together and talked about ways we could deal with the bill. We started to put the ag coalition together at that time. The bill was very strongly supported by the right-wing conservatives and the anti-immigration folks who felt that we needed to "send them all home," similar to what you saw in the Arizona

legislation. From an ag standpoint, we fought the bill very diligently, to the point where the author of the bill said that there were 16 different versions of the bill offered. In his final speech, the author used that number of revisions as evidence that he had compromised and worked with the bill's opponents, and in the end, the bill passed.

UF: What makes the bill so damaging?

CH: We felt like the E-Verify component was the biggest issue in the bill that we needed to fight, so that's where the bulk of our efforts went. But the enforcement component is what turned out to be the most damaging, and hurt us the most in the spring. When the bill passed, assuming most of our farms have between 10 and 100 employees, we knew that we had two years before the E-Verify component of the bill would be phased in for those size employers. But when the governor signed the bill on May 13 there was a big fanfare, celebration, and all sorts of press, and from there the rumors got out to the migrant community that the governor of Georgia had just passed a bill that was going to "deport everybody."

There were rumors that we had roadblocks at the Georgia-Florida border and we were checking papers as people came across on the interstate. As a result, we had migrant worker harvest crews that just didn't come to Georgia. I don't think that we could've done anything different if we had known that the enforcement aspect of the bill was what would get us, but maybe that's a lesson nationally — that if you're going to do a phase-in approach, you don't put in major, draconian enforcement efforts at the outset of the bill.

Currently, a judge has basically ruled that two of the bill's sections are possibly unconstitutional and will need to see their day in court, and he has blocked two sections of the bill so police can't check a person's papers without cause. From our standpoint, though, the deed had been done, and we were most of the way through harvest.

UF: So where did that leave the Georgia growers in terms of labor?

CH: The governor signed the bill on May 13, and on May 17, we got our first call from a grower asking what we knew about migrant workers not coming to Georgia. The company's crew leaders were telling them that they couldn't get migrant workers to come with them to fill their crew orders. We began to hear more of that and began to do some surveys and talk to growers, and at that point, we found that the migrant crews were showing up with half or three-quarters of the crew there. The governor then asked the commissioner of agriculture to do a study on the labor situation, and in mid-June announced that there were 11,000 employment opportunities, and encouraged unemployed Georgians to go to the fields and get jobs.

UF: How has that strategy worked?

CH: It's been great (laughs). Domestic workers can last maybe two to three hours, then they need to take the rest of the day off because they're worn out. Then, most of them don't come back. I've been called all sorts of things on these call-in shows saying that I'm insulting American citizens by calling them incapable of this work, but this is by no means a "normal" working situation. First of all, it's skilled work. If you think picking cucumbers or blackberries is unskilled, it's not. You've got to know exactly what you're doing; you've got to know exactly how to pick them and you have to know the ripeness and so on. Plus, you have to be in tremendous physical condition, out in high-90-degree weather for 10 hours a day. It's tough work, and most of our citizens won't do that work — they can't — they're not physically capable of doing it. As an example, we have not had major problems getting workers in the packing shed that's under the shelter and most of it is a sitting-down-type job. We can get domestic workers to go to the packing shed; we can't get domestic workers to go to the fields.

Don't forget to follow up with our September issue to catch the final part of this interview.



KICKING AROUND THE IDEA OF WHEN TO ORDER?
NOW IS THE TIME!



From the world's largest *fresh* cranberry grower.



AVAILABLE IN A 12 OZ PACKAGE
AND A CONVENIENT 3 LB MULTI-SERVE RECLOSEABLE PACKAGE

PROUDLY
REPRESENTED
BY:



Contact information: info@thecranberrynetwork.com
Sales: Bob Wilson or Blake Johnston
Phone: 715-422-0410
www.thecranberrynetwork.com

producebusiness
MARKETING • MERCHANDISING • MANAGEMENT • PROCUREMENT

To get ahead in the
 produce business, you
 need to stay ahead of
 the produce business.



PRODUCE BUSINESS
 is the industry's
 Number 1 source for
 insights and analysis.

For subscription
 information, please visit

www.producebusiness.com
 or
 call 561-994-1118

AUGUST 17-19, 2011

TEXAS PRODUCE CONVENTION

Conference Venue: Isla Grand Beach Hotel & Resort,
 South Padre Island, TX
 Conference Management: Texas Produce Association,
 Mission, TX
 Phone: 956-581-8632 • Fax: 956-581-3912
 Email: johnmclung@msn.com
 Website: www.texasproduceassociation.com

August 18 - 19, 2011

APPLE CROP OUTLOOK AND MARKETING CONFERENCE

Sponsored by the U.S. Apple Association, this conference
 offers an insider's view on the upcoming apple season.
 Conference Venue: Ritz Carlton, Chicago, IL
 Conference Management: U.S. Apple Association, Vienna, VA
 Phone: 703-442-8850 • Fax: 703-790-0845
 Email: info@usapple.org
 Website: www.usapple.org

SEPTEMBER 6 - 9, 2011

35TH JOINT TOMATO CONFERENCE

Key tomato industry leaders meet to review the past year
 and to share projects for the forthcoming campaign.
 Conference Venue: Ritz Carlton, Naples, FL
 Conference Management: Florida Tomato Committee,
 Maitland, FL
 Phone: 407-660-1949 • Fax: 407-660-1656
 Email: samantha@floridatomatoes.org
 Website: www.floridatomatoes.org

September 18 - 20, 2011

FLORIDA FRUIT & VEGETABLE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONVENTION

Conference Venue: Ritz Carlton, Palm Beach, FL
 Conference Management: Florida Fruit & Vegetable
 Association
 Phone: 321-214-5200 • Fax: 321-214-0210
 Email: information@ffva.com
 Website: www.ffva.com

September 21-24, 2011

NATURAL PRODUCTS EXPO EAST

Conference Venue: Baltimore Convention Center,
 Baltimore, MD
 Conference Management: New Hope Natural Media,
 Boulder, CO
 Phone: 303-939-8440 • Fax: 303-939-9559
 Email: info@newhope.com
 Website: www.newhope.com

September 22 - 24, 2011

SEPC FALL CONFERENCE 2011 2011 ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE

Conference Venue: Gaylord Opryland Hotel, Nashville, TN
 Conference Management: Southeast Produce Council,
 Inc., Sun City Center, FL
 Phone: 813-633-5556 • Fax: 813-653-4479
 Email: info@seproduceccouncil.com
 Website: www.seproduceccouncil.com

September 28 - 30, 2011

FIRST INTERNATIONAL BERRY CONGRESS OF MEXICO

Conference Venue: RIU Hotel, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico
 Conference Management: The National Association of
 Berries of Mexico (ANEBERRIES) Inc., Jalisco, Mexico
 Phone: 52 33 38133643
 Email: blancanelly.partida@aneberries.mx
 Website: www.aneberries.mx

OCTOBER 3-5 2011

WASHINGTON PUBLIC POLICY

The produce industry's most powerful public policy event.
 Conference Venue: Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill,
 Washington D.C.

Conference Management: United Fresh
 Phone: 202-303-3400 • Fax: 202-303-3433
 Email: united@unitedfresh.org
 Website: www.unitedfresh.org

October 8-11, 2011

ANUGA

The world's leading food fair for the retail trade and the
 foodservice and catering market.
 Conference Venue: Cologne Exhibition Centre, Cologne,
 Germany
 Conference Management: Koelnmesse GmbH
 Phone: 49 (0)221 821 2240 • Fax: 49 (0) 221 821 3410
 Email: anuga@koelnmesse.de
 Website: www.anuga.com

October 14 - 17, 2011

PMA FRESH SUMMIT 2011

Fresh Summit International Convention and Expo is the
 largest produce-centered convention in North America.
 Conference Venue: Georgia World Congress Center,
 Atlanta, GA
 Conference Management: Produce Marketing Association,
 Newark, DE
 Phone: 302-738-7100 • Fax: 302-731-2409
 Email: solutionctr@pma.com
 Website: www.pma.com

NOVEMBER 3 - 5, 2011

NOGALES PRODUCE CONVENTION 2011

43rd Nogales Produce Convention and Golf Tournament
 Conference Venue: Rio Rico Resort & Tubac Golf Resort,
 Rio Rico, AZ
 Conference Management: Fresh Produce Association of
 the America, Nogales, AZ
 Phone: 520-287-2707 • Fax: 520-287-2948
 Email: info@freshfrommexico.com
 Website: www.freshfrommexico.com

November 6 - 9, 2011

WESTERN GROWERS ANNUAL MEETING 2011

Western Growers' 85th Annual Convention
 Conference Venue: The Grand Del Mar, San Diego, CA
 Conference Management: Western Growers Association,
 Newport Beach, CA
 Phone: 949-863-1000 • Fax: 949-863-9028
 Email: wfink-weber@wga.com
 Website: www.wga.com

November 7 - 9, 2011

NEW YORK PRODUCE SHOW & CONFERENCE 2011

The New York Produce Show and Conference, presented by
 Eastern Produce Council and Produce Business, is the only
 produce show to be held in New York City
 Conference Venue: New York Hilton & Towers, New York, NY
 Conference Management: Produce Business, Boca Raton, FL
 Phone: 561-994-1118 • Fax: 561-994-1610
 Email: register@nyproduceshow.com
 Website: www.newyorkproduceshow.com

November 14 - 15, 2011

AMERICAS FOOD & BEVERAGE 2011

The 15th Americas Food & Beverage Show is your oppor-
 tunity to explore and sample the largest selection of foods
 and beverages from around the world catering to the taste
 of the Americas.
 Conference Venue: Miami Beach Convention Center,
 Miami, FL
 Conference Management: Americas Trade and Exhibition
 Company, Fairfax, VA
 Phone: 703-934-4700 • Fax: 305-871-7904
 Email: afb@worldtrade.org
 Website: www.americasfoodandbeverage.com

To submit events to our Forward Thinking
 calendar, please email info@producebusiness.com

CELEBRATING FRESH



NETWORKING



EDUCATION



RETAIL TOURS



CHEF DEMOS



WHOLESALE TOURS



RETAIL THOUGHT LEADERS



GLOBAL TRADE



FOODSERVICE FORUM



TRADE SHOW



THE NEW YORK
PRODUCE SHOW
AND CONFERENCE

Presented by
Eastern Produce Council
AND
Produce Business

November 7-9, 2011

New York City

www.nyproduceshow.com

Produce Takes Center Stage On Restaurant Menus

BY HUDSON RIEHLE, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, RESEARCH & KNOWLEDGE GROUP, NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION

Restaurant menus have always been — and still are — driven by consumer demand as much as by chefs' creativity. Today's consumers have a more adventurous and sophisticated palate than ever before, and they are taking a stronger interest in what's on their plate and where their food comes from. As a result, restaurants are blending new ideas in sourcing, nutrition and flavor profiles to create innovative menus — and produce is taking center stage.

Locally grown produce has landed as the top or second hottest trend each year, demonstrating that it is a longer-term trend rather than a fad.

No one has a better view of restaurant menu trends than the chefs of the nation's nearly 1 million restaurants, and that is why the National Restaurant Association surveys these culinary professionals on what's hot on restaurant menus.

The top trends this year — local sourcing, sustainability and nutrition — reflect wider societal trends and consumers' growing interest in these issues. Many restaurants are sourcing seasonal fruit and vegetables locally, and you often see chefs shopping for fresh produce at farmer's markets to create the menu options that today's diners want.

The National Restaurant Association's annual survey of more than 1,500 professional chefs (members of the American Culinary Federation) reveals that produce plays a central role on restaurant menus this year. Locally

grown produce, restaurant gardens, farm-branded ingredients, organic produce and fruit/vegetable side items in kids' meals all rank in the Top 20 trends. In addition, other high-ranking trends, such as nutritionally balanced children's meals and culinary cocktails often feature fresh produce.

The leading culinary theme revealed by the survey is sustainability, which is ranked as the third hottest trend. Whether applied to produce, meat, seafood or alcoholic beverages, the concepts of environmentally friendly practices and local sourcing — farm-to-fork — are appealing to both restaurant operators and consumers for several reasons, including freshness, minimal transportation and supporting local communities and businesses.

Locally grown produce is sharing the top spot with locally sourced meats and seafood, with 86 percent of the chefs surveyed saying it's a hot trend this year. Organic produce lands at number 14 out of the 226 items in the survey, with 72 percent of the chefs saying it's a trend. Sixty-nine percent agreed fruit/vegetable side items in kids' meals are a trend.

The NRA has been conducting the *What's Hot* chef survey for five years, and locally grown produce has landed as the top or second hottest trend each year, demonstrating that it is a longer-term trend rather than a fad. This doesn't mean that chefs and restaurateurs shun non-local produce; simply that sourcing local is a popular option that reflects consumer sentiment. According to National Restaurant Association research, more than two out of three (69 percent) American adults say they are more likely to visit a restaurant that offers locally produced food items.

The chefs ranked 226 individual food/beverage items, preparation methods and culinary themes as a "hot trend," "yesterday's news," or "perennial favorite" on restaurant menus in 2011. The chefs were also asked about "recession strategies," operational trends and

promoting nutrition.

One in five chefs (19 percent) said increasing the use of fresh produce options on menus is the most effective way for chefs and restaurateurs to best promote health and nutrition to guests. The top answer was to create diet-conscious menu selections (21 percent). The top operational trend is food trucks, followed by restaurants growing their own produce in rooftop, backyard or communal gardens.

The National Restaurant Association and Produce Marketing Association (PMA) also conducted research on opportunities for increased use of fresh produce on foodservice menus. The research shows that restaurant operators see fresh produce as a way to differentiate themselves from the competition.

Nearly three out of four restaurant operators (72 percent) said emphasizing fresh produce in their marketing efforts drives more customers to their restaurant. In addition, 46 percent of restaurant operators said they look for fresh produce items that their customers cannot buy at their supermarket, including 78 percent of fine dining operators. Fifty-six percent of survey respondents serve locally sourced produce in their restaurants.

In addition, 67 percent of restaurant operators said they wish they had more options regarding fresh produce selections, while 60 percent of operators said they wish there was more information on how to incorporate fresh produce on their menu. Forty-one percent said they expect to serve more fresh produce in the next two years, while 56 percent said they expect to serve about the same amount.

What this translates to is that consumers, chefs and restaurant operators all want more fresh produce. Finding ways to open up opportunities between growers, distributors and restaurant operators will help make that happen, and we are working with the PMA and International Foodservice Distributors Association to break down some of the barriers.



Founded in 1919, the National Restaurant Association is the leading business association for the restaurant industry, which comprises 960,000 restaurant and foodservice outlets and a workforce of nearly 13 million employees. Together with the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation, the Association works to lead America's restaurant industry into a new era of prosperity, prominence and participation, enhancing the quality of life for all we serve. For more information, visit our Web site at www.restaurant.org.

The Door Is Ajar For Foodservice Sales

BY JIM PREVOR, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, PRODUCE BUSINESS

Survey research of a professional group is very helpful in understanding what is politically correct amongst members of the surveyed group. Unfortunately, it is not necessarily helpful in understanding what is actually happening in practice. This is especially true when one is surveying individuals without “weighting” them for size of operation. So if you survey the head chef at McDonald’s and he says that the chain is not planning on doing more organic, and you then survey nine chefs at various single unit restaurants and these nine chefs say they are planning on doing more organic, it is easy to get confused about reality when the survey result reads that 90 percent of chefs expect to do more organic this year.

What this research really shows is what a job the produce industry has in front of itself when it looks to bring some rationality to the approach that is now trendy among culinarians. After all, one might think chefs would care deeply about flavor. Logically, this would imply seeking out the perfect, ripest, most delicious produce — wherever it may be in season in the world.

One would think chefs would care about variety and the diversity in flavors that this brings. So they want avocados and citrus from across the country and mangos and bananas from around the world.

Of course, all intelligent people want to serve the principles they support rather than yielding to superficially plausible, but deeply flawed, ideas. So chefs, acting in the service of ideals such as the environmental aspects of sustainability, could be expected to reject simplistic and deceptive calculations such as “Food Miles” and insist on rigorous study in the form of life-cycle analysis before changing their procurement patterns in ways that will wind up being harmful to their environmental goals. For example, a study looked at the environmental impact when British consumers ate local lamb as opposed to imported lamb from New Zealand. It turned out that the most sustainable choice, though counter-intuitive, went to New Zealand, as commercial transportation in fully loaded ocean containers is highly efficient and lambs raised on New Zealand’s pastures — as opposed to feed-raising them on farms in

densely populated England — accounted for a relatively small carbon footprint.

Of course, chefs would be concerned about food safety. But pathogens are an equal-opportunity problem for farms large and small. We know that today all large vendors maintain food safety departments, employ food safety experts and operate under multiple third-party audits. We also know that as nice a guy as a local small scale farmer may be, the personal financial consequences of deciding to not harvest a field because, say, a pig ran through it, are so great that the temptation to turn a blind eye to the problem is incredible.

Finally, large producers carry substantial liability insurance so if, despite best efforts, there ever is a problem, they are in a position to compensate the restaurant’s patrons for any damage caused. A small producer won’t typically carry enough insurance to make sure that happens. It is one thing if a restaurant tries to buy more locally through a Sysco or U.S. Foodservice... these distributors will still demand adherence to food safety standards and possession of liability insurance. But chefs who just go and “partner” with some small farm and place the name on the menu are courting disaster.

What chefs believe — true or false — matters both because they often control the purse strings on procurement and, also, because chefs are celebrities today, and their discourse on food affects the broader culture. Because changing minds is difficult, the produce industry is wise to find ways to integrate with this *Weltanschauung*. One way is by making sure definitions of local are broad enough to include things such as citrus and avocados from California and Florida. Another is by focusing on the authenticity of the farmer base wherever the produce is grown.

Our own research indicates that there is a gap between the way chefs use terms such as local and the way consumers do. Although chefs focus on the food and values such as sustainability, consumers often relate to local in an almost tribal manner. Go down to the south of England, right near the English channel and ask consumers about local and they will be enthusiastic advocates. We found this consistently in many focus groups. Yet if you ask them if they

want to see a lot of produce from the north of France, just across the channel — in service of ideals they purport to endorse, such as sustainability, food miles, low carbon footprint etc. — they scream no, not at all. They much prefer produce from the hinterlands of Scotland, 800 miles away, than from France. If the industry wants to cater to the predispositions of consumers, a focus on the team — the county, the state, the USA — is likely to be more effective than a focus on carbon footprints.

We are at a rare moment in time. We have an activist President, obesity is a major public health issue, and concern about medical costs is pronounced. So restaurants and the National Restaurant Association are petrified that the

Items that previously would have been rejected as not popular enough, too expensive or just a pain in the neck will now be given a hearing.

powers that be will blame restaurants as the cause of the obesity crisis. That is why McDonald’s is suddenly trumpeting apple slices in Happy Meals and why the NRA is now partnering with IFDA and PMA to double produce consumption in foodservice.

This creates an opportunity for produce firms to market to foodservice. Items that previously would have been rejected as not popular enough, too expensive or just a pain in the neck will now be given a hearing. Changing the eating habits of a nation is not easy, but the door is slightly ajar. The produce industry ought to push hard to see if it will open.

A FINANCIAL PRECIPICE

By James Prevor

President & Editor-in-Chief



It doesn't really make sense to say that the decision by Standard & Poor's to downgrade the debt of the United States government led to a stock market crash. When stocks were crashing, the price of U.S. bonds — traditionally seen as a safe haven in times of trouble — actually rose. So one would have to argue that concern about the credit rating on government bonds panicked investors into selling U.S. stocks so as to stash the money in the just-downgraded Treasury bonds. It is rather unlikely.

Indeed, the whole issue of S&P rating the sovereign debt of the United States is problematic. Although some countries issue debts in currencies they don't control, the U.S. government issues debt in dollars and the U.S. government controls the production of U.S. dollars, so its ability to pay its debts is unlimited as it can just produce more money to make the payments. One could argue that the concern is that printing all this money will be inflationary and that creditors will thus get paid in watered down dollars, but the government also sells inflation-indexed bonds and they sell at just tiny premiums to unindexed bonds, so that doesn't seem to be the fear that is gripping the market.

Part of the issue is overseas. Europe has no answer for the debt problems of many of its nations. It seems to find default inconceivable, yet its solution to help countries that have borrowed too much money is to lend them more. It seems likely that Germany will tire of paying and that other countries will tire of being told what they have to do by Germany, so a collapse of the Euro, and thus a big part of the world financial system, seems increasingly likely.

The riots in London are revealing as well. Despite endless articles, nobody has identified a plausible cause for the rioting. Indeed, it is best defined as opportunistic rioting as the baser elements of humanity and society come to sense that they are dealing with a police force and a society so fearful of being charged with racism and oppression that these institutions hesitate to fight back against hooliganism.

The sense is that Europe is on a precipice financially and has lost the strength to defend its culture.

With this collapse looming, the world desperately needs a strong and effective U.S., yet the recent debt ceiling talks revealed a dysfunctional government. It is not so much that Republicans and Democrats disagree, it is that the end result of their disagreement wound up being both sides agreeing *de facto* that the political structure cannot effectively deal with the problems we face. Creating a super-committee with nominations from Congressional leaders to determine budget cuts with

automatic cutbacks if they are not implemented may or may not work, but it is certainly neither the constitutional procedure for making law, nor a system that gives us confidence that Congress and the President are carefully weighing the value of each expenditure.

Plus, the agreement postpones almost all the spending cuts to periods after the next election. Since today's politicians have no power to bind politicians of the future, the whole exercise is dubious.

The produce industry is an excellent example of the way our political system is producing a kind of dysfunction. The produce industry is mostly made up of business executives, company owners and farmers. Not surprisingly, it is a fairly conservative lot and generally votes Republican. Obviously, there are many who vote Democrat and there is variability based on geography, ethnicity, age, etc., but, mostly, it is a conservative leaning industry.

Yet our government relations efforts are heavily focused on getting the government to spend more money. It might be on more FDA inspectors to enhance food safety or it might be on efforts to put more produce in schools or expand produce access in food stamps or maternal nutrition programs.

We wind up in this wacky situation, where people who would vote in a minute to end a

government program instead wind up lobbying for their share. When the last farm bill came along, we saw this vividly. Many in the produce trade find it scandalous that farmers who grow things such as cotton, soybeans, wheat etc., should benefit from Federal largesse. But there is no chance that the produce industry could successfully defeat the Farm Bill. So instead, the produce industry cuts a deal. It agrees to support the Farm Bill in exchange for funding for its various projects. We wound up with press releases from trade associations trumpeting the less than 1 percent of the bill that would be spent on fresh produce and simply ignoring whether the remaining 99 percent of the bill is good for the country.

You can't really blame the government relations people. It is their job to further the interests of the trade in Washington. Whether the country collapses one day from the cumulative impact of a thousand industries, advocacy groups and labor unions doing the same thing is someone else's problem

It is not clear how to control this problem. Some have proposed constitutional changes, such as giving the President a line item veto or enacting a balanced budget amendment. The goal is to prevent the kind of logrolling without limit that endangers the fiscal solvency of the nation.

In the short run, achieving some control over the budget may mean that the produce trade will lose a few projects. Nobody wants to be singled out. But everybody losing a few might be a win for us all. **pb**

With this collapse looming, the world desperately needs a strong and effective U.S., yet the recent debt ceiling talks revealed a dysfunctional government.

MANN'S
FAMILY OWNED FOR THREE GENERATIONS[®]

Arcadian Harvest[™]

PETITE WHOLE LEAVES



Looking for that “next generation” of salad greens with the flavor profile of European lettuce varieties? Something to differentiate your menu from the competition? Look no further.

Mann’s Arcadian Harvest[™] combines the beauty of petite whole lettuce leaves with rustic appeal; providing unmatched lift on the plate with multidimensional leaves cut just once—at the point of harvest.

Versatile and ahead of the trend, Arcadian Harvest[™] is multi-flavored, multi-functional—it’s what your salad lovers are looking for.

Farm fresh from Mann’s - the family who brought you Broccolini.[®]



Mann Packing Company, Inc., Salinas, CA
800.884.6266 | www.veggiesmadeeasy.com

PRODUCE WATCH

TRANSITIONS

EMERALD PACKAGING INC. UNION CITY, FL

Jim Burden has been hired for the newly created position of business strategy director. Jim will manage a variety of responsibilities including forecasting company production and raw material needs. Prior to joining Emerald Packaging, Burden spent eight years at Deluxe Packages in Yuba City, CA, where he had general management responsibilities and was most recently director of purchasing.



JEM-D INTERNATIONAL KINGSVILLE, ONTARIO, CANADA

Adrian Abbott has been appointed the director of operations. With more than two decades of hard work and commitment, Abbott joins Jem-D International following his tenure with BC Tree Fruits where he was director of marketing and industry relations. Abbott will be based in Kingsville, Ontario and will oversee the day-to-day operations of the distribution center and facility.



READY PAC FOODS INC. IRWINDALE, CA

Bryan Jaynes has joined the Ready Pac team as salad marketing director and brings close to 20 years of marketing experience in both retail and foodservice channels. He is located within the company's Swedesboro, New Jersey facility, and will be responsible for leading the marketing activities for the Packaged Salad and Ready Pac Bistro bowl salad segments.



BLAND FARMS GLENNVILLE, GA

Bruce Peterson has joined the Bland Farms team as CEO. Peterson joined the Bland Farms Board of Advisors in January, 2011, and accepted the position of CEO as of July 3rd. Since 1983, Bland Farms has experienced growth as a grower, packer and shipper of sweet onions, and has diversified into processed foods, fertilizer and distribution services.



NEW PRODUCTS

INNOVATIVE PACKAGING FROM ORGANICS UNLIMITED

San Diego, CA-based Organics Unlimited offers new packaging that can easily identify the difference between an organic banana and a conventionally grown banana. The new packaging includes taping hands of bananas as they are initially packed for shipping. This tape can carry information such as the source of the produce and pricing in a smaller space, eliminating the need for individually stickered bananas.



INTRODUCING NEW TROPICAL GOLD PINEAPPLE SPEARS

Westlake Village, CA-based Dole Foodservice expands the line of Chef-Ready Cuts to seven styles, adding ready-to-use, bite-sized pieces of Tropical Gold pineapple. Packed in 5-lb. resealable pouches, consistent in size and amount, the spears are 100 percent real fruit and plate-ready. The entire Chef-Ready Cut line includes Mango Cubes, Pineapple Cubes, Diced Peaches, Diced Strawberries, Diced Apples and Sliced Strawberries.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

NATIONAL APPLE MONTH ANNOUNCES 2011 RETAIL DISPLAY CONTEST

Vienna, VA-based National Apple Month has teamed up with Marzetti, Smucker's and Jif for a national retail and military commissary display contest. The theme, "Host an Apple Pairing Party," aims to capture the imagination of produce managers and consumers alike, ultimately increasing sales of U.S. apples and apple products. To be considered, participants must have a display in place at least two weeks between September 1 and November 30, 2011.



BLUEBERRIES EARLY AND PLENTIFUL THROUGHOUT NEW JERSEY

The Trenton-based New Jersey Farm Bureau declares an early start for New Jersey's blueberry season and the locally grown "state fruit" is now for sale at farmer's markets, u-pick farms, grocery stores and dedicated "Blueberry Festivals." Some 299 farms devote 7,500 acres to blueberry cultivation, yielding approximately 6,980 pounds per acre. The state is the country's fourth largest producer of blueberries.



MANGO MANIA DISPLAY CONTEST

Orlando, FL-based National Mango Board has announced the Mango Mania Display Contest. With more than \$10,000 in cash prizes, the contest is designed specifically for small retailers with up to 50 stores. Entries are due by August 15, and all contest details are available at www.mango.org/contest. Prizes will be awarded by the NMB to nine entries from each of three store categories: one to five registers, six to nine registers and ten registers or more. Winners of the contest will be announced by September 21, 2011.



POTANDON PROMOTES KLONDIKE POTATOES WITH SUMMER RECIPE CONTEST

Idaho Falls, ID-based Potandon Produce announces America's Outdoor Recipe Contest, an online recipe contest. To promote it, Potandon has assembled an extensive social media campaign. Consumers can submit a recipe and photo of a grilled or Dutch oven-made dish made that highlights Klondike potatoes to KlondikeBrands.com through August 31. Recipes and photos will then be published on the site, where consumers will vote for their favorites.



WONDERFUL PISTACHIOS BEGINS \$20M TV CAMPAIGN

Los Angeles, CA-based Paramount Farms will debut eight new Wonderful Pistachios ads in the brand's \$20 million campaign across network and cable, which will be supported full circle by in-store POS, including display bins, social media, public relations, FSIs and more through December. The first campaign resulted in \$28.3M in new sales. The momentum continued with an additional 20 percent increase in year two.



GIUMARRA AGRICOM OPENS NEW AVOCADO PACKING FACILITY

Los Angeles, CA-based Giumarra Agricom International is pleased to announce the opening of its new avocado packing facility in Ventura, CA. The facility was designed to better service Giumarra's growers in the northern growing region of California, and will lessen Giumarra's carbon footprint by reducing the transfer distance of the product from the fields to the packinghouse.



Produce Watch is a regular feature of PRODUCE BUSINESS. Please send information on new products, personnel changes, industry, corporate and personal milestones and available literature, along with a color photo, slide or transparency to: Managing Editor, PRODUCE BUSINESS, P.O. Box 810425, Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425, or e-mail us at info@producebusiness.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FRESH START FOR PEARS AND FOR CALIFORNIA PEAR ADVISORY BOARD

The Sacramento, CA-based California Pear Advisory Board (CPAB) expects this year's pear season to begin in mid-July with volume anticipated beginning July 25. A pre-season crop estimate comes in at just over 4.1 million 36-lb. box equivalents. While CPAB will no longer employ a merchandising staff or directly fund in-store retail features, behind-the-scenes individual pear shippers and their customers will still have resources and support at their disposal.



CPS WELCOMES GIFT FROM WEGMAN FAMILY CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

During the opening ceremonies for the Center for Produce Safety's second annual Produce Research Symposium in Orlando, FL, representatives from the Wegman Family Charitable Foundation presented a gift of \$250,000 to CPS officers. The foundation's gift will support CPS' competitive research grant programs.



L&M PARTNERS WITH EAKIN FRUIT

Raleigh, NC-based L&M Companies announced an exclusive marketing relationship with long-time Yakima Valley grower/shipper, Eakin Fruit. This move will substantially add to L&M's organic apple program, along with increasing the mainline varietal volume. Italian Prunes, as well as Empress Plums and President Plums are also among the list.



SUMMER PROMOTION PAIRS CALIFORNIA AVOCADOS AND COPPER RIVER SALMON

Irvine, CA-based California Avocado Commission (CAC) and the Copper River Salmon/Prince William Sound Marketing Association (CRS) developed retail POS materials, including a recipe booklet that can be merchandised in produce and seafood. The booklet features creative combinations of the two products including Lomi Lomi Salmon in a California Avocado Half.



CALIFORNIA GIANT "FEAR THE BEARD AND LOVE THE BERRY" EVENT

Watsonville, CA-based California Giant Berry Farms teamed up with KNBR and the San Francisco Giants to cap off a six-week marketing campaign promoting berries and baseball. Fans received 8-oz. containers of fresh California Giant berries. Special posters and beards were created to celebrate the combination of the company's delicious berries with the revered Brian Wilson, closing pitcher for the team.



FRESHWAY FOODS CONTRIBUTES TO PMA FIT

Sidney, OH-based Freshway Foods has made a contribution of \$1,000 to the PMA Foundation for Industry Talent annual campaign. This donation will help build programs designed to attract, develop and retain talent for the produce supply chain. Freshway Foods has been a produce processor, repacker, distributor and logistics provider for over 20 years.



WORLD'S LARGEST WATERMELON DISPLAY

Lehi, UT, residents celebrated summer with the sweet taste of watermelon during the grand opening of the newest Macey's Supermarket. The 2011 National Watermelon Queen, Whitney Conner, and Macey's president, Paul Stratton, welcomed shoppers. Three truckloads of watermelons equaling 180 watermelon bins were on display for this grand opening event.



REDLINE SOLUTIONS PARTNERS WITH GARY FLEMING FOR PTI CONSULTING

Santa Clara, CA-based RedLine Solutions has partnered with Gary Fleming (right), a leading expert in traceability for fresh produce, to offer PTI consulting to companies who need strategic guidance on PTI implementation planning. This alliance can help customers learn what is required by PTI initiatives. This new partnership extends what RedLine can offer customers who are currently trying to become PTI compliant.



INTERGROW EXPANDS GREENHOUSE ACREAGE

Albion, NY-based Intergrow Greenhouses Inc. is in the final stages of an 18-acre addition to its existing 30 acres of greenhouses. Intergrow will also be adding a new pack-house, irrigation pond and expanded office space. With an almost entirely closed irrigation system, Intergrow uses rainwater to irrigate the plants and biomass fuel to heat the greenhouse that has a double curtain system, reducing heat demand to a minimum.



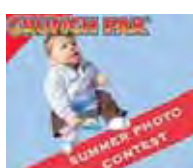
VIDALIA ONION JINGLE CONTEST ATTRACTS 70,000 WEB VISITORS

Vidalia, GA-based Vidalia Onion Committee (VOC) is seeking the most popular Vidalia jingle, and more than 70,000 people have visited the Vidalia onion Web site to cast their votes. Votes are being accepted through August 5, 2011. The most popular jingle will earn \$1,000 cash, while another winner, based on talent and creativity as chosen by a judging panel, will win an Ultimate Nashville Getaway.



CRUNCH PAK LAUNCHES SUMMER FACEBOOK PHOTO CONTEST

Cashmere, WA-based Crunch Pak is celebrating summer with a photo contest promoted on the company's Facebook page. The contest invites people to take photos of themselves or their friends and family enjoying Crunch Pak products in a favorite location outdoors. The winners are chosen by the number of people who "like" a photo each month. The company is currently placing more than 300,000 stickers on all 14-oz. bags of sliced apples with its Facebook address.



150 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Oxnard, CA-based Deardorff Family announced the start of their Salinas Valley organic celery and leaf program. The program will be grown by the Bunn family and marketed by Deardorff Family Farms. The two fourth-generation family farmers offer a combined 150 years of farming experience. This new program establishes a year-round supply of many of the commodities marketed by Deardorff Family Farms.





Pretending To Buy Local: Why Is Wal-Mart Ashamed Of Its Important Role In Bringing The Produce Of The Country And The World To Its Customers At A Reasonable Cost?

FROM JIM PREVOR'S PERISHABLE PUNDIT 08.03.2011,

The *Wall Street Journal* ran a piece titled, "'Local' Grows on Wal-Mart," which tells precious little about what Wal-Mart is doing and an awful lot about how easily reporters get snowed when they don't know much about the subject at hand:

Wal-Mart Stores Inc., which scours the globe seeking the lowest-cost suppliers, is finding it can save money by buying more fruits and vegetables grown closer to its stores.

Other food retailers, including Super-Valu Inc. and Safeway Inc., also are racing to expand the amount of locally grown food they offer, as more Americans flock to farmers markets and gourmet grocers such as Whole Foods Market Inc. in search of fresher produce.

While some retailers, such as Wal-Mart and Kroger Co., say that buying locally yields savings, most of the chains say their main objective is to satisfy changing consumer preferences.

The lack of a federal standard or any consensus on what qualifies as "local" food leaves grocers a lot of leeway in their marketing. At most large retailers, fruits and vegetables harvested hundreds of miles away can be touted as locally grown.

Such loose definitions have sparked criticism from small farmers and organic-food advocates that the chains are merely adjusting their marketing to capitalize on the latest food trend, rather than making real changes in their procurement practices.

Wal-Mart, the largest grocer in the U.S., with more than \$120 billion a year in food sales, encourages its managers to buy produce grown within 450 miles of its distribution centers, even if local peaches, for example, cost more than those produced across the country in California.

That's because the Bentonville, Ark., giant has determined that, in an era of



high diesel prices, trimming the number of "food miles" produce travels cuts fuel costs. Buying locally also reduces produce spoilage, Wal-Mart says, though it won't quantify the savings.

This summer, Wal-Mart has lined up farmers to grow jalapeño peppers in 30 states, twice as many as last summer. A decade ago, almost all of the chain's hot peppers came from Florida, California and Mexico.

"We can get chili peppers from Florida all day long, but at the end of the day that is not necessarily the best model for us," says Darrin Robbins, Wal-Mart's senior manager for produce. "I'm going to pay a higher price in Ohio for peppers, but if I don't have to ship them halfway across the country to a store, it's a better deal."

The shift — and a related pledge Wal-Mart made last fall to double purchases of locally grown fruits and vegetables to 9 percent of its U.S. total for produce by 2015 — promises to create winners and

losers in American farming, with growers in some regions gaining new business and others seeing reduced orders....

Where does one begin?

First, this is not the way produce pricing works. We used to export lots of apples, for example, and had the flexibility of buying in lots of growing areas. Many of these apples went to northern Europe. If one simply looked at the map, one might think it would work out a lot cheaper to ship New York State apples rather than Washington State apples. We did ship lots of New York State apples, but mostly Macintosh or Empire varieties that they wanted in the UK and were not available in Washington State.

When it came to Red Delicious apples, it turned out that both apple shippers and buyers on the East Coast knew what the freight rate was from Washington State. Prices for apples of comparable quality grown in New York rose — above Washington State prices — as buyers in New York City looked to pick up bargains. This is



producebusiness

MARKETING • MERCHANDISING • MANAGEMENT • PROCUREMENT

HOW TO MAKE THINGS GROW

Whatever your role in the produce industry, the key to a blossoming bottom line is knowledge. About major trends and developments, and the people behind them.... About new sales opportunities around the world.... New packaging and transportation technology.... New ideas in marketing and promotion.... New retail strategies.... New equipment and services.... New techniques for managing individual businesses, and their personnel, more efficiently.

And your Number 1 source for all of the above is PRODUCE BUSINESS, the industry's only monthly business magazine serving all buying segments. **And the most widely read of any publication in the field.** If you're not receiving every important issue, call to start your subscription without delay. It's the only way to be sure you're getting all the knowledge you need. And growing the way you should.

STARTING WITH LUSH, GREEN SAVINGS ON YOUR SUBSCRIPTION!

YES! Please enter my PRODUCE BUSINESS subscription immediately for one year (12 informative issues) at just \$58.40 — I save a full 50% off the single-copy price!

FOR EVEN BIGGER SAVINGS —

- Two years, just \$107.40 (save over 54%)!
- Three years, just \$153.40 (save over 56%)!
- Check here if a Canadian subscription.
Please add \$10 per year and remit total in US dollars only.
- For other countries, double US prices and remit in US dollars only.

producebusiness
MARKETING • MERCHANDISING • MANAGEMENT • PROCUREMENT



Print Name _____ Position _____

Company _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Country _____

Home Ph: (____) _____ Business Ph: (____) _____

Fax: (____) _____ This is my home office address

- Payment enclosed Please send invoice
- Bill my: Visa MasterCard American Express

Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

PRODUCE BUSINESS is \$118.80 for one year by single-copy.

Ph: 561-994-1118 • Fax: 561-994-1610

P.O. Box 810425 • Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425

NEW!! Fill out your Subscription Form **ON-LINE** at www.producebusiness.com

what markets do. So the notion that there are these massive disparities in prices between different growing regions and that people can pick off massive savings is mostly not the way it works.

Second, shorter transportation is not necessarily cheaper. The cheapest way to supply an East Coast customer from the Midwest is often to ship a full trailer to California where there are lots of mixed loads loading. When shipping back to the East Coast, load up a full trailer with multiple items. This is why FedEx was ingenious when it recognized at its start that the cheapest way to overnight a package from Boston to New York was to fly it through Memphis. The key is filling up the trucks, which is hard to do when

Fourth, the whole discussion is bizarre because what advocates care about when they talk about local — small scale, bio-diverse farms, family farms, within a few miles of a store, not a distribution center that is going to ship things long distances — has virtually nothing to do with any local buying Wal-Mart may actually do.

Fifth, undefined claims that local will grow to 9 percent of sales of U.S. produce sales by 2015 have more to do with store distribution than produce procurement. Wal-Mart has been under-indexed in California, and every time it opens a store there, it improves its “local” numbers. It is completely meaningless and unverifiable.

Sixth, although it has efforts such as its Heritage Agriculture program, such pro-

pliers, but it is highly likely that ultimately Wal-Mart will buy most of their jalapenos from those who will sell them cheapest. Growers need to be prepared.

Eighth, the idea that local means less spoilage depends on an awful lot of things... such as the local grower having the same advanced pre-cooling and packing facilities that national shippers do. Some do have such facilities, but if they do, then they are not small-scale operations.

Proving that not only Wal-Mart wants good publicity, the article goes on to quote other retailers, including an unidentified spokesperson for Supervalu who makes a claim that can't have anything to do with the subject at hand:

“Supervalu, which owns the Jewel-Osco, Albertsons and Lucky supermarket chains, estimates it now buys between 25 percent and 40 percent of its produce locally for its more than 1,100 stores across the country.”

Presumably that refers to where Supervalu's procurement agent is or, perhaps, where the company they buy from is such as a terminal market wholesaler, but it can't possibly refer to where the produce is grown. Bananas, tropical fruits, counter-seasonal imports from Chile, South Africa, the Caribbean, plus Mexican produce and California produce — how could it be possible for 40 percent of produce to be “locally grown”? Remember during large parts of the year, there is very little grown locally for chains such as Acme in Philadelphia — it is, in fact, impossible.

There is no reason not to celebrate good locally grown produce, but there is also no reason to be ashamed of a worldwide distribution network that brings peak-of-the-season produce from growers all over the country and around the world to the smallest towns in the U.S. at a highly reasonable price.

In the end Wal-Mart, and any large retailer, can't gain from pretending to be something it is not. That lack of sincerity and authenticity will leave a far worse taste in the mouths of consumers than will some produce shipped from the West Coast.

Someone at Wal-Mart should reign in the PR team that is pushing for this kind of coverage and teach them about the virtues of what Wal-Mart actually does for the American consumer.

There is no reason not to celebrate good locally grown produce, but there is also no reason to be ashamed of a worldwide distribution network that brings peak-of-the-season produce from growers all over the country and around the world to the smallest towns in the U.S. at a highly reasonable price.

buying from small farms. If one is concerned with emissions, it is also worth noting that deliveries made in half-empty trucks double the emission per pound.

Third, vendors we speak to know nothing of instructions being given to Wal-Mart buyers to buy local even if it costs more. There certainly are some products that can be seen as categories of their own — say Vidalia onions or Southern peaches — that retailers, including Wal-Mart, may pay more for. It is also obviously true that Wal-Mart, as with all retailers, is mostly concerned with delivered costs, not FOB costs, but Wal-Mart has a massive initiative to reduce procurement costs. The notion that it is running around the country looking to overpay to be “local” is so counter to what is actually happening at the company that it is mind-boggling such a thing gets written.

grams account for significantly less than 1 percent of Wal-Mart's produce procurement. It is more PR than procurement. It is the way a giant geo-political entity tries to appease regulators and advocacy groups.

Seventh, it will always be easy to find growers appreciative of business. But we caution those growers to not invest substantial money to service Wal-Mart without a Plan B. One option for a grower is to maintain a diverse business portfolio so that they can walk away from the Wal-Mart business the day Wal-Mart executives decide they need margin and want to get it from their friendly local grower. Alternatively, a grower can insist on a long-term contract or agreement in writing with Wal-Mart that assures the local grower of sufficient time to amortize any investments being made. This year, Wal-Mart may want more jalapeño sup-

Winners Circle

20 Well Rounded Campaigns
Garner Industry Recognition



*Congratulations to the following companies that have won
PRODUCE BUSINESS' 23rd Annual Marketing Excellence Award:*

**Apio Inc. • The Avocado Producers And Exporting Packers Association of Michoacan (APEAM)
Columbia Marketing International Inc. • Global Fruit and Martins Family Fruit Farm Ltd.
Idaho Potato Commission • National Mango Board • National Watermelon Promotional Board
Ocean Mist Farms • Ontario Apple Growers • Produce For Kids • Safeway • Sun Pacific • Sunkist Growers
Tanimura & Antle • U.S Highbush Blueberry Council • University of Massachusetts, Amherst • Wholly Guacamole**

Comprehensive and Multi-Dimensional. These words best describe this year's winning entries of the Marketing Excellence Awards. Whether the promotion was geared toward consumers directly or through the consumer media, or toward the trade's buyers — either retail or foodservice — each entry comprised many marketing facets. As if it wasn't enough to just have a sweepstakes, or put on a parade or a ball or sampling event, traditional marketing tools and new media weapons were combined to achieve the desired goals.

The use of Facebook, Twitter, QR codes, e-blasts, microsities — most done in combination — were utilized in both consumer and trade promotions. Charitable components were also notably included. A deeper dive into the winning promotions reveals the following:

- Out of 20 winners, 14 entries were oriented toward consumers and consumer media
- Kids and Moms were the target audience of several consumer

- promotions, with sports elements incorporated in some
- Microsites and new Web sites were integral to many promotions
- E-blasts to consumers, bloggers and media were common elements
- Trade packaging programs also incorporated traditional POS materials and collateral material for the retailers

What's become most clear from these winning campaigns is that it's no longer enough to extend a simple outreach with print ads or a singular Facebook page. Multiple print and social media aspects are a prerequisite to get the job done, and when used properly, can double or even triple consumer impressions. The same is true for trade marketing, where busy executives have to be interfaced from various fronts to affect change.

PRODUCE BUSINESS congratulates the following Marketing Excellence Award winners, listed in alphabetical order by company, and encourages companies with clever and unique marketing campaigns to submit entries for next year.

APIO INC. Guadalupe, CA

Pink Petite Vegetable Tray To Benefit Breast Cancer Research



OBJECTIVE: To increase sales of the 22-oz. Petite Vegetable Tray without off-invoice promotions while supporting a great cause; to maximize awareness of the fight against breast cancer while promoting a healthful diet low in fat and sodium.

CAMPAIGN: Throughout October, 2010, all of Apio's 22-oz. Eat Smart Petite Vegetable Trays were packaged in an eye-catching pink base with promotional stickers that informed shoppers their purchase would help support National Breast Cancer Foundation Inc.

According to a Cone/Duke University Behavioral Cause Study, 85 percent of shoppers say they have a more positive image of a company or product when it supports a cause they believe in. Apio benefited from this, and also donated approximately 20 cents from the purchase of each tray to the National Breast Cancer Foundation for a minimum of \$25,000. In-store danglers noting, "These veggie trays are making a difference," attracted shoppers' attention and encouraged their participation.

RESULTS: The campaign received a great deal of positive press in a number of produce trade publications. Apio was also rewarded with the PMA Impact Award for Excellence in Packaging at the 2010 PMA Fresh Summit in Orlando, FL. The promotion was a large sales motivator as well, providing a 28 percent lift in sales year over year and a 21.4 percent lift over the previous 6-week average volume.

THE AVOCADO PRODUCERS AND EXPORTING PACKERS ASSOCIATION OF MICHOCAN (APEAM)

Los Angeles, CA

Avocado On Top Consumer Sweepstakes Promotion

OBJECTIVE: To execute a consumer sweepstakes promotion aimed at increasing the visibility of the Avocados From Mexico brand, as well as providing customers with new usage ideas; to obtain in-store displays of Avocados From Mexico.



CAMPAIGN:

Working together with its agency, Integrated Marketing Works (IMW), APEAM executed a consumer sweepstakes via a custom-built Avocado On Top microsite that allowed entrants to participate in a survey regarding their favorite meals to top with avocados. An e-blast sent to nearly 300,000 consumers nationwide and articles in the *Avocado Advocate* trade newsletter, as well as POS cards that included a tear pad with sweepstakes entry forms, completed the promotion. One Grand Prize Winner was awarded a \$2,500 iCard gift card; 10 second place winners received a \$100 iCard gift card; and 500 third prize winners got a \$25 iCard gift card.

RESULTS: Nearly 24,000 site visits to the Avocado On Top microsite were achieved during the promotion, with more than 12 million consumers reached. Sweepstakes entries totaled 28,162; 287 new Facebook fans were added; 107 new Twitter followers were obtained; and 1,240 total POS orders were received.

THE AVOCADO PRODUCERS AND EXPORTING PACKERS ASSOCIATION OF MICHOCAN (APEAM)

Los Angeles, CA

Bicentennial Mexican Independence Day Event September 2010

OBJECTIVE: To increase awareness of avocados from Mexico by leveraging the 200th anniversary of Mexican Independence Day and participating in a large-scale themed event around Mexican heritage; to secure media exposure for Avocados from Mexico (AFM).

CAMPAIGN: Partnering with its agency, Integrated Marketing Works (IMW), APEAM organized an event, parade and festival to celebrate Mexican Independence Day. Placido Domingo acted as the Grand Marshal of the parade. Large signage, table tents and a unique, custom parade float reinforced the presence of avocados from Mexico, which was a key sponsor of the event. As the official snack, free guacamole was served to more than 200 guests and avocados were distributed in AFM logo-ed bags. Famous Mexican photographer, Lourdes Almeida, was on hand to photograph "Faces of the Bicentennial," a group of Mexican and Mexican-American ages 1 to 71 that were born on September 16.

RESULTS: 15,000 avocados from Mexico, 1,000 AFM buttons and 600 recipe cards were distributed at the event, which attracted more than 2 million members of the Hispanic community. The parade campaign secured 212 million impressions in media outlets including Univision, Telemundo, ABC and NBC. APEAM was the only parade sponsor noted in the official Mexican Independence Day press release.



SCARE UP SOME SALES!

By joining the Dulcich Halloween Hobgoblin promotion,
shipping September 12th.



Hobgoblin
Shelf Dangler



Hobgoblin Bin



Hobgoblin
Grab-N-Go Bags

What better way to get your customers attention
then with beautiful point-of-sale materials that capture
both their eye, and their pocket book. We at
Dulcich & Sons are proud to supply you with the very
best tools to increase sales, and all you have to do is talk
to one of our friendly sales staff to get yours today!

www.dulcich.com • 661-792-6360

SUNLIGHT
SUNLIGHT INTERNATIONAL SALES
Premium California Table Grapes
Grown and packed by Jakov P. Dulcich and Sons

Home Of The
**Pretty
Lady**
Grape



**COLUMBIA
MARKETING
INTERNATIONAL INC.**
Wenatchee, WA

Orchard Fresh Program

OBJECTIVE: To create a look of just-picked apples right out of the orchard using display shippers, new various POS and more.

CAMPAIGN: To promote its apples, instead of using CMI's corporate look, the company created new packaging that would resemble wooden crates to create a farm-fresh look in the produce department. By using an old-fashioned, yet updated and eye-catching look, CMI caught consumers' attention. POS support material included fresh apple and pear brown tote bags, wooden crate-like boxes and a handy Pocket Pro Ripeness Chart that helped consumers understand and compare taste and ripeness levels of different apple and pear varieties. Trade ads were also included in the promotion.

RESULTS: While retailers have loved the look of wooden boxes in their stores, noting the graphics complement the produce department, consumers have also enjoyed the bright, fresh look of the campaign and found the POS Pocket Pro Charts incredibly helpful.



**GLOBAL FRUIT AND
MARTINS FAMILY
FRUIT FARM LTD.**

Clarksburg and Waterloo,
Ontario, Canada

**Introducing Ontarians To The
Royal Red Prince Apple**



OBJECTIVES: To create media and brand awareness and demand for the new Red Prince apple via retail listings, in-store and out-of-store sampling, and to build positive media coverage — specifically 5 million impressions; to sell at least 5,000 cases of Red Prince apples.

CAMPAIGN: Working with Mississauga, Ontario-based Faye Clack Communications, the campaign revolved around creating a movement of civility and etiquette linked to the brand's royalty theme. Promotional activities involved a consumer launch event, traditional and social media outreach, a consumer contest, media and collateral materials, in-store sampling, and most importantly, the personification of the Red Prince character to represent the brand and bring life into the civility movement.

The launch event took place in Toronto's underground PATH system targeting the high-end business crowd. The Red Prince gave out 10,000 apple samples, each of which were packaged in a gold organza bag, including recipe cards, etiquette tips and snack ideas.

RESULTS: Campaign coverage generated more than 13.2 million media impressions, and 15,000 cases of Red Prince apples were sold in Ontario, a significant achievement for a new apple variety within a saturated category. The microsite logged 3,308 visitors and 1,243 consumers entered the online contest. Forty-thousand consumers sampled the apple at 186 in-store demos.

**IDAHO POTATO
COMMISSION**

Eagle, ID

**Idaho Potatoes
Project Reinvent Campaign**

OBJECTIVE: To demonstrate to the foodservice industry how Idaho potatoes can be used in new and exciting recipes.

CAMPAIGN: The Idaho Potato Commission, along with its advertising agency, Evans, Hardy & Young Inc., liaised with well known chefs to develop creative dishes using Idaho potatoes. Award-winning photographers then photographed the dishes, such as a Potato Stuffed 1-lb. Burger, Harvest Hash and Street-Cart Fries. The photographs were a central component of the ad campaign, which could be found in foodservice trade publications beginning August 1st, 2010.

RESULTS: The promotion has been a great success, and the ads continue to run in trade magazines. They have inspired restaurant and institution chefs to order Idaho potatoes and incorporate them into their menu in modern dishes.



How do you get consumers to *crave your food products* and *rave about them* to others? You start by speaking with the food communication *experts*.

Our 39 years of *experience* has garnered us a *reputation* for *understanding* every link in the *food value chain* and establishing key stakeholder *relationships*. Our industry insights *empower* us to design and implement *effective*, vertically integrated marketing & public relations *campaigns* that include:

- ☞ Reliable industry research
- ☞ Inspiring brand & creative development
- ☞ Relationship-based digital and social media relations
- ☞ A unique approach to broadcast and conventional media relations
- ☞ Flawless event planning and management
- ☞ Creative website design and management
- ☞ Engaging collateral material
- ☞ Knowledge-based value chain analysis
- ☞ Collaborative in-store retail and foodservice marketing support
- ☞ Influential trade negotiation support
- ☞ Effective merchandising support
- ☞ Persuasive grassroots consumer outreach

Our approach allows us to *influence* how consumers make food choices and deliver *award winning campaigns*, such as:

The Canadian Public Relations Society - A.C.E. Awards, "Best Creative Campaign of the Year" - 2010

The Produce Business Marketing Award of Excellence - 2010

The Ontario Produce Marketing Association, Outstanding Achievement Award - 2010

We speak the universal *language of food*. From fresh to value add; local to imported, we create *brand affinity* for our clients' products, delivering results that positively *impact* their *bottom line*.



hot MARKETING &
COMMUNICATION IDEAS
for the
entire
produce industry.

For more information, contact

Virginia Zimm
Faye Clack Communications Inc.

t) 905.206.0577

f) 905.206.0581

e) vzimm@fayeclack.com

w) www.ideaswithroots.com



FAYECLACK
COMMUNICATIONS INC.

The Food Communications Experts

IDAHO POTATO COMMISSION
Eagle, ID

**Idaho Potatoes
Comic Book Campaign**





Enter the National Apple Month
Display Contest!

SOME THINGS JUST GO TOGETHER, like apples, caramel and peanut butter. That's why National Apple Month has teamed up with **Marzetti®**, **Smucker's®** and **Jif®** for a national retail and military commissary display contest with \$14,000 in prizes.

- Pique the interest – and palates – of consumers, and ultimately increase sales of U.S. apples and apple products through the 2011 theme: “Host an Apple Pairing Party!”

- Easily cross-merchandise apples and apple products with sponsored products through downloadable point of sale materials.



Contest runs September through November and display judging is based on a 2 week (14 day) period. Visit USApple.org/national for rules, registration and promotional materials.

Questions? Email NAM@USApple.org






© 2011 National Apple Month ©/® The J.M. Smucker Company ©/® T. Marzetti Company
Fruits & Veggies More Matters® is a registered trademark of the Produce for Better Health Foundation

OBJECTIVE: To familiarize retail grocery produce category managers with regional Idaho Potato Commission sales representatives and to explain the various ways they can help retail produce executives sell Idaho potatoes using promotions, market data and category analysis info.

CAMPAIGN: Building upon the tremendous success of the “Comic Book” Campaign, which is in its third year, the latest iteration of the campaign depicts IPC’s retail promotions directors Ken Tubman, Bill Savilonis, Larry Whiteside and Kent Beesley as modern-day superheroes who, in traditional comic book format and fashions — bright costumes included — bring to life everyday issues retailers face and offer practical, yet heroic solutions. They were even commemorated in bobble-head dolls. The comic books, distributed at produce trade shows, along with the ads they are used in, build camaraderie between produce executives and potato reps, and serve as a reminder that Idaho potato reps are always ready to help “save the day” by increasing sales and profits.

In addition to the printed materials, animated webisodes are posted on idahopotato.com and youtube.com and direct-mailed to retail produce executives on DVDs.

RESULTS: The promotion has been a phenomenal success and has influenced orders of Idaho potatoes in record numbers. The IPC’s retail customers have thoroughly enjoyed the humorous campaign and look forward to new editions of the comic book series.

NATIONAL MANGO BOARD

Orlando, FL

Virtual Test Kitchen



OBJECTIVE: To educate food editors at national and local publications, as well as food bloggers nationwide about how to use different ripeness levels and varieties of mangos through mango deliveries, videos, recipes and printed “how to” guides, so they could share this knowledge with their millions of readers in print and online.

CAMPAIGN: A virtual test kitchen was created online as a way to provide hands-on test kitchen experience to suit consumers’ schedules without incurring the time and expense of traveling to each of them. The test kitchen kicked off with the Spice & Ripeness Experience, which featured a video of Chef Allen “The Mango Man” Susser explaining how different spice combinations could complement mangos at varying degrees of ripeness. Virtual test kitchen participants received deliveries of mangos at different ripeness levels, as well as spices and a how-to guide so they could follow along with the video. Videotaped cooking demonstrations by Chef Allen were also posted online.

RESULTS: NMB’s Virtual Test Kitchen was a creative and cost-effective approach to an age-old media outreach strategy. With a negligible amount of \$213,000 invested, the campaign reached consumers more than 152 million times for an ROI of 714 impressions per dollar invested. The Virtual Test Kitchen garnered coverage that would have cost more than \$8.6 million if that same space had been published as advertising.

NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTIONAL BOARD

Orlando, FL

GOAL! World Cup Watermelon Campaign Scores In Canada

OBJECTIVE: To generate national media coverage for watermelon during the 2010 watermelon season in Canada and to encourage Canadian bloggers and their audiences to engage in online discussions about the positive benefits and usages of watermelon.



CAMPAIGN: Inspired by the 2010 FIFA World Cup soccer tournament, the campaign, which was created and executed by Faye Clack Communications, paired internationally inspired watermelon recipes to a World Cup team while promoting the benefits of watermelon as a natural hydrator. World-cup themed recipes and articles exploring watermelon’s health benefits and versatility as a beauty aide were distributed to the Canadian press.

RESULTS: This year’s campaign smashed all records of success in Canada with a whopping 169 clips and 39 million audience impressions. The social media campaign reached over 203,745 Twitter users, secured 10 television segments and boasted an editorial value of \$1.9 million. In 2010, Canadian retailers experienced a significant increase in U.S. watermelon sales with an overall average sales increase of 43 percent. Costco Canada Inc. doubled its U.S. watermelon volume in 2010 compared to 2009.

OCEAN MIST FARMS

Castroville, CA

Artichoke Aficionado Club Sweepstakes: Easy To Make. Easy To Win.

OBJECTIVE: Generate consumer awareness for the Ocean Mist Farms artichoke; drive traffic to Ocean Mist Farm’s mobile Web site; and increase membership of The Artichoke Aficionado Club.

CAMPAIGN: The company’s first ever consumer sweepstakes ran for six weeks, during which time, shoppers were directed to Ocean Mist’s mobile Web site, where they could enter to win a grand prize of \$10,000. To qualify, consumers had to become an artichoke club member.

The sweepstakes was promoted at club stores with QR codes and POS signage on bagged product, along with individual “petals” that were inserted in each artichoke with information about the sweepstakes. Digitally, Ocean Mist Farms promoted the sweepstakes via its Twitter and Facebook pages. Email blasts were also sent out to existing members of the artichoke club. In Northern California, traditional print media outlets promoted the contest, and select local retailers participated in an artichoke display contest.

RESULTS: The six-week promotion was a huge success and exceeded all goals of doubling the Artichoke Club membership, which grew 400 percent from 8,600 to 34,121. More than 1.8 million consumer impressions were achieved through in-store POS, digital posts and email blasts.



Entertainment center.



On Air September 15, 2011

Want to get profitin' with the #1 snack nut SKU? Then order your bins in time for the Get Crackin' campaign launch. Featuring a top-secret cast of intriguing personalities, our \$20 million campaign includes prime time, cable, online social media, in-store promotion, national FSIs

Profit center.



and PR. The fun – and the earning – starts on September 15, just in time for fall snacking. So don't wait. **Call your Paramount Farms Representative or 1-800-528-NUTS (6887).**

Wonderful®
PISTACHIOS
getcrackin.com

ONTARIO APPLE GROWERS

St. Catherines, Ontario, Canada

Winter Apple Ball

OBJECTIVE: To educate and engage audiences about the winter availability, versatility and health benefits of Ontario apples via a large-scale awareness initiative — the Winter Apple Ball; to implement media strategies that would result in coverage and third-party endorsements and stimulate a call-to-action among consumers.

CAMPAIGN: The Ontario Apple Committee partnered with Faye Clack Communications to hold a free, public event for families to generate excitement and pay tribute to the McIntosh's 200th anniversary while also highlighting all other Ontario apple varieties. The large-scale family event was rooted in influencing the purchasing decisions of primary grocery shoppers and appealing to children. Creating a charity tie-in with Second

Harvest provided an opportunity for the Ontario Apple Growers to give back. While attendance was free of charge, guests were encouraged to bring their favorite Ontario apple to donate to the organization, which helps feed Torontonians in need.

OAG partnered with the Toronto District School Board to distribute eye-catching flyers detailing event information to teachers who would then pass the word on to their students. The flyer also referenced educational activity worksheets that could be downloaded from onapples.com, encouraging classroom discussions about Ontario apples.

Collateral materials including banners, brochures, recipes cards and trivia wheels were created in tandem with the event, and the onapples.com Web site was transformed into a winter wonderland with whimsical music, scrolled invitations, a countdown clock and more. The event itself included a number of activities that were fun for all ages, such as a Guinness World Record attempt for the most people bobbing for



apples simultaneously, a tribute dance to the McIntosh Apple, an Apple Education Station and a Candy Apple Land.

RESULTS: Registration (1,000 tickets) was filled for the Apple Ball within five days of the first promotion effort. The campaign generated more than 11.8 million media impressions in 142 print and online articles and 13 broadcast clips. A total of 2,300 apples were donated to Second Harvest. There were 7,284 visitors to the Web site during the campaign period of November 22, 2010 to March 16, 2011.

PRODUCE FOR KIDS

Rock Hedge, FL

2010 Retail Merchandising Program

OBJECT: To educate kids and parents (primarily moms) on the benefits of healthful eating incorporating fresh produce; to raise funds to help support children's non-profit organizations; to provide a community service enhancing retailers' commitments to children, education and community.

CAMPAIGN: PFK's Ideal Meals is a merchandising program introduced in 2010 targeting moms ages 25-44, children and teachers in grades K-6 that provide solutions for consumers who want to eat healthfully with valuable meal tips and in-store and online information. A series of 12 Ideal Meal Cards were displayed in an eye-catching shipper at the retail level. Included in each card series were complete recipes for three different meals in such categories as Breakfast Boost and Lunchbox Faves.

Recipe demos were conducted in 25 of the top-selling stores to sample one or two of the Ideal Meals recipes. E-newsletters, a new Web site and expanded social networking on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube completed the campaign.

RESULTS: PFK secured national, online media on more than 350 outlets, reaching a total of 125 million consumer impressions. Media outreach to national grocery trade publications resulted in 32 features. Donations made toward Children's Miracle Network totaled \$399,942.12, while \$194,752.83 was raised for PBS Kids.



SAFeway

Pleasanton, CA

Safeway's Lunchbox Winners



OBJECTIVE: To provide nutritious lunchbox and snack solutions that are "Easy for Mom, Better for Kids;" to utilize Olympic athletes as role models to inject a fun, motivating element to encourage children to stay active and incorporate more fresh fruit and vegetables into their diets.

CAMPAIGN: Lunchbox Winners is a shopper marketing program designed to give parents easy solutions for their kids' school lunches. Working with Augustine Ideas, Lunchbox Winners ran throughout the school year and engaged shoppers with eye-catching POP components. To raise public awareness of the campaign, four events were held during the school year featuring Olympic metal-winning athletes, such as Misty May-Treanor, Jason Lesak, Dominique Dawes and Kristi Yamaguchi, who shared healthy tips and encouraged kids to eat fresh produce. The campaign also included an interactive Web site, targeted at parents, which offered lunch recipes, useful links and an "Ask An Athlete A Question" section.

RESULTS: Thanks to a thorough media campaign, approximately 60 stories ran in national trade publications, regional newspapers and local television stations and garnered more than 500,000 gross impressions. Lunchbox Winners was promoted in 1,500 Safeway stores across the nation and the Web site has had 16,000 visitors to date. In April, 2011, Safeway was awarded the Produce For Better Health Foundation's Role Model Award, which singled out the company's Lunchbox Winners program as exemplary in its support of childhood nutrition and PBH's Fruits & Veggies — More Matters Campaign.

SUNKIST GROWERS

Sherman Oaks, CA

Sunkist: S'alternative Consumer Recipe Contest Promotion



OBJECTIVE: To educate consumers on the health benefits of using Sunkist lemons as an alternative to salt by communicating the message that they can help reduce sodium, increase potassium and enhance flavor; also to establish an online presence, gain media exposure and build existing and new relationships with registered dietitians and bloggers who can help spread the S'alternative message.

CAMPAIGN: The recipe contest, which ran from August 10, 2010 to October 29, 2010, was conducted in partnership with Integrated Marketing Works (IMW) Sunkist's nutrition PR and marketing agency. Consumers uploaded their favorite salt-free recipe featuring Sunkist lemons and a photo of the recipe to the Sunkist Facebook page via a custom-built contest application. The Top 10 winners were then featured on a public gallery on Facebook where consumers voted for their favorites.

Sunkist also developed a S'alternative microsite, which educated consumers about the benefits of lemons, the dangers of high sodium intake and tips on using lemons as a salt-alternative via recipes and videos. POS materials for retailers, as well as direct mailings to targeted registered dietitians, made this a thorough and complete campaign.

RESULTS: Nearly 18 million impressions were achieved through the various communication tools used. S'alternative's Facebook page received 30,997 views and 23,472 new "likes," along with 97 recipe contest entries. The microsite received more than 1,325 visits. Sunkist plans to continue building on the S'alternative health initiative with a new campaign.

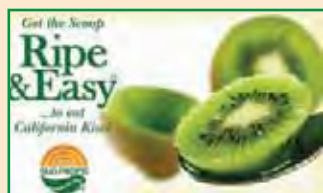
SUN PACIFIC Los Angeles, CA

Ripe & Easy Kiwi

OBJECTIVE: To stimulate the domestic kiwi category and to gain category market share in the United States, lessening Sun Pacific's exports to Mexico, which would provide a higher return to company stakeholders.

CAMPAIGN: Prior to bringing the campaign to the retail level, Sun Pacific developed a unique sorting, storing and preconditioning program for its kiwis. The company invested in controlled atmosphere storage and pressure-sorting technology that could sort the kiwi by stages of ripeness. Finally, Sun Pacific contracted with ripening centers across the country to guarantee just-in-time delivery to retailers.

Once a supply of ready-to-eat kiwis were available, Sun Pacific began to communicate the ease and fun of eating kiwi, along with its nutritional information. High-impact photographs of mom and child on the label, display-ready cartons and bases illustrating how to scoop and eat kiwi were shipped to retailers across the country. Clamshells also included a 3x5-inch tri-fold insert that were seasonal, event-driven and customer-specific, which included such information as selecting and eating tips, recipes, promotional coupons, storage information, games, and a knife were also included in the clamshell. The program included a complete online and social media component comprised of a consumer website, QR code and more.



RESULTS: As a result of the comprehensive campaign, Sun Pacific's harvest was depleted two months ahead of time due to historic sales and retail support and demand. In one year, sales increased 8.4 percent in club stores and 290 percent in supermarkets.

TANIMURA & ANTLE Salinas, CA

Season's Bringing

OBJECTIVE: To increase sales and distribution of the Tanimura & Antle Artisan Lettuce 4-count retail clamshell during the 2010 holiday season.

CAMPAIGN: Produce packages were dressed for the holidays in a red bow and gift tag featuring a weekly consumer sweepstakes for \$1,000. The eye-catching packaging engaged consumers at the retail level and drove traffic to a new consumer-focused produce-specific Web site where consumers could enter the contest. A two-part direct mail campaign including a 3-D gift box filled with a clamshell of Artisan lettuce and a 2-D follow-up mailer, targeted key trade customers and prospects. The new Web site was launched featuring holiday recipes and entertaining tips; and drove traffic to artisanlettuce.com and Facebook, where they were regularly engaged in the brand. Finally, consistent and frequent print media was used throughout the campaign.

RESULTS: The success of this program was a result of the combined efforts of high-impact seasonal packaging, targeted communications and a strong sales focus. It increased trade customers of Tanimura & Antle Artisan Lettuce by 177 percent and tripled distribution points.



U.S. Highbush BLUEBERRY COUNCIL

Folsom, CA

Blueberries Go To School



OBJECTIVE: To alert school foodservice decision-makers that blueberries are available and offer them ways to incorporate more blueberries on school breakfast and lunch menus; to give K-12 school children an opportunity to try the fruit.

CAMPAIGN: The four-fold program included advertising, collateral material, outreach and blueberry promotions in K-12 cafeterias. Advertising in foodservice magazines and Web sites repeated USHBC's message that blueberries are available to schools through the USDA and helped keep this top of mind in directors' plans. School-friendly collateral materials were offered to school foodservice operators with ideas for using blueberries on their menus.

USHBC was one of three sponsors for the 22nd Annual National School Breakfast Week, bringing attention to the addition of blueberries to school menus and their versatility on breakfast and lunch dishes. The council also had a booth at the Annual Nutrition Conference, attracting the attention of school foodservice employees. Finally, the USHBC worked with school foodservice departments to create blueberry promotions featuring breakfast and lunch menu ideas.

RESULTS: Reader print impressions from ads totaled 3.25 million. New recipes loaded onto the Web site were opened 275 times between January 2011 and May 31, 2011. School staff at approximately 84,000 schools were made aware of the versatility of blueberries through the USHBC's presence at the conferences and conventions.

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS, AMHERST
Amherst, MA

Annual Ultimate Cranberry Sampling

OBJECTIVE: To promote simple food and helpful eating, educate students on the health benefits of cranberries and create excitement.

CAMPAIGN: The fall semester at UMASS Amherst began with a challenge to students to double their consumption of fresh produce for the term. To help them achieve their goal, special events during September, October and November highlighted various produce items, all leading up to the Annual Ultimate Cranberry Sampling Event on December 1st.

On this day, a variety of breakfast, lunch and dinner items included cranberries, such as Gingerbread Pancakes with Cranberries, and Spicy Cranberry Turkey Sliders. A second generation Ocean Spray grower came to campus to discuss the history of cranberries and her perspective on sustainability.

An artificial cranberry bog was created at one of the dining halls, where students had the opportunity to put on hip-waders and see how the fruit is produced by raking the fresh cranberries. Dining services conducted a massive campaign to promote the event including social media, the school newspaper and radio channel, posters, flyers, banners and word-of-mouth via student ambassadors.

RESULTS: More than 1,000 pounds of cranberries were consumed during the event and average traffic count at the dining halls increased by 15 percent — or 1,388 people — for the special event. Customer satisfaction increased to 8.6 on a scale of 1 to 10, while the food cost per meal remained the same during the promotion. A total of seven new recipes were used during the event that incorporated the cranberry into various new dishes.



**NOT JUST ANY PEACH ...
 A JERSEY FRESH PEACH**

Garden State Grown
 Nutritious, Delicious, the Best!



**Plentiful Supplies of
 Yellow Peaches
 Well Past Labor Day**

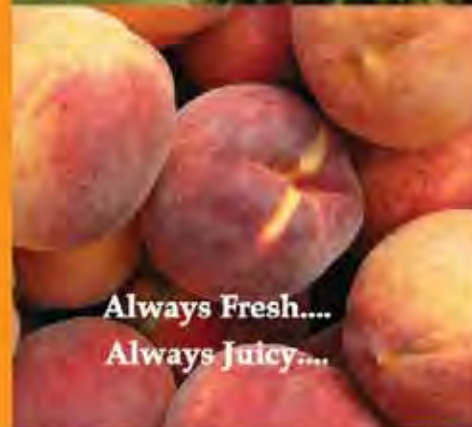
Visit Our Website
 Grower, Packer, Shipper List
 Downloadable Price Card &
 Recipe Booklet
 And Much More



**Dedicated to the Orderly
 Marketing and Promotion of
 New Jersey Peaches**

Find Jersey peaches on facebook

www.jerseypeaches.com





TURN YOUR MARKETING INTO AN **AWARDING** EXPERIENCE

Right now, and on through June 4, 2012, we're taking entries for the **24th Annual Marketing Excellence Awards Program**, presented by **PRODUCE BUSINESS**. The awards recognize excellence in marketing in each of six categories: retailers, restaurants, wholesalers, shippers, commodity organizations and allied service/product providers. Print, broadcast and other media are eligible to win.

To participate, send us the following:

1. Your name, company, address and phone.
2. Type of business.
3. Names and dates of promotion (must have taken place between June 1, 2011 and June 1, 2012).
4. Promotion objectives.
5. Description of promotion.
6. Promotion results (sales or traffic increases, media attention). What made this program a success?
7. All support materials used in the promotion – such as POP, ads, posters, TV commercials.

High resolution digital image or high quality photos encouraged (Please do not send any produce)

SEND ENTRIES TO:
PRODUCE BUSINESS MARKETING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

P.O. Box 810425 • Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425

Deadline for entries is June 8, 2012

For additional information, call: 561-994-1118, Ext. 101

WHOLLY GUACAMOLE

Saginaw, TX

Inside The Huddle Final Report



OBJECTIVE: To increase sales and brand awareness; drive trial and usage; encourage partner excitement for the future.

CAMPAIGN: Built around the idea of "homegating," this promotion sought to educate consumers on how to entertain sports-viewers at home using Wholly products in new and inventive ways. New packaging, which included an on-pack homegating logo and an on-pack coupon booklet as well as a strong social media campaign conducted through Facebook, Twitter and food bloggers, all drove consumers to the HomegatingHQ.com site. The thorough Web site, which included a photo contest, videos, partner pages, along with recipes and entertaining kits, was built strategically to create "stickiness" and appeal to various demographic groups. With multiple content categories, HomegateHQ.com creates reasons for viewers to keep coming back. The program ended with two coupon promotions in January that were Super Bowl-focused.

RESULTS: HomegatingHQ.com received 328,361 visitors, creating 4.3 million impressions. Even more impressive, web traffic reports showed that HomegatingHQ was mentioned across the web every 30 minutes during the months of November to January. Wholly's current bloggers database has increased to more than 220 bloggers. Thanks to newsletter mailing, Wholly's general database increased by 14,835 between the first two January mailings.

WHOLLY GUACAMOLE

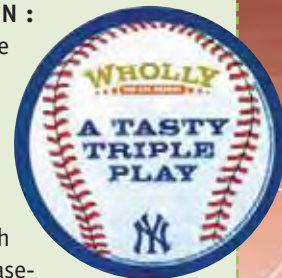
Saginaw, TX

New York Yankees Promotion

OBJECTIVE: To increase sales and brand awareness; to drive trial, usage and consumer experience.

CAMPAIGN:

Teaming up with the New York Yankees baseball team, Wholly Guacamole wanted to draw attention to their products through the passionate baseball community. To do so, a number of ads were placed in geographically targeted markets that included coupons for \$1-off the Wholly Guacamole suite of products, including Wholly Salsa, Wholly Queso and Wholly Guacamole. Web banners were also placed online at Yankees.com and MLB.com, which forwarded web-goers to the Eat Wholly website.



Custom designs, box fonts and creative copy were built around the NY Yankees brand and logo, along with various POS materials, such as channel strips and danglers. Wholly Guacamole was also promoted at the ballpark with baseline rotating banners, chip dips and the addition of guacamole as a topping on the stadium nacho carts.

RESULTS: Sales of Wholly Products in the NY market increased by 20 percent. Wholly's web traffic included 22,806 total hits, with 5,359 coupons being downloaded. Overall, the promotion was a huge success and greatly impacted the company's database with a new face of sports fan, consumers, creating a new channel for sports-related promos.

For information about entering the 2012 **MARKETING EXCELLENCE AWARD** competition, please visit our Web site at www.producebusiness.com



**CAREER
PATHWAYS**
PROGRAM

Attracting Tomorrow's Leaders



Meet and network with top agriculture and food marketing students
and faculty from universities across the country during the
PMA Fresh Summit International Convention & Exposition.

In addition to networking, this Career Pathways program, funded in part by the Jay and Ruth Pack Family Foundation, introduces students to careers in fresh produce through professional mentoring with industry volunteers, customized educational workshops, and a career path discussion panel with industry leaders.

To learn more about this flagship Career Pathways program or one of our 3 regional Career Pathways programs, visit www.pmafit.com/careerpathways.

For information on volunteer opportunities, visit www.pmafit.com/GetInvolved or contact Alicia Calhoun at +1 (302) 607-2157 or acalhoun@pmafit.com.

México

ADVERTISEMENT

MEXICAN BERRIES: *Small Fruits, Big Potential*

Mexico is a high quality producer and exporter of blackberry, blueberry, raspberry, and strawberry. As of 1992, these products gained powerful attention from Mexican producers resulting in crop production increases of close to 390% in a five year period. In 2008 the total value of berry production in Mexico approached US\$365 million.

In 2009 the production of berries increased 6.4% in volume (22,000 tons) over the previous year for a total production of 364,156 tons. Strawberry and blueberry were the products which most increased production. Commercial value of berries reached \$457 million dollars in 2009, an increase of 25% over 2008.

Mexican berry production provides production at important times during the year so that U.S. marketers can offer a year-round supply

in the berry category. The berry category is a crucial profit center as evidenced by the following facts:

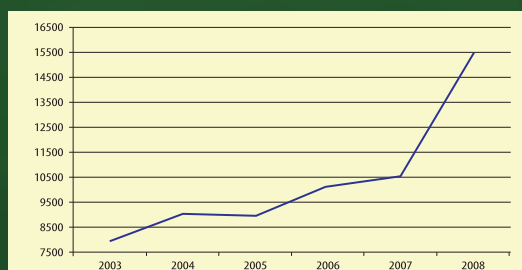
- During 2009, berries as a category represented 8.2% of total combined fruit and vegetable sales;
- Berries are a category with high growth in the U.S. market;
- At least five weeks of the year, berries occupy first place as a category in supermarkets, out selling packaged salads, tomatoes and apples.
- Berries were one of the few categories that experienced growth during the 2009 recession.
- Fruits and vegetables in general have shown a 6% growth in volume. Berries have posted a 20% volume growth.

Area and Value of Berries in Mexico • Year 2008

Product	Area (Hectares)	Value of Production (Millions of Mexican Pesos)
Strawberry	6214	1,482,823.93
Blueberry	190	3,015
Raspberry	915.75	395,704.94
Blackberry	8,193.95	2,376,757.80
Total	15,513.7	4,258,301.67

Source: SIAP

Growth in Production Area (Hectares) Of Berries in Mexico • Years 2003 to 2008



Source: SIAP

For more information on berries in Mexico, contact the Mexican berry association Aneberries A.C. (La Asociación Nacional de Exportadoras de Berries). Aneberries is made up of the most important berry exporters in Mexico. The association initiated formal operations in 2010 in response to the need for collaboration and representation in the Mexican berry industry.

Join us for the
**First International Berry
 Congress of Mexico**
Small Fruits of a Big Country
 September 28-30, 2011
 For more information
 contact Aneberries



ANEBERRIES, A.C.

Contact: Blanca Nelly Partida
 Tel: 52 33 38133643
 Nextel: 52 33 16615515
 Id 92 *13*58341

Email: blancanelly.partida@aneberries.mx
 Web: www.aneberries.mx





DRISCOLL BERRIES: 20 YEARS OF QUALITY BERRIES IN MEXICO

Driscoll's has been growing berries in Mexico for over 20 years. We have developed some outstanding partnerships in Mexico in excellent production areas for our complete line of berries – strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and blueberries both organic and conventionally grown. In Mexico, we have been able to produce superior quality berries in a timeframe that complements production from other areas.

An important part of our partnerships with independent farmers in Mexico is conducting research into varieties and cultural practices that fit their climate and production systems. We are very proud of the extent to which our partners in Mexico have embraced Driscoll's standards.

Our experience in Mexico has been very positive – a win, win for Driscoll's, the family farmers with whom we have partnered and for the communities in which we farm. Our values are to operate with passion, humility and trustworthiness and recognizing that our businesses have an impact on the communities in which we farm. Our business partners throughout Central Mexico and Baja share those values. The farmers with whom we have partnered are leaders in their communities and are making a positive contribution for their employees and the community as a whole.

PERSPECTIVE FROM THE FIELD:

SPLENDOR PRODUCE S de RL de CV

Splendor Produce is a Mexican company dedicated to the production, export and marketing of fresh agricultural products, particularly blackberries. The company boasts highly trained employees, abundant resources, good infrastructure and quality processes that allow it to deliver the highest quality fruit to the end consumer.

Q: Can you give us a little history on your berry production?

A: Blackberry production in this region of Mexico has existed for about 12 years now. Production is principally located in the zones of Jalisco and Ziracuaretiro, Miguel Silva, Ario de Rosales as well as Los Reyes de Salgado, Michoacán. The season fluctuates a bit each year, beginning around the end of September until June – depending on the climate.

Q: What products or varieties are mainly produced?

A: Our main varieties of blackberry are Tuppy, Brazzo y Brasileña. (We also have production of raspberry and blueberry.)

Q: What is the area and quantity of production?

A: Currently there are about 8,000 hectares of berries under production with an annual growth of about one to two percent. There are 11 exporting companies exporting around 25 million boxes per year during the season. These companies include: SPLENDOR PRODUCE, SUN BELLE, GRUPO HERES, EXPOBERRIES, SUNNY RIDGE, AGROINDUSTRIAL EL MOLINITO, EXIFRUT, AGRANA FRUIT DE MEXICO, HORTIFRUT, VITAL BERRY, and BERRIES PARADISE

Q: What type of certification or quality programs do you work with?

A: We take quality and food safety seriously. We know that if we don't assure the highest quality and safety for the customer, there won't be any business. We work with PRIMUS LABS.COM, GLOBAL GAP, USA GAP, and the official certification of SENASICA. These certifications apply to our installations, like coolers and packing facilities, as well as our production.

Q: What are the two most important things a buyer should know about berries from Mexico?

A: First, that the food safety of the product is highest priority. We take so many factors and programs into care, from following Good Agricultural Practices, to the quality of the water and the use of inputs registered in both destination and producer countries. Second would be that the quality of our fruit is outstanding, as much as in appearance as in taste (high brix). Buyers may be surprised to know that berries are particularly nutritious, specifically in their high antioxidant level. They are very versatile in use and thus a great item to promote.

For more information on trade and business opportunities with Mexico:
Agricultural Office at the Embassy of Mexico

HECTOR CORTES

Agricultural Attache

(202)728-1727 • Hcortes.sagarpausa@verizon.net

1911 Pennsylvania Ave NW • Washington, DC 20006



For More information on investing in Mexico: ProMexico, www.promexico.gob.mx





Corrugated (left) and RPCs (above) meet a number of different retail needs.

Packaging For Transport And Display

Efficiency, sustainability and marketability are just a few of the benefits offered by properly designed RPC and corrugated packaging options. **BY CAROL M. BAREUTHER, RD**

Trade packaging, such as reusable plastic containers (RPCs) and corrugated cartons, can offer much more than simply the ability to transport fresh fruits and vegetables from field to retail shelf.

RPC Designs Fit Specific Functions

The use of RPCs isn't new, says Roy Ferguson, CEO of Chantler Packaging Inc., in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada. "They have been around for 10 to 15 years, and today, many of the big retailers like Wal-Mart, H.E.B. and Kroger in the United States and Loblaw's in Canada use them."

"Some retailers want to increase the percentage of produce they receive in RPCs," adds Jim Scattini, vice president of sales and marketing for Sambraile Packaging, headquartered in Watsonville, CA. "This includes berries, which traditionally require more specialized packaging and handling than other fruits and vegetables."

New generation designs of RPCs have been developed over the past few years to answer these demands. Key features in these designs are improved ventilation, strength and lighter

weight. Sam Monte, the fourth generation owner and president at Riverside, MI-based Monte Packing Co., says, "We have eight or nine different styles of RPCs. For example, blueberries are traditionally picked into 30-lb. lugs. Recently, a grower asked if we could source 15-lb. RPCs for him. There are many more examples like this. The request may be driven by the demands of new packaging machinery or efficiencies such as the ability of an RPC to slide better down a packing line. There are a multitude of reasons for variations in an RPC product."

Earlier this year, IFCO introduced a new RPC design within the industry standard 60cm x 40cm footprint specifically for strawberries. Fred Heptinstall, president and general manager of IFCO RPC Management Services Division, based in Tampa, FL, says, "This new design protects the delicate fruit better through the supply chain and it facilitates faster cooling due to vents along the sides and base to optimize air flow. This results in better shelf-life of the berries."

In addition, this new RPC design accommodates nine 1-lb. clamshells, which translates into a 9 percent increase in clamshells per

pallet delivered versus the conventional corrugated pack. The new strawberry RPC also cross-stacks to build a strong pallet and eliminates the need for tie sheets and other packaging materials.

IFCO has also introduced a new RPC for bananas. "The design was five years in development due to the complex nature of the banana supply chain," notes Heptinstall. One notable feature of the new banana RPC is interior side walls that are curved and smooth to cradle and protect the fruit. Ventilation features provide for faster cooling and better temperature management for fruit ripening and freshness at retail display. In addition, its ergonomic handle for easy lifting and secure stacking ability generate supply chain and handling efficiencies that translate into cost savings in labor and time.

IFCO has also introduced a new advanced technology RPC for fresh eggs, says Heptinstall. "This may offer applicability for fresh produce such as bagged salads in the future." In addition to protecting the eggs from breakage during shipment, this RPC reduces store labor in merchandising as one side of the crate opens fully for display, enabling a 'one-

“Another trend is being more economical with the materials needed to create secondary packaging. This trend to reduce the packaging footprint is being driven by rising costs and a desire to be perceived as being socially responsible.”

— Jim Scattini, Sambrailo Packaging Inc.

touch’ system from the farm to the shelf.

New Designs In Corrugated

Big things are happening in the corrugated industry and these may signal a shift away from RPCs for some retailers. Dwight Schmidt, executive director of the Corrugated Packaging Alliance (CPA), in Elk Grove Village, IL, says, “The corrugated industry’s answer to retailers’ demand for high-quality produce packaging is the standardized Corrugated Common Footprint (CCF). The ‘Common Footprint’ eliminates the problem of unstable mixed loads that can topple during transport and helps increase the volume of produce that can be shipped on a pallet from a distribution center. Its modular characteristics go a long way toward reducing costs in the supply chain.”

“The next step in the corrugated design evolution after the ‘Common Footprint’ sizing,” according to Jeff Grossman, manager at Temple-Inland Inc., in Edinburg, TX, “is scaling the height of the box according to the produce shipped. For example, varying the depth of the box can eliminate head space and freight saving because you’re not shipping air. This is an advantage over RPCs.”

“Another trend is being more economical with the materials needed to create secondary packaging,” adds Sambrailo’s Scattini. “This trend to reduce the packaging footprint is being driven by rising costs and a desire to be perceived as being socially responsible. In fact, some corrugators have proactively established in-house sustainability committees or teams that place a greater emphasis on improving their internal process. It is being driven by all stages of the distribution chain, from grower to consumer.

Dovetailing with this trend is the avail-

ability and use of recyclable wax alternatives for wet and iced products. The CPA’s Schmidt discloses, “This is growing each year since the industry introduced its repulpability/recyclability standard and test protocol, which allows these wax alternatives to be certified recyclable. This makes it possible for retailers and other end-users of corrugated packaging to recover more old corrugated containers (OCC) for recycling, which, in turn, increases their revenue from the sale of OCC and reduces their disposal costs for non-recyclable waste. Rising OCC prices due to high interna-

tional demand make increased recovery even more profitable.”

The RPC Vs. Corrugated Debate

There is no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to trade packaging. Rather, decisions about the optimal packaging for produce should be made on a commodity-by-commodity basis. “For example,” says IFCO’s Heptinstall, “the only kind of produce that doesn’t work well in an RPC is watermelon and that is due to its sheer size.”

One reason why some retailers switched to

Safe-T-Fresh[®]

Industry Leading Tamper Evident Containers
Now made with a unique and sustainable low carbon footprint
△ PET material.
Safe, Clear, and 100% Recyclable.

Tamper-resistant, Tamper-evident, Leak-resistant containers
USING IS BELIEVING
Call for your **FREE Samples 1-800-826-5567**
Mention Promo PB0811

Patented tear strip locks in safety and seals in freshness, while eliminating the need for shrink bands.

Come Visit Us!
Booth #963

Inline Plastics Corp.
Good Things Come In Our Packages[®]

42 Canal Street, Shelton, CT 06484
800.826.5567 • www.inlineplastics.com

RPCs at retail is to help drive cost out of the supply chain. “Corrugated also offers cost benefits,” says the CPA’s Schmidt. “Corrugated is lightweight, boasts high stacking strength and cube efficiency, resulting in low shipping costs. There are no back-shipping expenses, and in fact, a grocery store will typically earn money when the used boxes are recovered for recycling. A disadvantage of RPCs includes the need for back-shipping and maintenance of a national container pool. Cost and reliability of sanitation processes for reusing those containers is also an issue, as is container loss

through theft and/or breakage.”

“Whether using RPCs or corrugated, it’s important to look at the road-worthiness of the packaging,” points out Monte Packing’s Monte.

“RPCs can significantly reduce damage to produce during transport and storage,” maintains Heptinstall. “RPCs are better for getting the field heat out of a product. It ranges from 35 percent faster to up to 75 percent faster for products such as soft vegetables like yellow squash. This leads to a better quality and fresher product.”

However, Schmidt counters, “With its

“Whether using RPCs or corrugated, it’s important to look at the road-worthiness of the packaging.”

— Sam Monte, Monte Packaging Co.

fluted construction and built-in air cushioning, corrugated provides superior product protection and minimizes damage from abrasion and bruising. It can be custom-designed to offer additional reinforcement, cooling vents, insulation and moisture barriers to keep contents protected.”

In addition, carton liners made out of ethylene-removing film, such as the PrimePro product made by Chantler Packaging, can help maintain the quality of produce during transport in corrugated cartons. These have been found especially effective with pears, apples, plums, broccoli, peppers, zucchini and summer squash, cherries and green beans.

Sustainability is a positive feature in both types of trade packaging. For one, RPCs can be used up to 100 trips and are 100 percent recyclable. Heptinstall reports, “Their use results in a 53 percent lower greenhouse emissions potential in a lifecycle analysis. In addition, RPCs require 29 percent less total energy and can reduce solid waste by 95 percent.”

“On the other hand,” says Lin Moses, marketing manager for International Paper, in Memphis, TN, “corrugated packaging is environmentally friendly as it’s made from trees — a 100 percent renewable resource. Corrugated is also the single most recycled packaging material with 81 percent of all corrugated produce in the U.S. recovered. Discarded corrugated takes up less landfill space, is more compactable than plastic, and has a shorter lifespan in a landfill than plastic.”

Another concern is availability. Moses adds, “Supply availability for RPCs has become an issue for smaller grower/shippers as retailers increase their demand.”

More than 1,300 corrugated packaging suppliers in the U.S. make it possible to source CCF and other corrugated packaging locally, says the CPA’s Schmidt. “This represents a big cost savings and speed to market for packaging the locally grown produce that grocers are increasingly focused on providing to the consumer.”

The ‘Farm-Stand’ Look

Boutique produce stores may still use old-time wooden crates and bushel baskets

ProducePackaging.com®
for all your produce packaging needs

Kurt Zuhlke & Associates, Inc.
Keeping it Green - Made of 100% Recycled PETE
Call 1-800-644-8729 or Visit www.ProducePackaging.com

to transport and merchandise fruits and vegetables in-store. “However,” says Chantler’s Ferguson, “Most retailers shy away from these because of labor, cost and food safety concerns.”

“Yet, the growing trend for retailers’ produce departments to a ‘Locally Grown’ look has led to the development of other options,” notes Moses. “Since corrugated boxes can be printed and custom-designed, they can be quickly and easily updated to respond to new trends.”

Temple-Inland’s Grossman reveals, “We had a green bean grower come to us to design a display-ready, open-top carton that looked like a crate. In other words, he wanted the look of wood, but the advantages of corrugated.”

Monte Packing has accommodated similar requests. Monte recollects. “We designed a 25-lb. tomato carton using 4-color technology to print it to resemble a field crate with the logo of the grower. The desire for a ‘farm-fresh’ look is pervasive, from the big box stores to the conventional supermarkets to the mom-and-pop stores, and this is one way they’re achieving it.”

“In addition,” continues Monte, “another reason why retailers like RPCs is because it gives the produce department a fresh look, like the produce was picked and packed right into the RPC and then transported directly from field to shelf.”

Packaging As A Merchandising Tool

Display-ready boxes continue to grow in popularity among grower/shippers and retailers, notes International Paper’s Moses. “They provide many advantages, such as opportunities to share brand and product merchandising or country of origin information; quick and easy in-store setup reducing labor requirements; and can function as either primary or secondary packaging.”

CPA’s Schmidt adds, “If high-impact graphics are incorporated, the merchandising power of the corrugated case also helps attract attention to product features that consumers are looking for, such as locally grown, organic, or specific brands.”

More production plants now have the ability to run and process high end print graphics — not just two to three color post print. Moses details, “High-end graphics, including multiple colors, pre-print, or litho lam printing, are being requested more on corrugated boxes by retailers. We have a wide variety of printing options including the exclusive ChromaPak color reproduction process, which provides the look of a 4-color image

using as few as two colors and EarthSaver ink, a new, environmentally friendly ink made from the byproduct of potato food processing.”

Monte Packing’s Monte notes, “Some grower/shippers are printing Web site addresses and even QR codes on their boxes. It’s a proven merchandising fact that consumers that reach out and become more engaged with a product are more likely to buy.”

“Many production plants also have new high-speed flexo rotary die cutters with computer-controlled set-ups, as well as machines that have the ability to convert to

either standard post print, or high-end graphics,” says Sambrailo’s Scattini. “This now gives corrugators the ability to supply high-end graphics at competitive price levels.”

Beyond graphics, there’s a trend toward, and demand by, retailers for smaller consumer sized boxes. Schmidt explains. “There has been increased demand by club stores and major grocery retailers for specifically designed transport packages that represent a single-sale unit that the customer can take out of the store. This has been especially requested for fast moving and seasonal items.” **pb**



Fox Packaging

Style, Form & Function...
It's in the bag.

Take advantage of Fox Packaging's industry leading packaging solutions to improve packaging efficiencies and grow your fresh produce sales.

Visit us at Fresh Summit booth #2247.
(956) 682-6176 ■ www.foxbag.com



Fox SOLUTIONS

Fox Solutions, LLC's extensive knowledge of produce packing operations make us the right resource for labor-saving equipment solutions that make the most sense for your business needs.

Baggers ■ Bulk Handling Equipment ■ Linear and Radial Scales
Robotics ■ Case Packing ■ Traceability Coding

Visit us at Fresh Summit booth #2247.
(716) 471-7884

TOMATO SHOWCASE

True Italian Heirloom Fresh-Frozen Tomatoes



Marchini Marzano introduces a revolutionary new blast-frozen alternative. Vine-ripened, hand-picked, and preserved at the height of flavor.

Your customers will taste the difference!



Call Toll Free: 1-877-899-9007
Salinas: 831-758-0200
Le Grand: 559-665-9711



www.marchinimarzano.com



Deardorff
FAMILY FARMS

CALIFORNIA
HIGHLAND
Ranch
VINE-RIPED TOMATOES

**POLE GROWN
VINE-RIPES
& ROMAS**

ALL
**CALIFORNIA
GROWN**

PRODUCT

USDA
ORGANIC
ORGANIC ROMAS
ROUNDS, HEIRLOOMS

SHIPPING FROM OXNARD, CA
DAVE, DOUG, & PAUL: SALES DEPT.
805.200.5215 FAX 805.483.1286

DEARDORFFFAMILYFARMS.COM

ECLIPSE
BERRY FARMS, LLC

Shipping Strawberries, Raspberries,
Grape Tomatoes
Oxnard & Watsonville shipping locations



Rick Hearst & Stuart Gilfenbain

310.207.7879

Indulge Your
Customer...
...Harvest Profits



As a grower owned marketing company, Greenhouse Produce Company understands your business. We connect your buyer to our grower! We efficiently manage the supply chain and reflect the savings on to you. Our greenhouse products are packed at the farm, shipped directly to your distribution centers, maintaining freshness and shelf life thereby assuring complete traceability of all our products. All our products are not only third party certified but also sampled and tested for micro-biological organisms on regular intervals.



Greenhouse

BORDER WAREHOUSE: McALLEN & NOGALES
SALES OFFICES: PA • CA • FL
EMAIL: frid@greenhouseproduce.net • 1.800.492.1492



DiMARE.

DiMare, Mr. Tasty & Tap Brands
Growers, Packers & Shippers of
Tomatoes, Roma Tomatoes, Mature Green
Vine Ripe Tomatoes & Grape Tomatoes

Caesar Muratore & Todd Giardina
Sales: 209.862.2872 • Fax: 209.862.0103
dimarenewman@dimare-ca.com

Newman, CA

TOMATO SHOWCASE

MOONEY FARMS
Grower · Packer · Shipper



PREMIUM CALIFORNIA
SUN DRIED
Tomatoes

Phone: 530-899-2661
Email: mooneyfarm@aol.com
www.mooneyfarms.com



Mucci
FARMS

Sales: 866-236-5558

- Gourmet greenhouse produce
- Year round availability
- Sustainable packaging

www.muccifarms.com
produce@muccifarms.com

Growers · Packers · Shippers




THEY'RE STARTING TO ASK
FOR THEM BY NAME.




Offering six North American
distribution centers to serve you.
Freshness Redefined with one call
1-800-286-0691
www.jemdinternational.com

Glasshouse Grown




tomatoes
bell peppers
cucumbers

**Village
Farms**

Apolectic Hydroponic

Change in all things is sweet
Aristole

877-777-7718 sales@villagefarms.com



**THE NEW YORK
PRODUCE SHOW
AND CONFERENCE**

Presented by
EASTERN PRODUCE COUNCIL
AND
PRODUCE BUSINESS

November 7-9, 2011
New York City
Register Today At
NYProduceShow.com

Pacific Tomato Growers 

Pacific Triple E 

Specializing in Rounds, Romas and Sweet Grape Tomatoes

*Sales Handled By Jon Esformes, Joe Esformes, Jack Esformes, Joey Poksemba,
Carlos Blanco, Jimmy Munquia, Rob Meade, and Lyle Bagley*

Palmetto Florida Sales: (941)722-0778
Tracy California Sales: (209)835-7500
Nogales Arizona Sales (520)281-4927

Grower, Shipper, Distributor
www.sunripeproduce.com



Washington Apples: Variety Report

Growers and marketers alike are constantly on the hunt for “the next big thing,” but in the meantime, they are making the most of an expanding apple category. **BY CAROL M. BAREUTHER, RD**

There’s an irresistible appeal in sampling something new. Even though the apple category has expanded considerably over the past decade, there’s no lack of consumer demand for varieties that deliver a fresh flavor. This is good news to retailers such as Jon Clements, director of produce for Kuhn’s Quality Foods Market, a 9-store chain based in Pittsburgh, PA. “Why do I add new varieties when shelf space is already at a premium? It’s a thirst for sales,” answers Clements. “Sure, I can put apples on sale and grow sales for that week. But to truly grow the category over the long term is to increase variety over time.”

Many retailers look to the West to find future trends in the apple category. Washington State boasts a number of factors, such as ideal climate; vertically integrated grower/shipper/marketers whose roots reach back five generations; the latest horticultural technology; high-density plantings, which have skyrocketed yields per acre and robust organic production estimated to reach between eight to 10 percent of the state’s production in the

next three to five years, that have combined to make it a powerhouse in apple production. By the numbers, there are some 2,200 growers in the state with more than 175,000 acres of orchards that produce over 100 million cartons annually or enough to supply two-thirds of the total U.S. apple market and also sell some 30 million cartons to export markets around the globe.

Todd Fryhover, president of the Washington Apple Commission (WAC), in Wenatchee, WA, says, “The Washington apple industry is in a growth mode. We expect our volumes to continue to increase upwards to 120 million boxes. This season (2010) is shaping up to be our largest on record — 108,800,000 bushels, comprised of Red Delicious (30 percent), Gala (20 percent), Fuji (15 percent), Granny Smith (15 percent) and Golden Delicious (10 percent). The remaining 10 percent is made up of Honeycrisp, Braeburn, Cameo, Jonagold and Cripps Pink, along with several other smaller volume varieties. I expect these percentages to remain consistent as our production increases.”

Washington is also a hot spot for cultiva-

tion of new varieties. One of the fastest gaining apples in both volume and dollar sales is Honeycrisp, Fryhover adds. “We could see a doubling of our 2.8 million bushel volume in 2010 to 4-plus million bushels in 2011. In addition, I expect Honeycrisp to approach seven to 10 percent of the state’s total production in the next five years.”

Fred Wescott, the Elgin, MN-based president of Wescott Agri Products Inc., which markets the Honey Bear brand of Honeycrisp, says, “I don’t believe the industry will hit those numbers. What I do think will happen is that mediocre acreage will be eliminated and that there will be replantings of improved strains that will make for an overall better quality Honeycrisp.”

“In addition to Honeycrisp,” says Suzanne Wolter, director of marketing for Rainier Fruit Co., based in Selah, WA, “the apples with double-digit retail volume and dollar sales growth between the 2010 and 2009 seasons include Pink Lady, Pinata and Jazz. Jazz has been well received by consumers, and its volume will double over the next five years. From a percentage standpoint, if you look at

KEEP IT SIMPLE WITH CMI.

We grow, pack, ship and strategize - for you.

- Premium growers & exclusive varieties.
- Robust organic program.
- Year-round supply & import program.
- Award-winning POS material.
- One stop. One source. Call CMI today.

PREMIUM APPLES, PEARS, CHERRIES + ORGANICS
cmiaples.com 509-663-1955 Wenatchee, WA



NEW VARIETIES & ANTICIPATED 2011-2012 VOLUMES

VARIETY	CARTONS (40-LB.)
Cameo	850,000
Ambrosia	350,000-plus
Pinata	300,000
Sonya	125,000
Lady Alice	100,000
Sweet Tango	85,000-95,000
Aurora Golden Gala	40,000
Junami	40,000
Kiku	35,000
Rosalynn	20,000
Kanzi	20,000
Rubin	3,000
Autumn Glory	4,000

the projected volume increases of Junami and Lady Alice, these two could be considered some of the fastest growing in terms of future sales.”

Retailers have put in their orders when it comes to new varietal development. Wolter explains, “Four to five years ago, almost every retail partner we work with asked us for a new

“In addition to Honeycrisp, the apples with double-digit retail volume and dollar sales growth between the 2010 and 2009 seasons include Pink Lady, Pinata and Jazz...From a percentage standpoint, if you look at the projected volume increases of Junami and Lady Alice, these two could be considered some of the fastest growing in terms of future sales.”

— Suzanne Wolter, Rainier Fruit Co.

variety, to go find the ‘next Honeycrisp.’ We heard repeatedly, ‘we want the exclusive and we’ll take everything you have.’ It is apparent retailers asked this of every apple supplier.”

“To meet this request, brand-building — thanks to the Pink Lady marketing model — is becoming a more important factor for growers,” says Alan Taylor, the Yakima, WA-based marketing director for Pink Lady America LLC. “Those involved understand that to be successful, first and foremost, you have to start with a high-quality apple product with a

unique characteristic or two.”

Lee Reynolds, director of produce for Haggen’s Inc., a 32-store chain based in Bellingham, WA, operating under the Haggen Food & Pharmacy and TOP Food & Drug Store banners, agrees, “For a new apple to work, it has to have a different flavor that will entice customers to come back.”

Update On New Varieties

New apple varieties grown in Washington come from breeding programs in both Wash-

“Your reputation is in my hands & I don’t take that lightly.”

At L&M, our produce speaks for itself. When it comes to top quality apples, L&M is committed from the ground up. From the first seed planted, throughout the entire supply chain, you can count on us to deliver the expertise you require. | lmcompanies.com





nutritious



tasty



crispy



take your pick now

It's New York apple harvest season. And with two-thirds of the population of North America living within 500 miles of New York State, that means you can provide your shoppers with the freshest, tastiest, crispiest apples. Shorter shipping times and distances translate into healthier, more delicious apples that arrive faster and fresher!

All the favorite varieties are here now – perfect to meet customer demand for snacking, lunches, baking, sauces, salads and recipes. Let your customers know that buying New York Apples also saves energy, helps the environment, and supports local farmers.

So take your pick now and order in the healthier, more delicious apples from New York. *Millions of local branches near you.*



ington and the world, says Andy Tudor, director of marketing for FirstFruits Marketing of Washington LLC, in Yakima, WA. "We're testing two apples out of WSU (Washington State University) right now, and they show real promise. But many of the new varieties have come from breeding programs in other parts of the world. Opal originated in 1999 in the Czech Republic; Fuji came from Japan; Jazz, Envy and Braeburn are all from New Zealand."

Loren Queen, marketing and communications manager for Yakima, WA-based Domex

Superfresh Growers LLC, says, "These newer varieties aren't yet the big moneymakers or workhorses of the category. But, they do make a nice bump in incremental sales and offer retailers a point of distinction and differentiation."

Below are updates for the coming season on a baker's dozen of new or newer apple varieties grown in Washington.

CAMEO: This patented trademarked variety discovered from a chance seedling began commercial production in 1997. Production has plateaued at 840,000 cartons



PHOTO AT RIGHT COURTESY OF STEMILT

SweetTango is a combination of the Honeycrisp and Zestar that was developed at the University of Minnesota's breeding program.

CHELAN FRESH

PREMIUM FRUIT. PROVEN PROGRAMS.

Chelan Fresh doesn't just grow the world's best pears, we know how to sell them. Our exclusive "Naturally Delicious & Nutritious" display materials educate consumers on the health and nutritional benefits of pears, and have been proven to increase sales by up to 20%.

So, what's the bottom line? Chelan Fresh offers our customers more programs, more fruit, and more profit. We think those are three great reasons to give us a call today.

BROWSE OUR PRODUCE & PROGRAMS www.chelanfresh.com **CALL 509-682-4252**

annually. "The competitive advantage we see for Cameo is that it stores well, therefore we rebranded it for the first time last year as a late-season apple that we market aggressively from January to June," says Kevin Precht, marketing program director for the Wenatchee, WA-based Cameo Apple Marketing Association (CAMA). Growers will phase over to a red strain of Cameo in the next three to five years, he adds.

AMBROSIA: First introduced in 2006, this chance seedling is a Jonagold, Red Delicious and Golden Delicious bi-color hybrid discovered in British Columbia. "We have over 600 acres in the ground and are looking at producing upwards of 500,000 cartons in the next three years," says Bob Mast, vice president of marketing for Columbia Marketing International Corp., (CMI), in Wenatchee, WA. "This bi-color apple, with its yellow background and red splotches makes a good color break."

PINATA: Over 500 acres of this cross between a Golden Delicious, Cox's Orange Pippin and the Duchess of Oldenburg varieties have been planted. "Pinata has a distinctive striped bright red color, a high sugar and acid content that provides a unique flavor, and crunchy texture that fills a niche," describes Roger Pepperl, marketing director for Stemilt Growers LLC, in Wenatchee, WA, which owns the exclusive trademark to this variety.

SONYA: This New Zealand variety, which is available from mid-late September to April or early May, is very sweet, according to Chuck Sinks, president of sales and marketing for Sage Fruit Co. LLC, in Yakima, WA. "We have measured higher Brix levels than the Fuji apple in

some of our Sonya blocks.” The marketing niche for the Sonya, Sinks adds, is as a “gourmet” apple that is excellent for fresh eating, salads and baking into pastries.”

LADY ALICE: In its fourth selling season, this chance seedling discovered in Washington offers a sweet taste with a hint of tartness and heirloom-like crunch and is harvested in late September. It is then put into controlled atmosphere storage until February when it’s released to the market. “It is an all-purpose apple and very slow to brown, making it an excellent choice for fruit trays, salads, cooking, baking or general snacking,” says Rainier’s Wolter.

SWEETANGO: A complex flavor with a touch of fall spices characterizes this trademarked variety that is a combination of the Honeycrisp and Zestar. “We expect volumes to triple this year out of Washington,” says Pepperl. Stemilt is the exclusive West Coast grower of Sweetango. The variety, developed in the University of Minnesota’s breeding program, is also cultivated in Minnesota and New York.

AURORA GOLDEN GALA: Auvil Fruit Co. Inc., in Orondo, WA, is the only U.S. company to grow this variety that has a golden color with pink blush and conical shape. “We currently have 93 acres planted, and in the next three years we project we will pack and ship approximately 80,000 cartons,” says sales representative, Ray Norwood.

JUNAMI: Bred in Switzerland, this cross between Idared and Maigold with Elstar has been a winner in Europe. It has a tangy taste, crisp bite and juicy character that make it a thirst quencher. “Junami is harvested in September/October and has good keeping qualities,” says Rainier’s Wolter. “Volume is expected to triple over the next three years.”

KIKU: Born as a chance seedling in a Fuji orchard in Japan and raised in Italy, CMI is the exclusive U.S. grower/shipper of this variety. “This striped-colored apple is 10 percent sweeter than a traditional Fuji,” says Mast. Over 300 acres are planted with the majority in Washington.

ROSALYNN: Grown from a chance seedling, Sage Fruit’s Sinks says, “This variety is positioned towards the tart apple consumer.” The Rosalynn harvests in late September/early October and is dark red with a light green background.

KANZI: Introduced to select retailers for the first time last season, this bi-color Belgium-developed apple with Gala and Braeburn parents is “an intensely flavored apple, almost like a sweet tart,” says CMI’s Mast. “The first

bite takes customers back and their tastes adjust with the second bite, so it’s a great apple to sample.” The Kanzi is harvested in October and held in storage until January. CMI is the only Washington grower of the variety.

RUBIN: This marks the third season Chelan Fresh Marketing has marketed the Rubin. “It’s a Gala and Elstar mix that originated in Italy,” says Mac Riggan, vice president of marketing for the Chelan, WA-based company.

AUTUMN GLORY: Bred from a Golden

Delicious and Fuji, this firm-textured red apple with a yellow background is naturally flavored with a hint of nutmeg and cinnamon. “It’s got incredible legs in controlled-atmosphere storage,” says Domex’s Queen. “We tested 16 pounds of pressure as of late April/early May.” Most of the production of this variety is organic. “We expect to reach 30,000 cartons in the next few years.”

Retailers Introduce New Varieties

Haggen’s introduced the Opal by taste.

The varieties, volumes
and reliability you need,
all year 'round.

*Our difference makes all
the difference.*

EXEMPLARY ORCHARD MANAGEMENT
LOGISTICAL EXPERTISE EXPERT CATEGORY MANAGEMENT

Market analysis, crop reports, category data and more. Sign up for the new Superfresh News!

DOMEX **superfresh growers**

www.superfreshgrowers.com

“We didn’t need to put the apple on sale. In fact, it was priced around \$2 per pound when most of our other apples sold for around \$1.59 per pound. But, there was no need to talk people into buying it or offer incentives once they tasted it. Without sampling the Opal, or any new variety, nothing is going to happen.”

— Lee Reynolds, Haggen’s Inc.

“Looks don’t sell apples, flavor does,” says Haggen’s Reynolds. “That’s why the most important part of introducing a new apple — especially one such as the Opal, which isn’t the prettiest — is to let customers try it.”

That’s just what Reynolds and his produce managers did last winter when they introduced the Opal. “We did a combination of self-sampling and then active sampling by our produce staff during heavy traffic times,” he explains. “We didn’t need to put the apple on sale. In fact, it was priced around \$2 per pound when most of our other apples sold for around \$1.59 per pound. But, there was no need to talk

people into buying it or offer incentives once they tasted it. Without sampling the Opal, or any new variety, nothing is going to happen.

The Opal, a cross between a Golden Delicious and Topaz apple, is exclusively grown and distributed in the U.S. by Broetje Orchards, in Prescott, WA, and FirstFruits Marketing, respectively. The bright yellow apple has a sweet flavor, distinctive crunch and its flesh resists browning after slicing. It debuted to select retailers in 2010.

Festival Foods, a 9-store chain based in St. Paul, MN, recently promoted the new Kiku. It’s difficult to introduce a new apple variety,

especially in the fall when the market is flooded with new crop, seasonal varieties and regional favorites and best sellers such as the Honeycrisp. Yet, this is just what Rod Borden, director of produce and floral at Festival Foods, successfully did during a promotion for the Kiku apple last fall.

What made the November-promotion so fruitful was its three-fold approach. Borden explains, “We made it a priority to put the Kiku up front and build large displays with the high-graphic boxes the apples are shipped in. We also stationed stanchion signs next to the displays.” The signs provided information about the apple, but also introduced the second part of the promotion — a consumer contest. Festival Foods partnered with CMI, the Kiku’s exclusive U.S. marketer, in this promotion, and CMI offered customers the opportunity to win a BMW-brand sled with the purchase of the apples, which were integrated into the displays.

Active sampling was the third part of the promotion. “We sampled constantly via slices in a sampling dome,” says Borden. “In addition, we also did active sampling.” The active sampling took place in 4-hour blocks over the

A Premier Grower / Shipper of Apples, Pears & Cherries Providing Our Customers With Superior Quality, Selection and Service.

Handled with Care, Delivered Fresh!

BORTON FRUIT

2550 Borton Road Yakima, WA 98903
509-966-3996 www.bortonfruit.com

Providing premium apple programs from Washington’s leading growers:

- Crane & Crane
- Big Check
- Honeybear Growers

800-551-6183
Your locally grown apple experts!

Kids Just Wanna Have Fun... and DO on **FoodChamps.org!**



Activities



Kids, aged 2-8, or kids at heart, are guided through this interactive site by Fruits & Veggies Color Champions™, helping them learn in a fun way about all forms of fruits and vegetables and why they are important to eat.

Games



Coloring Pages



Easy-to-Make Recipes



Art Gallery



Big Pauly

Birthday: July 2
Favorite snack: Fruit kabob
Favorite activity: Skate boarding and snacking on fruit kabob!
"Trust me fruits & veggies taste great, they're great for you and there are so many to choose from!"

www.FoodChamps.org

If your company is not already involved, and you'd like to learn more about Fruits & Veggies—More Matters, give us a call or send us an email. We're always looking for some new friends, too!

For more information, contact Toni Eaton, Production Manager,
at 302.235.2329, ext. 316 or teaton@PBHFoundation.org



©2011 Produce for Better Health Foundation
1372-0611 (Produce Business - August)

www.FruitsAndVeggiesMoreMatters.org

Produce for Better Health Foundation
302.235.2329 • www.PBHFoundation.org

course of a week in each of Festival's stores. The samplers included the store's produce manager, the grower and Borden. "Consumers love to talk about apples, what they like and what they don't, and they really enjoyed the opportunity to talk with us and meet the grower," he adds. "In addition, we posted a short video on our chain's Facebook page that showed the grower, Tim Welsh, in the field, hand-picking the Kikus specifically for us."

Price was not part of the promotion. The Kiku's were sold for \$1.99 per pound, while Honeycrisp was priced at \$2.99 and more common varieties such as Red Delicious, Braeburn and Gala were priced at 99-cents per pound.

The result? "The day the Kikus were

sampled in-store was the day they were the No. 1-selling item in the whole store, even above bread and milk," says Borden. "Customers for many months after have kept asking us when the Kikus are returning."

Kuhn's went the extra mile to market Lady Alice. A little extra effort is all it took for customers at Kuhn's Market to go from lookers to buyers of the new Lady Alice apple variety, says Clements. "The first year we offered it, in the spring of 2010, we put it in line with the other apples, signed it and positioned it in front. We wanted to see what would happen. There was a moderate amount of success, but not that much excitement."

This March, Clements and his produce managers did things a little differently. "We

took Rainier's advice and built a massive display, put of POS signage such as posters and note cards and sampled the apples," says Clements. "I didn't think it would work, but it was a wonderful success. It really brought a lot of excitement to the late season. It was certainly easier than introducing a new apple in the fall, but you can't do that with all varieties. The Lady Alice works because it stores well."

The Lady Alice was also featured, not price promoted, in the chain's ad circular for \$2.49 per pound. "We were able to work through our distributor to be the only supermarket in Pittsburgh to sell the Lady Alice," says Clements. "That was a huge marketing advantage for us, especially when competing with some of the much bigger chains in the area." **pb**



CASTLE ROCK
Vineyards
it's all about the flavor...

SHIPPING:
THOMPSON, CRIMSON, FLAME, RED GLOBE, AUTUMN ROYAL,
PRINCESS, SUGRAONES, SCARLET ROYAL, SUMMER BUFFAL,
AUTUMN KING, CALMERIA & CASTLE ROCK BFF VARIETIES.

Delano, CA
4000 N. 11th Street
Linda Wilson, 1800-911-1111
661-721-8717

www.castlerockvineyards.com
Clubs, Specialty Packs & Wraps

Salinas, CA
Linda Marcella
651-757-3292

SUNVIEW
MARKETING INTERNATIONAL

MARKO ZANINOVICH, INC
*Premium California
Table Grapes
Conventional and Organic*

DOMESTIC SALES:
CHARLENE HIGHTOWER-WYLIE
661-792-3144
CHARLES ALTER
661-792-3146
JOHN ANSPACH
661-792-3142
GINETTE BROCK
661-792-3145
DREW JOHNS
661-792-3153

EXPORT SALES:
PETE ARELLANES
661-792-3154

1998 Road 152, Delano, CA 93216

ANTHONY
VINEYARDS

Grapes of Distinction
Organic & Conventional
California Grown

Available May to December
Sales: John Harley, DJ Ryan,
Rob Spinelli and Jonathan Gist
Bakersfield 661.858.8300
Fax 661.858.8306
www.anthonyvineyards.com

SANDRINI SALES
INCORPORATED

QUALITY TABLE GRAPES

Contact Ralph Casciaro at Sandrini Sales to handle all your domestic or export grape needs this season.

661.792.3192 Fax 661.792.6512

ralph@sandrini.com
www.sandrini.com
Delano, CA



Colorado's high altitude and clean soil help grow nutritionally dense products.

Freight Advantage, Diversity Draw Buyers To Colorado Crops

Colorado continues to prosper from an advantageous location and a bounty of high-quality crops. **BY SANDY LINDBLAD LEE**

Breathtaking scenery and a climate that encourages healthful, outdoor activities are all part of the Colorado mystique. Amidst all that splendor, its wide diversity of high quality produce — thanks to the state's ideal growing conditions — may be one of Colorado's best-kept secrets. Colorado provides a diverse variety of products that can satisfy the needs of the most innovative retail and food-service buyers. Combine all that with the state's natural freight advantage, and the appeal of its fresh produce is relatively unmatched.

Adding to its attractiveness is the widespread belief that Colorado's high altitude, fresh air and clean soil help grow products that are even more nutritionally dense than the average federally established standards. Although prevailing cool and wet weather slowed the maturity of some Colorado crops through this past spring and early summer, sellers and buyers of the state's vegetables and fruit remain confident that high quality and consistent volume would prevail as harvest progresses through the fall.

Colorado's centralized location in the

middle of the Western half of the U.S. has normally provided a freight savings to customers, but buyers who had previously diverted their purchases to the more distant growing regions are being drawn in increasing numbers to the state's offerings. The continuing trend for locally grown has added even more allure to the Mile High State's produce.

Onions and potatoes, two of the state's leading vegetable crops, are among the more well known commodities, but they are only the beginning of the offerings. "Colorado vegetables have more flavor; they keep their freshness longer; and the quality is great," contends Ray Keegan, an owner of American Produce LLC, in Denver. Zucchini, yellow squash, carrots, eggplant, bell peppers and mixed leaf lettuce varieties are only a few examples of the plethora of items Keegan buys. King Soopers, Safeway, Albertson's, Super K-Mart and various Hispanic markets are among his key retail customers.

Carrots, sweet corn, beans, squash, mixed greens, cabbage, broccoli, and tree fruit are also harvested and shipped from Colorado. Sellers say the long-standing reputation for better

flavor will maintain the popularity of Colorado fruit. Peaches, apples, Bing cherries, wine grapes, pears and apricots are among the mix of fruit grown in the Western Slope of Colorado. While in recent years, other regions of the country have focused on bringing back the lost flavor in stone fruit, western Colorado orchard owners claim they have always maintained a practice of not harvesting fruit before reaching its flavor peak.

In the Arkansas Valley, in the south central part of the state, watermelons and the popular Rocky Ford cantaloupes began shipments in late July. As the autumn season commences, pumpkins will begin harvest there.

While fruit provides a popular niche, Colorado farmers have been producing potatoes for about 150 years, according to Chuck Bird, vice president of Greeley-based Martin Produce Co. Approximately 60,000 acres of potatoes are produced in Colorado, reports Jim Ehrlich executive director of the Monte Vista-based Colorado Potato Administrative Committee (CPAC). The Northeastern section of the state, surrounding Greeley, produces a summer crop, while the San Luis Valley in

make more *connections.*



More buyers, suppliers, and ideas: That's the value of your PMA membership. Create new sales connections from our membership directory then build those business relationships at PMA events like Fresh Connections. PMA brings together the people and ideas your farm needs now. From the latest reports on consumer tastes and buying patterns, to practical advice on food safety issues, PMA membership means more. **Join or renew today. Visit pma.com/membership to find out more.**



MORE CONNECTIONS. MORE COLLABORATION. MORE VALUE.
A PMA membership means more.

PRODUCE MARKETING ASSOCIATION +1 (302) 738-7100 PMA.COM



PMA membership
means more



PMA is your source for information to help your business grow:

- Expert-answered questions
- Consumer trends
- Industry news and alerts
- Food safety solutions and crisis management

Begin accessing the benefits of PMA today. Start at pma.com/membership



PMA.COM



Jean Hoshiko and son Dennis Hoshiko, North Weld Produce Inc.

Southwestern Colorado produces a fall storage crop harvested in September. The San Luis Valley is the largest and highest commercial agricultural valley in the world, Ehrlich adds, with elevation in the Valley ranging from 7,400 to 8,000 feet above seal level.

The 2009 potato crop was valued at nearly \$190 million, making it one of Colorado's leading agricultural industries, reports Tim Larsen, senior international marketing specialist for the Lakewood-based Colorado Department of Agriculture. In Northern Colorado, overall half of the potato acreage was destroyed last year due to the infestation of potato psyllid. Martin Produce's Bird shows optimism that close monitoring of field conditions this season should help keep the potential for a repeat of that disaster in check.

Outside of potatoes, Colorado's other vegetable crops were valued at nearly \$80 million in 2009, Larsen reports. Onions are Colorado's second leading vegetable crop, with production totaling more than 300 million pounds. "The onion fields are looking great, even though we've had a lot of weed pressure because of the moisture," notes Bob Sakata, chairman of Sakata Farms Inc., in Brighton, CO. "Overall, I think we have some of the best-looking crops I've ever seen in Colorado this year." That's saying something, as Sakata has farmed in the state for over 50 years.

Recent years, however, have seen major challenges relating to increased regulations on agricultural water supply in the state. "Widespread public opposition to the construction and development of existing natural water supplies has caused municipal entities to actively acquire agricultural water for consumer needs," emphasizes Dennis Hoshiko, president of Greeley-based North Weld Produce Co. "This situation is resulting in significant challenges for irrigated farmers in Northern Colorado."

In addition to providing onions and potatoes to the U.S. market, Colorado also exports these products nearly year-round, thanks to in-field curing and modern storage facilities. Most of the onions are grown north and east of Denver, with some in the Arkansas Valley and on the Western Slope.



Alan Kinoshita and Lynn Fagerberg, Fagerberg Produce.

Sweet corn is the third-largest vegetable crop produced in the state in terms of value, with annual production of 108 million pounds and a value of \$15 million, according to figures from the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA).

Colorado produced 127 million pounds of cabbage in 2009, valued at \$14 million. Final 2010 figures were not available yet. Other top vegetable crops grown in Colorado include carrots, lettuce and spinach.

Colorado's leading fruit crops are peaches, apples, and pears, accounting for more than \$23 million annually. "The high altitude at which Colorado apples are grown makes them taste better, consistently winning taste tests in supermarkets and at trade shows," notes Wendy White, CDA's marketing specialist. Colorado produced 26 million pounds of peaches and 16 million pounds of apples in 2009.

Ideal Sales Inc., headquartered in Dallas, TX, buys a wide variety of fruits and vegetables from Colorado. Potatoes and onions are among its highest-volume procurements, according to Pam Dunning, Ideal salesperson. "Colorado's dry climate helps onions and potatoes cure in the fields and make the storage crops perfect for shipments through most of the year," she emphasizes.

Colorado's Expanding Organic Sector

Tim Larsen, senior international marketing specialist for the CDA, also points out that in 1989, the CDA was the first state agency to begin a certification program for organic farmers. "Since then, some farmers, ranchers and processors are choosing organic production and processing to differentiate their products and seek great farm revenues."

According to the USDA report on national organic certification statistics, Colorado's organic industry consists of more than 270 certified organic farms and ranches with more organic certified acres — over 580,000 food products under organic certification regulations. This represents 25 percent of the total certified organic acreage in the United States.

With a lineup that includes several Fingerling potatoes, LaSalle, CO-based Strohauser Farms Inc. has seen phenomenal growth in its organic specialty produce. Harry Strohauser,



Bob Sakata, Sakata Farms Inc.



Chuck Bird, Martin Produce Co.



Augustine Hernandez and Bob Sakata of Sakata Farms, Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper and Joanna Sakata of Sakata Farms

president and owner, said the increase of consumers eating at home has increased demand for flavorful new items, both organic and conventional. Strohauer's Fingerling potato production includes Russian Banana, French Fingerling, Rose Finn Apple and Peruvian Purple varieties. Pearl onions and shallots are other specialty selections.

Tanya Fell, director of marketing and retail relations, explains, "Strohauer Farms' organic and convention Fingerling potatoes are smaller in size, which makes them convenient, flavorful and versatile. Because of their size, Fingerlings bake quickly. They can also be roasted, grilled, steamed, sautéed, boiled, fried or mashed."

One of the oldest organic farms in Colorado is Wellington-based Grant Family Farms Inc. Cory Spain, sales manager, reports

that Grant Farms' 2,300 organic acres include kale, chard, collard greens, cilantro, parsley, dill, five lettuce varieties, onions, leeks, winter squash, beets, carrots, eggplant, zucchini, Heirloom dry beans, raspberries, Heirloom tomatoes and artichokes.

Quality Comes First

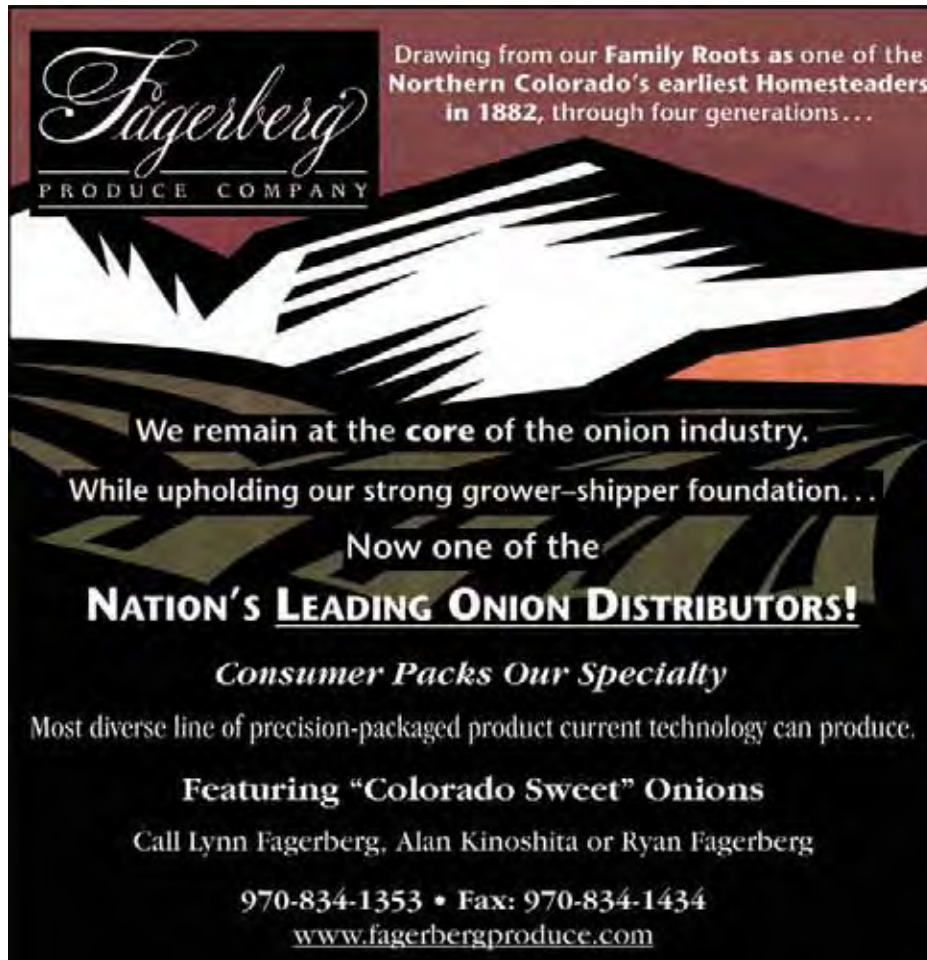
Whether it is conventional or organic produce, most Colorado shippers stress that quality remains their No. 1 priority. A standout among the Colorado vegetable producers is Greeley, CO-based North Weld Produce Co., whose owners still choose to harvest the majority of their onion crop by hand instead of through the machine-harvested method. North Weld's Dennis Hoshiko reports that this method also offers employment for laborers

who have been forced to find other work due to increased mechanization on a global basis. "Our primary customers are quality-conscious retail grocers who prefer the superior appearance that can be achieved through hand-harvesting the crop. The premium quality that results more than offsets the additional costs."

Hoshiko hastens to emphasize that he attributes the company's ability to maintain its business in an evolving, competitive marketplace to "a long-time, dedicated staff, loyal customers," and a higher power. "We plant and we nurture, but God gives the growth."

Special Events Promote Colorado Proud

"Better for you. Better for Colorado." This tag line, used when branding and promoting



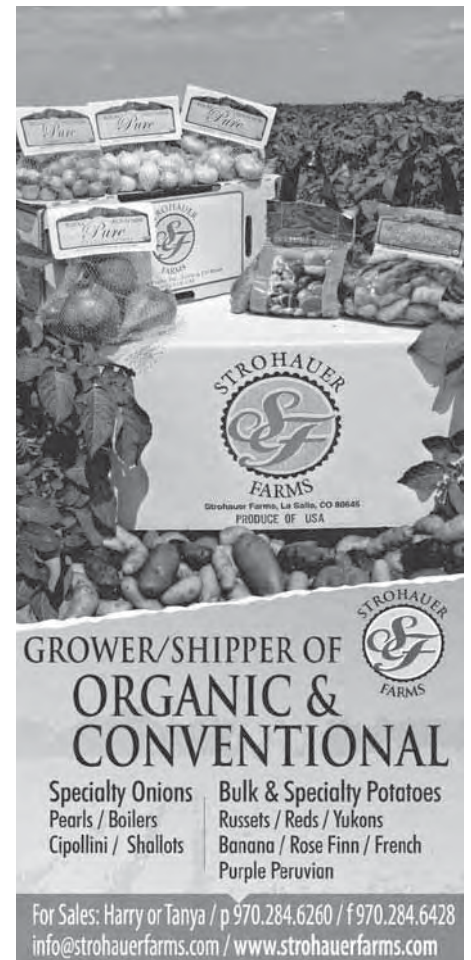
Fagerberg
PRODUCE COMPANY

Drawing from our **Family Roots** as one of the **Northern Colorado's earliest Homesteaders** in 1882, through four generations...

We remain at the **core** of the onion industry.
While upholding our strong grower-shipper foundation...
Now one of the
NATION'S LEADING ONION DISTRIBUTORS!

Consumer Packs Our Specialty
Most diverse line of precision-packaged product current technology can produce.

Featuring "Colorado Sweet" Onions
Call Lynn Fagerberg, Alan Kinoshita or Ryan Fagerberg
970-834-1353 • Fax: 970-834-1434
www.fagerbergproduce.com



STROHAUER
FARMS
Strohauer Farms, La Salle, CO 80845
PRODUCE OF USA

GROWER/SHIPPER OF
ORGANIC & CONVENTIONAL

Specialty Onions Pearls / Boilers Cipollini / Shallots	Bulk & Specialty Potatoes Russets / Reds / Yukons Banana / Rose Finn / French Purple Peruvian
--	--

For Sales: Harry or Tanya / p 970.284.6260 / f 970.284.6428
info@strohauerfarms.com / www.strohauerfarms.com

the Colorado Proud program, is being embraced more than ever by consumers who are showing increasing interest in locally grown, raised and processed products.

Administered under the umbrella of the CDA's Markets Division, Colorado Proud is now in its twelfth year. "Consumers are

learning they can have a positive impact on Colorado's economy by looking for the Colorado Proud label," states White of the CDA. "From the field to the fridge, products grown or produced locally are fresher because they are harvested and delivered immediately to local retailers — not stored and transported

from out of state. And buying locally-produced foods decreases food miles, thereby saving energy and lowering the carbon footprint."

Colorado Proud now boasts more than 1,500 members including farmers, ranchers, processors, retailers, restaurants and greenhouses. The program started in 1999 with 65

WHAT'S NEW IN COLORADO

L & M COMPANIES INC., Rocky Ford, CO: The L & M Family of Companies, headquartered in Raleigh, NC, reports that Ken Stewart, former sales manager at Fort Boise Produce Co., in Parma, ID, has assumed the position of manager of L & M's onion operations in Rocky Ford. Stewart had been with Fort Boise Produce for 10 years before joining L & M earlier this year, shares Tracy Fowler, general manager of potatoes and onions for L & M. Stewart's title is sales and operations manager. Working in the Rocky Ford L & M sales office with Stewart are Art Ratliff, Jacob Howes, Jason Bishop and Bruce Angle.

The Rocky Ford shed runs onions from six growers' crops. Production from that operation, as well as from the other L & M Colorado onion-packing facilities in Greeley, Fort Collins and the Western Slope total approximately 2.5 million 50-lb. equivalents annually. "We have added acreage in Greeley, Rocky Ford, Western Slope and Fort Collins this season," Fowler notes.

In addition to onions, the Colorado facilities grow and pack potatoes, cantaloupe and sweet corn. Fowler adds, "More and more retailers, wholesalers and foodservice buyers want to go directly to the source. That was one of the primary reasons we made the acquisition of Griffin-Holder in 2010. We are now able to control the potato and onion supply chain from the ground up, throughout the year."

The Griffin-Holder purchase encompassed two onion packing and storage facilities in Colorado, along with one in California; onion production in Colorado, California, and New Mexico; and the sales offices in Rocky Ford, CO.

FAGERBERG PRODUCE INC., Eaton, CO: Upgrades in the company warehouse have focused on efforts to maximize food safety, according to owner and president Lynn Fagerberg. "We've already had a full-scale food safety program since 2003. We're just working to make it even more comprehensive," he explains.

"A lot of sanitation and lighting upgrades, and the proper documentation and other paper work have been in progress, preparing for our November audit, which will assure that we are compliant by this winter with the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI)," explains Lori Trahan, food safety specialist. "We are also working on maximizing our product traceability. Putting all of the changes in place will be the hardest part. Ultimately, it will save us labor and make everything more accurate."

Other activity at the company includes a slightly changing customer profile. "We are doing a little more with foodservice customers on a year-round basis," reports Alan Kinoshita, sales manager.

Answering increasing demand from both retail and foodservice sectors, last year, the company installed a robotic palletizer at its packing operation, according to Kinoshita. "It takes the bags and puts them on a pallet mechanically and wraps them automatically," he explains. "It reduces labor by six or seven people and increases efficiency. Another robotic palletizer may be added at the packinghouse in the future," Kinoshita adds.

Fagerberg Produce ships onions throughout the country and specializes in a full line of consumer packs.

MARTIN PRODUCE CO., Greeley, CO: In its 72nd year of operation, its onion-growing operations continue with only direct-seeded varieties. The organization discontinued its transplant onion-growing and harvest program two years ago, according to general manager Chuck Bird.

The crop from Colorado transplants normally begins shipment during an earlier market window in late July, prior to the direct-seeded, storage onion crop's availability. "We still have plenty of seeded onion supplies for our customers, starting in August," Bird emphasizes. "And we began shipping potatoes the first part of August." Bird is hoping for a better crop in 2011, since last year "was a complete

disaster," when potato psyllid "destroyed over half of our crop."

The Martin Produce potato crop is grown and packed for the fresh market and is shipped through Labor Day. It is sold by the sales staff at Center, CO-based Canon Potato Co. Inc., whose storage potato volume overlaps with the early crop and provides a year-round spud supply for its customers.

SAKATA FARMS INC., Brighton, CO: After 55 years, production manager Adam Kniss Jr. retired, reports Bob Sakata, chairman and chief operating officer. Effective Jan. 1, 2010, R.T. Sakata (Bob's son) took the reigns as president of the company. Over a year later, Bob reflects, "I feel so fortunate to have R.T.'s leadership, his organization and his capable handling of such a dedicated staff."

The popularity of locally grown produce has resulted in this firm's recommitment to its diverse line of Colorado produce, according to R. T. Sakata. Growers of onions, sweet corn, cabbage and broccoli, the company had seriously considered the option of eliminating broccoli from its mix for various reasons including mounting production and distribution costs and labor and water concerns. "Our local retailers came to us and strongly encouraged us to keep growing it," R. T. Sakata reports, emphasizing that the locally grown trend has increased demand for all their primary commodities in addition to broccoli.

NORTH WELD PRODUCE CO., Greeley, CO: Celebrating its 47th year in business, the company maintains its emphasis on a more traditional measure to continue the quality that President Dennis Hoshiko believes is a step above his competitors. Unlike most all direct-seeded onion growers, North Weld still harvests virtually all of its onion crop by hand. "Our clientele appreciates the higher quality and longer shelf-life that hand-harvested onions are known for, and we are pleased to be able to provide jobs for more people by doing so," Hoshiko notes. **pb**

members. According to a 2010 CDA survey, it seems to be working. Of the data collected, 68 percent of respondents are "very or somewhat familiar" with the Colorado Proud logo, up from 59 percent in 2008. And 57 percent "are looking for the Colorado Proud logo more often when shopping now than they used to," according to the survey.

Colorado Proud will continue its successful television advertising campaign this year on Denver's NBC affiliate, Channel 9-KUSA. Governor John Hickenlooper filmed the new ad on location at Sakata Farms in Brighton in June. The ads were scheduled to run July through September and encourage consumers to buy local food products.

"Retailers including Safeway and King Soopers (Kroger) have been great supporters of Colorado Proud since its inception," White continues. "They procure a lot of in-season produce and use the Colorado Proud logo to promote local products in their stores. We also receive appreciated support from Albertson's, Wal-Mart, Sunflower Farms Market, Sprouts and Whole Foods." The logo is consistently used in the retailers' newspaper ads or inserts and through point-of-sale material signage.

The mile-high state's governor has officially

proclaimed August as Colorado Proud Month. "There are a number of events scheduled to help draw more attention to Colorado products through the autumn months, including Feast in the Field and Colorado Proud School Meal Day," announces White.

"We are also working to develop more farm-to-school connections in Colorado, encouraging schools to incorporate more local ingredients into their menus," White continues. "The Colorado legislature created the Farm to School Task Force in 2010.

September 14 will be the eighth annual Colorado Proud School Meal Day. The CDA invites all Colorado schools to participate. "This is a day to celebrate Colorado agriculture and to educate school children about healthy eating," White explains.

Governor Hickenlooper has also been active in the efforts to increase relations with potential buyers from international markets. He hosted a three-day visit in late June for Mexican potato buyers that focused on how Colorado can actively promote potatoes as additional markets open, according to Christi Light, communications director of the CDA. "Colorado currently supplies about 44 percent of all fresh potatoes exported to Mexico, repre-

sented about 1,770 semi truck loads of potatoes each year."

Another resource available to potential customers, Colorado MarketMaker, is an online resource for finding Colorado products. Available at www.comarketmaker.com, "This online resource connects consumers, restaurants, retailers and schools with local products," according to White. "Users can search for local companies or visit the Market Place for new products." Currently, 18 states participate in this networking resource.

Receiving a big boost for marketing outside the state, the CDA's Markets Division was again awarded more than \$40,000 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Specialty Crops Grant Program to fund the first Colorado Pavilion for the Produce Marketing Association's (PMA) Fresh Summit trade show in 2008. This year's Colorado Pavilion is expected to be the largest yet. Highlighting some of the strongest benefits of the Colorado Pavilion, the CDA's Larsen, notes, "The Colorado pavilion is a large exhibition area where the Colorado produce industry can share common spaces at trade shows. We are able to promote Colorado's produce on the U.S. level as well as internationally." **pb**

North Weld Produce Co.

Shipping *Premium* Quality Onions
September—March
47 Years of Service



Grower • Packer • Shipper

For Those Who Want The Very Best...
"Blue Tag" & "Jack Pack" Brands

Dennis Hoshiko

Sales: 970-353-4950 • Trans: 970-353-2534



Fax: 970-356-6566
P.O. Box 399 • Greeley, CO 80632





#1 Executive Search Firm In Produce

MIXTEC GROUP


Leonard Batti Jerry Butt Chris Nelson

709 E. Colorado Blvd • # 250
Pasadena, CA 91101
626-440-7077

9825 Blue Larkspur Lane
Monterey, CA 93940
831-373-7077

mixtec@mixtec.net
www.mixtec.net



PHOTO ABOVE COURTESY OF APIO INC.
PHOTO AT RIGHT COURTESY OF MANN PACKING CO. INC.

Pre-made party trays are a healthful and convenient option for tailgaters.

Fresh Ideas For Tailgating

Keep produce top of mind for sports fans looking to entertain during the big game. **BY NICOLE BRAYSHAW BOND**

Now that the NFL has officially ended its lockout, heightened awareness for the upcoming football season should have produce managers everywhere in the United States scrambling to prepare for the inevitable tailgating activities. Whether it's for a pro or college game, tailgating brings all the fun of a picnic right to the back of your customers' vehicles. Convenience produce, grilling items and unique specialty snacks that will dazzle and impress fellow tailgaters will be on the minds of consumers.

"The growing popularity of tailgate parties works hand in hand with the produce industry. It's great for our industry," says Dionysios Christou, vice president of marketing at Del Monte Fresh Produce North America Inc., based in Coral Gables, FL.

Jim Weber, producer director of Minneapolis, MN-based Econo Foods, has the numbers to show it: "With the Packers in the Superbowl, our cut fruit and veggie sales were up 40-50 percent." Tailgating is a marketing bonanza that can't be ignored.

From internet recipe forums and social media sites to cooking and lifestyle shows, tailgating parties are a hot feature that get a lot of attention, making it simple for all levels of tailgating chefs to get inspired. Just a quick search of the Internet provides a jackpot of

menu ideas with produce as key ingredients. *Grilling.com* offers a Spicy SoCal Coleslaw with peppers, onions, cabbage and celery as key ingredients. *MyRecipes.com* suggests a Grilled Vegetable Salad that has artichokes, Heirloom tomatoes, zucchini, eggplant, and other fresh ingredients.

Retailers and produce suppliers are keen to pass on ideas and options for consumers to plan their tailgating parties with any level of sophistication. Elena Hernandez, marketing coordinator at Mann Packing Co. Inc., based in Salinas, CA, reminds, "Packing a few bags of Mann's pre-washed Sugar Snap Peas to dip in ranch, salsa or guacamole for the game is a healthful option for those trying to avoid salty or sugary snacks. The sweet, crunchiness of the snap peas is so addictive, sports fans won't even miss the greasy potato chips."

Classic American cuisine is a perfect fit for a pre-game party since it centers on the barbeque. While meat still seems to be the focal point — a circumstance that produce suppliers are working to change — truly anything goes in the potluck setting of the tailgate party. Hernandez reminds retailers not to forget about sweet potatoes. They are a healthful and satisfying alternative to French fries, "Mann's fresh-cut sweet potato fries make a perfect sweet treat to compliment any tailgate menu."

And what could be a better way to celebrate the home team than incorporating fresh, in-season produce? Maggie Bezart, marketing director for the Washington D.C.-based Chilean Avocado Importers Association (CAIA) points out, "Avocados from Chile are at peak-of-season during the fall and winter months. Retailers promote this fact with our Grab Some for the Game football programs, which include football-themed POS material with new QR codes for consumers to scan. The CAIA supplies plenty of inspiration to our retail customers with sample display photos illustrating how tailgate-complementary items can be added to the produce department, enhancing existing produce displays and giving consumers incentive to buy additional produce items for a variety of avocado dishes."

Healthy Options Fit Right In

Ninety-five percent of tailgaters prepare their own food at the stadium, and most really cook. *Tailgating.com* reports that 98 percent use a combination of grills, stoves and smokers onsite. Tailgaters are an inventive, creative bunch, and they're open to bringing healthful options to the table — or rather, the parking lot. Grilled, fresh, in salads and sandwiches, arranged on ready-made platters or blended into salsa and chili, there are endless ways to highlight produce in the tailgate menu.

Cali Tanguay, director of marketing and

technology at Apio Inc., located in Guadalupe, CA, identifies yet another plus to produce: “Fresh vegetables go a long way to helping tailgaters satiate their need to munch while visiting or waiting for the BBQ to warm up!” She notes that Apio offers salads and slaw blends that make great wraps with a choice of protein and suggests using different colored tortilla wraps to reflect team spirit.

For those concerned about starch-laden dishes on a tailgating menu, Mann’s Hernandez recommends Mann’s Simply Singles, pre-washed lettuce leaf singles in romaine, green and red. “They are perfect for carbless sandwiches, burger fillings, tacos or burritos.”

Christou of Del Monte Foods puts in a good word for avocados: “They come in their own container.”

Bezart of the CAIA remarks on the nutritional qualities of avocados: “They are nutrient-dense, supplying nearly 20 vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients. They also can help optimize the fat quality of your diet by providing a source of good fats — both monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat. One serving contains 50 calories, and avocados are naturally sugar- and sodium-free. Football fans take advantage of this.

According to avocadocentral.com, they consume more than 262.5 million pounds of avocados at their tailgating celebrations during the regular football season.

Robert Schueller, director of public relations of Melissa’s World Variety Produce Inc., based in Vernon, CA, has a variety of suggestions for healthy tailgating menu alternatives, including grapes, guacamole, salsa, and a traditional American favorite, corn on the cob. “Produce needs to catch up to meat in the tailgating world,” he maintains.

Fresh Ideas Fly Off The Platter

As well as all the ingredients for their feast, tailgaters have to bring everything along from forks to cutting boards. They appreciate convenience as well as utensil-free cuisine. Pre-made platters in a variety of sizes and combinations are a natural for featuring fresh produce, and savvy suppliers market them with sports themes tied in to supporting their local teams.

Apio’s Tanguay maintains, “Eat Smart pre-made vegetable trays are an ideal tailgate item. They’re easy to grab from the local market when purchasing all of the other game-day products for any sized gathering, plus they’re

washed and ready to serve so there is absolutely no prep work. Our retail partners will typically place more trays on display or in freestanding iced bins for additional attention during the football season. In late August, Eat Smart will offer our Game Day tray with a fun football theme.”

Mann’s pre-washed and pre-cut vegetable platters, available in multiple sizes and combinations, encourage sharing of healthful tailgating options. “Open, unseal and healthy vegetables and creamy ranch dip are ready to be enjoyed!” says Hernandez.

While tailgating is part of American tradition, the face of sports food culture is changing to reflect the new needs of consumers. There is a growing diversity of tastes amongst today’s multicultural fan base. An aging population has specific dietary requirements. The general public has more access than ever to information about nutrition and good health.

Parents expect to see healthy menu options for their families, especially with juvenile obesity on the rise. The hungry legions that show up to take in a game will continue to demand — and enjoy — a wider variety of foods, and that means a winning streak for the produce industry. **pb**

Kick off the season right.

Consumers buy Eat Smart for the consistent, quality of our fresh vegetables. Increase impulse purchases this football season with our 32oz Beef & Cheese Vegetable Tray with Ranch dip. Playing it smart has never been so easy.

Eat Smart

www.apioinc.com • 800.454.1355

Brought to you by **Apio** INC.

Most supermarket chains have only scratched the surface of ethnic marketing potential. Yet, targeting and capturing huge, fast-growing ethnic segments is arguably the most important corporate initiative the retailer can undertake to grow sales and profits, win consumer loyalty and gain the competitive edge.

Produce executives, take note: Fresh produce is of core importance to multi-cultural shoppers. Latinos, Asian-Americans and African-Americans represent more than one-third of the U.S. population, and collectively, are expected to grow another 40 percent by 2020.

The PRODUCE BUSINESS Guidebook Series On Merchandising To Ethnic Consumers is designed to offer different strategies and perspectives for success in reaching targeted ethnic segments of the population. This is part of an ongoing collaboration with market leaders and PRODUCE BUSINESS.

SPONSORED BY:



The world's finest.

AVOCADOS FROM MEXICO



TURBANA CORPORATION



The world's finest.

COMPANY:
AVOCADOS FROM MEXICO

PRODUCT FOCUS:
AVOCADOS (MEXICO)

TARGET ETHNIC GROUP:
HISPANIC

Why does your product appeal to this specific ethnic group?

Avocados are a food staple in the Latino household. The incidence of usage is high with four out of five Hispanics saying they buy avocados to eat or serve at home at least once a month and 50 percent say they do at least once a week according to the Hispanic U&A Report provided by the Hass Avocado Board (HAB) in May 2011. Avocados from Mexico evoke a sense of nostalgia for Latino consumers who grew up eating avocados and prefer fruit from Mexico.

How will the growing U.S. Latino population rise impact sales of your product?

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the Latino population in the United States grew by 43 percent in the last decade, with Latinos now making up 16 percent of the nation's population. Latinos are quickly becoming the mainstream and are expected to become the majority in California and Texas within the next decade. The U.S. Latino population rise will provide retailers with valuable sales opportunities by allowing them to strategically market Avocados from Mexico to the Latino consumer. After all, research shows that avocados are a food staple in Hispanic households and Hispanics prefer Avocados from Mexico!



How do you support retailers through marketing to your target ethnic consumer?

Avocados from Mexico continuously invests in sales building integrated marketing programs targeting Hispanic consumers, which include television, radio and online marketing in select markets, as well as national print advertising, public relations,

promotions, and social media programs to keep Avocados from Mexico top of mind amongst Hispanic consumers. Avocados from Mexico also works with retailers to develop customized programs to help build their avocado sales and offers merchandising materials as well as training in Spanish so that retailers can promote avocados to Hispanic consumers in store year-round.

INSIGHT FROM THE FIELD...

Business Development Manager for Avocados from Mexico, Alejandro Gavito, offers the following sales building tips:

- Ripe avocados can outsell unripe avocados by 2-to-1. To help consumers find what they want, identify ripe avocados with stickers or signage and display firm avocados on a separate display. This will also prevent customers from squeezing the fruit, which causes internal bruising and shortens the shelf-life.
- Avocados like it dry. Do not refrigerate! Do not display on wet racks or near misting systems. Display at room temperature.
- Give consumers options. Use multiple display stations to promote large and small sizes, different price points, levels of ripeness and bagged fruit.
- Cross-merchandise! Display avocados next to items they partner with in meals and recipes. For example, next to tomatoes, onions, lemons and limes. Or near the deli or bread aisle to promote their use in sandwiches!
- Create displays that are eye-catching. Tie them into holidays, entertaining and occasions where families gather. Create hype with promotional cards and encourage impulse sales with secondary displays.



Alejandro Gavito

HISPANIC POPULATION VS. TOTAL U.S. USAGE COMPARISON

	Spring 2011	
	Hispanics	Total U.S.
Bought avocados to eat or serve at home (monthly)	83%	67%
Average number of avocados purchased annually	102	63
Average number of ways avocados prepared	6.8	4.7

Source: Avocados from Mexico with data from Hispanic U&A Report provided by HAB, May 2011

Are there other market segments for this product?

Avocados have started go mainstream. Recent sales data from the Perishables Group showed that the avocado category grew 22 percent in 2010, exceeding the growth of the other top 20 fruits, nuts and vegetables in the produce department. This is in large part due to the wide expansion in avocado appeal across many behavior stages and lifestyles. Consumers are discovering more everyday usage ideas for avocados and finding that Avocados from Mexico make good food better. Further reinforcing the popularity and value of avocados, Subway just added avocados to its U.S. stores nationwide, and Subway's avocado integration program will also impact consumption of fresh avocados at home, as more and more consumers taste avocados for the first time and associate them with common, easy to make food items such as sandwiches.



The produce department just got greener.



AVOCADO SALES CONTINUE TO RISE

Year	Dollars	Volume
2009	511,861,415	428,385,482
2010	552,072,577	523,623,826
Total Increase	+7.9%	+22.2%

Source: Perishables FreshFacts® Powered by Nielsen, 52 weeks ending 12/25/10.

As a category, avocados enjoyed an impressive 22.2% increase in unit sales last year. Easily beating the sales performance of the other top 20 fruits, nuts and vegetables in the produce department. And Avocados from Mexico

proudly lead the way. Best of all, thanks to their superb quality, full range of sizes and unique year-round availability, Avocados from Mexico deliver distinctly delicious flavor that is always in season.

Avocados From **Mexico**

▲▲▲▲▲ The world's finest. ▲▲▲▲▲

Place your order for fresh, hand-picked Avocados from Mexico today.
www.avocadosfrommexico.com





COMPANY:
 TURBANA CORPORATION

PRODUCT FOCUS:
 PLANTAINS

TARGET ETHNIC GROUP:
 HISPANICS, AFRICAN-AMERICANS AND ASIANS



What is your target ethnic market? What other segments are you targeting?

Currently, Turbana is marketing plantain and exotic products not only to Hispanics, African-Americans and Asian populations originating from countries where plantains are consumed

but also to mainstream Americans, due to extensive travel and food channels.

Nearly 33.2 percent of the U.S. population is Hispanic, Asian-American and African-American.

What products are you directing to ethnic consumers?

Turbana, the leading importer of plantains, recently expanded its product line to include new plantain varieties such as *Burros* and Hawaiian plantains. In addition, we also offer Baby, Red and *Manzano* exotic bananas, as well as pineapples.

We also developed a 20-lb. variety pack box. This is a mix of *Manzano* and Red bananas. They are delicious and a great way to get people interested in exotic bananas so they can enjoy our top quality Red bananas, with a hint of raspberry, and our *Manzano* bananas, with a nice kiwi-banana-citrus taste.

How do product preferences differ among segments?

It is very important to understand that it is not productive to group all ethnic consumers together. It is key to look at each group separately because of different wants and expectations. For example, depending on the consumer's country of origin, the demand for stages of ripeness of plantains changes.

Discuss supermarket buying habits among your target consumers.

As a whole, Hispanics tend to shop more often than mainstream American consumers, eating at home more often, preparing more meals from scratch and using larger amounts of fresh produce.

Hispanics also spend 41 percent more on fresh fruits than mainstream consumers; their basket sizes are larger and they tend to make shopping a group or family activity.

If you are able to attract these groups to your store, they will purchase more than just your tropical products.

What advice can you share on display tactics?

Since plantains can be prepared and eaten in various stages of ripeness, supermarkets can double their plantain sales by offering both green and ripe plantains.

Can you pinpoint key marketing strategies?

Use tropical fruits as the tool to capture as much of the total food dollar as possible.

In order to capture these ethnic shoppers, it is important to reach out to these communities and make the supermarket employees look like their neighborhood.

Hiring bilingual employees and being involved in the community also builds upon goodwill, as does educating staff members about the culture and values of their customers.

Introducing ethnic elements to the store, such as bilingual signage and in-language advertising, makes your ethnic group feel at home in your store.

We provide bilingual signage to our customers for plantains and exotic bananas. We offer our customers POS informational materials.

Another great educational tool for the plantains are recipe stickers. When the shoppers purchase the plantain, there is already a simple recipe for them to follow, so any first-timer is guaranteed success.

We also have recipe booklets containing a variety of plantain recipes, which include photos, for preparation of both the green and ripe stages. Many shoppers, after having enjoyed the recipe on the sticker, call to request our free recipe booklets for more ideas.

What are the biggest challenges to ethnic marketing?

The challenge when trying to capture an ethnic market is to know the relevant demographic makeup of the surroundings of the store.

Supermarket involvement in the community has proven to be an important factor when marketing to ethnic groups.

Where do you see untapped opportunities?

The size and purchasing power of this group and the fact that one of every three Americans is of ethnic descent make catering to this underserved group a huge opportunity to capture as much of the total food dollar as possible.

The Turbana sales force and marketing department are proven success stories, and we can tailor-make business plans to suit your plans. For any and all other inquiries, please visit our website: www.Turbana.com or call 1-888-BANANAS.

www.turbana.com



Burro

How do you turn a plantain into a category?

Variety.



Hawaiian



Traditional

Not long ago, consumers were unsure if a plantain was a fruit or vegetable. Today it is becoming one of the fastest growing categories in the produce department, with Traditional, Hawaiian and Burro varieties. Whether sweet or starchy, with Latin, Caribbean and Pacific influences, more and more families are discovering plantains as an alternative to potatoes, rice and pasta. We are the leading importer of all varieties of plantains in North America. Let's grow together.



plantain goodness inside.

www.turbana.com | 800-turbana



PHOTO COURTESY OF APEAM



Offering a variety of ripeness levels — those that are ripe and ready to eat and those that are bagged and still ripening — will increase sales.

Five Ways To Maximize Fall Avocado Sales

Continue to grow the category with savvy cross-merchandising, a steady supply and a mix of ripeness levels. **BY BOB JOHNSON**

Avocados are one of the fastest-growing items in the produce department, as more consumers are becoming aware of this fruit's many uses. The entire avocado category continues to ride taste and nutritional value to flourish even in tough times. "Consumption has continued on an upward trend even during uncertain times. Avocados are doing well from a health standpoint, not only nationwide, but worldwide," says Ross Wileman, vice president of sales and marketing at Mission Produce Inc., based in Oxnard, CA.

The avocado trade organizations have spent tens of millions of dollars increasing consumer demand for avocados as a nutritional and culinary treat. "The commissions have spent a lot of money developing demand," admits Bruce Dowhan, general manager of Giumarra Agricom International LLC, headquartered in Escondido, CA.

The expanded uses of avocados are making it possible to sell more of them to those who have already been buying them for years, as well as increase household penetration. "Demand in general has been increasing signif-

icantly every year, and we're not in every house yet," says Dana Thomas, president of Index Fresh Inc., headquartered in Bloomington, CA. "We are succeeding in getting households that already buy avocados to buy more of them. All the good health news about avocados helps, and I think there's going to be \$30 million spent by the producer groups to promote avocados this year."

With the peak fall season approaching, producers offer five tips to maximize avocado sales.

1. Display Ripe Fruit

The avocado display must include easy-to-find ripe fruit because most consumers are looking for something they can eat that night. "You want ripe fruit," asserts Jackie Bohmer, marketing director for the Mexican Hass Avocado Import Association (MHAIA), based in Coral Gables, FL. "Consumers go to the grocery store and look for something ready to eat. They are not looking for an avocado that will be ready to eat three or four days from now."

Suppliers emphasize the importance of

having ready-to-eat ripe avocados on display more than any other point. The difference in avocado sales this one simple step can make is staggering. "Making sure you have ripe fruit will increase avocado sales between 2-to-1 or even 4-to-1," reports Emiliano Escobedo, marketing director for Avocados from Mexico (APEAM), headquartered in Los Angeles, CA.

The display of ripe fruit must be visible, and it must be kept appealing. "You need proper signage," continues Escobedo. "You want to have a sign that says the fruit is ripe and ready to eat. You also need a good culling process. The signage helps with shrink and you want to make sure the fruit on display is of good quality."

It is advantageous to have fruit that is at different stages in the ripening process. "Have a variety of ripeness available, because not every consumer wants the same stage of ripeness," suggests Dowhan. "That means having a section of the shelf that is slightly breaking, a section that is green and another that is ripe." He cites the example of a customer who is throwing a party in three days and wants both a bag of still ripening avocados for

FROM OUR
AVOCADO FIELDS
TO YOUR STORES

SLIMCADO® Avocados



Naturally 50% less fat...
naturally 33% fewer calories*

SlimCados are a healthy way to
top salads, sandwiches and creamy soups.
SlimCados are the green-skinned avocados with sell-thru,
coming by that reputation with a lot of hard work:

- In-house research and development
- Hydro-cooled straight from the field
- Food safety-audited facilities
- State-of-the-art packing house
- Quality control team
- Continuous Cold Chain® from our fields to your stores

All that hard work delivers quality — SlimCado
Avocados with great taste and proven shelf life.
Call today to get SlimCado Avocados coming your way.

*compared to the leading California avocado



**BROOKS
TROPICALS**
GROWER • PACKER • SHIPPER

800.327.4833 • Fax: 305.246.5827
www.brookstropicals.com





the upcoming party and a single large ripe avocado for tonight's family dinner.

"Keep your displays full and offer a variety of ripening stages," agrees Maggie Bezart, marketing director of Chilean Avocados Importers Association (CAIA), in Aptos, CA. "Over 40 percent of shoppers are not looking for ripe fruit. Consumers are becoming very savvy on how to ripen their own fruit at home."

Nonetheless, the avocado display must include fruit that can be eaten tonight. "It is important to merchandise ripe, ready-to-eat avocados in prominent and permanent locations to generate sales," says Jan DeLyser, vice president of marketing for the Irvine-based California Avocado Board (CAC). "Retailers should monitor ripeness to ensure consumers have the best eating experience possible. Multiple displays of bulk — both large and small — and bagged avocados offer consumers a choice in size and price point."

2. Devote Enough Space

Avocados are a very fast-growing category, and it is easy to fall behind in giving them the growing amount of space they deserve in the produce department. But the price for falling behind in devoting space is lost opportunities for sales.

"One key to success is allocating the proper space to the category," says APEAM's Escobedo. "The avocado category was up 20 percent in 2010. The associations and commissions are spending millions of dollars to increase demand, but a lot of retailers are not paying attention to this in deciding how much space to allocate to avocados."

The additional space can be used to offer a full range of sizes and volumes of avocados. "Research has shown that offering multiple avocado items, like small and large avocados and bags, will really increase the volume of the entire category. When you look at retailers that

are very successful they have many avocado products, they promote them and they give them enough space," Escobedo continues.

Space can be used to have different displays oriented toward consumers with different uses for their avocados. "The key to me is to have a category with two or three displays of different sizes and price points," notes Thomas of Index Fresh. "You have something for someone who wants a larger avocado and is willing to pay more for it, or for someone who just wants to cut up a bag of avocados and make guacamole."

Additionally, multiple displays offer an opportunity to have avocados next to different complementary produce items. "You can have an end cap of 60s, another display of 36s and a rack with bags in separate displays. They can be next to complementary products like tomatoes or onions," adds Thomas.

The avocado space can include special bins that add a promotional touch to the category display. For example, "Football is the No. 1 sport in the United States, and Chilean avocados are available during the entire season," says Bezart of CAIA. "Tailgating and home parties are happening on game nights and avocados are the 'fruit' of the game for guacamole, with tomatoes, onions, peppers and salsa, not to mention carrots, celery, jicama and bell peppers for dippers. Avocados can be found on hamburgers and hot dogs, salads and fresh platter with crackers. There are some chains that do not allow vendor POS, but we have had great success with our 'Grab some for the Game' POS, bins and contests."

3. Highlight the Uses

One of the reasons avocado sales are increasing is that many consumers finally understand that they can be far more than the main ingredient in guacamole. Effective merchandising includes educating consumers

about the many uses of avocados. "We started making fresh guacamole last year, and we put them in a self-contained cooler right next to the avocados," says Robert Seegmiller, sales director for fresh produce at Harmons, a 14-unit chained based in West Valley City, UT.

"Displays should highlight how the avocado can be both an ingredient in salsa and also used as a bowl to serve it," recommends Mary Ostlund, marketing director for Brooks Tropicals LLC, based in Homestead, FL. "Served with chips, it's a great idea as a personal appetizer. Salad displays should show images or offer recipes."

Effective displays can also go beyond including avocados as another ingredient in salads. "Don't let consumers stop at using avocados only to make guacamole or to slice into a salad," continues Ostlund. "The popularity of the fruit indicates consumers are willing to do more. Displays should show how to use this creamy, rich bundle of green as a fruit, which it is. Combining avocado with other fruits is a great way to get started on this new path. Making a fruit-focused guacamole combines the familiar with the unusual."

The trend toward increasing the uses of avocados has reached the hamburger and pizza fast food outlets, too. "The key change we're seeing is that more people are using avocados in dishes other than guacamole," points out Giumarra's Dowhan. "People are putting them on salads, hamburgers and pizzas. You see avocado French fries and avocado egg rolls."

The list of new and interesting uses for the avocado keeps growing. "Avocados aren't just for guacamole anymore," adds Thomas of Index Fresh. "They are on sandwiches, eggs, salads, and on top of a good steak. You can go on and on."

Brooks Tropicals has developed an avocado variety, called SlimCado, with reduced fat. This variety suggests use in low-fat diets. "The Florida-grown SlimCado has half the fat and one-third fewer calories than other leading avocado varieties," details Ostlund. "Most Americans are looking to lower their fat intake. SlimCados can be a good nutritional choice, for example, for pairing with grilled meats, especially higher-fat cuts like ribs and rib eye steaks to balance out the meal."

This fruit is particularly amenable for use at tailgating parties because it is durable and holds up at a wide range of temperatures. Tailgating displays should take into account that cooking in a stadium parking lot can bring certain menu challenges. Dishes must be able to stand up to challenging temperatures. "SlimCado avocados — as well as any other

“Promotions are the key to avocado growth. We’ve done research through the Perishables Group that verifies that in order to maximize volume, avocados need to be promoted throughout the year. If retailers promote any one avocado product, they increase sales of the entire category.”

— Emiliano Escobedo, Avocados From Mexico

type of avocado — actually have more pronounced flavor at middle-of-the-road temperatures than when they are really cold or too hot, making them a perfect addition to a tailgating party,” Ostlund says.

4. Promote, Promote, Promote

Avocado sales will increase if you promote them early and often, and not just at the obvious times. “We’ve put together a few display contests among our produce managers with the Chilean avocado importers for the Super Bowl. The first year avocado sales were up 20 percent,” Seegmiller reports.

He advises that it is important to pre-book avocados beginning six weeks before the promotion to make sure there is an adequate supply of ripe fruit. “Promotions are the key to avocado growth,” says APEAM’s Escobedo. “We’ve done research through the Perishables Group that verifies that in order to maximize volume, avocados need to be promoted throughout the year. If retailers promote any one avocado product, they increase sales of the entire category.”

And the fall avocado season offers some obvious promotional opportunities. “We’re doing a baseball program in October; the sport has been a very effective way to promote avocados,” says the MHAIA’s Bohmer. The association organizes a contest for the best retail displays with prizes including a trip to the World Series. The association also has a mobile unit that promotes avocados on top of hot dogs, as well as other uses related to baseball.

Some suppliers find that California avocados benefit in much of the country from promoting the locally grown aspect. “One of the big things with the California avocados is the locally grown aspect,” Dowhan of Giumarra says.

The major California avocado trade organization has materials to help with this aspect of merchandising. “The California Avocado Commission provides POP materials to retailers who merchandise California avocados

in season,” says DeLyser. “The materials include California-themed display bins, POS cards that tie in to consumer promotions, recipe cards and tear pads to encourage usage of avocados and other support materials. Retailers also use their own tools to cross-promote with other produce items or call attention to the nutritional benefits of avocados. Recipes are an excellent way to introduce consumers to new usage ideas while increasing sales.”

There are many cross-merchandising opportunities for avocados within the produce

4th AMHPAC's Technical Business Convention

Mexico as the continent's premier vegetable supplier

August 24-26th • Presidente Intercontinental Hotel
Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico

During our convention, we will review the business and productive strategies we use as industry experts, to be "suppliers of significance" 12 months a year.
Join us from August 24-26th, because we are on a Campaign!
See You There!

Guest country: The United States, Our Dear Client.

We expect participation from more than 300 individuals and companies including: Grower/Picker/Shipper, Retailers, Produce Buyers, Distributors, Marketing Experts, Technology and Quality Experts, Suppliers, Government Officials, Researchers, and Academia

Vote Mexico!
Vote

Our Industry Expert Speakers include:

- Leo Zuckermann
- Lorna Christie
- Juan Antonio Aguila
- Juan Marin Bravo
- Elliott Grant
- Antonio Alarcón
- Bram Vanthoor

For more information and registration on line, go to www.amhpac.org

AMHPAC
MEXICAN ASSOCIATION OF PROTECTED HORTICULTURE
www.amhpac.org

Sponsors: Financiera Rural, FMC, Bayer CropScience, Massey Ferguson, TradeCorp, De Ruyter Seeds, HarvestMark, Rosh, and many others.

department. "You can cross-merchandise avocados with other produce items like tomatoes, onions, peppers or tomatillos," Dowhan suggests.

Cross-merchandising promotions including avocados can also be used to suggest recipes. "Salad fixings are always great cross-merchandising opportunities. And who said avocados can't share the grandstand with other fruits and veggies in everyone's favorite dip — guacamole? Tomatoes, fennel, plums, apples and cranberries can make a guacamole that is the talk of the party," Ostlund says.

The fall season offers opportunities to

"The key change we're seeing is that more people are using avocados in dishes other than guacamole. People are putting them on salads, on hamburgers and pizzas. You see avocado French fries and avocado egg rolls."

— Bruce Dowhan, Giumarra Agricom International LLC

promote avocados in conjunction with tailgating and other sports events. "Tailgating and fall sports-themed programs are a natural fit

with avocados. Year-round, tie-ins with guacamole ingredients as well as secondary displays near salads, can generate incremental volume," says the CAC's DeLyser.

The fall is also a special time for avocado promotion, because that is when the volume of supply can sustain promotional prices. "It is important to give the right price to the consumer," says Mission's Wileman. "We'll be back in September or October with supply that is strong enough for retailers to promote them."

Some retailers were having success with price promotions even early in the summer. "The price point on all those products is very important. We've seen retailers with a 10-for-\$10 offer, or 4-for-\$5 offer, and it's a powerful merchandising tool," says Thomas of Index Fresh.

5. Have A Year-Round Supply

The different growing regions throughout the Western Hemisphere give avocados an extended season, and sales will increase if consumers are offered supplies as many months of the year as possible. "California's crop generally starts in February. The southern part of the state will go through July or August, and the northern region to October," Dowhan says.

This year, the supply of avocados from California may be a bit lighter than usual toward the end of the season. "Specific to California, we'll be lighter in supply than last year in September and October based on overall crop volume," DeLyser says.

But as the California harvest winds down early in the fall, the Mexico harvest reaches its peak. "For Mexico, the season really kicks in around October, but we have product almost year-round. In Mexico, we have four blooms so we don't have the harsh seasonality other regions do," explains MHAIA's Bohmer.

So far the fall crop from Mexico this year is shaping up to be a good one, notes Bohmer.

The Chilean crop is also shaping up to be larger than last year. "Chilean avocados are due to start at the Labor Day holiday. We are projected to have an increase over last year, with approximately 170 million pounds," Bezart says.

pb

Sell more produce!
with **CONCORD FOODS**

CONCORD FOODS
GUACAMOLE MIX
JUST ADD: 2 Avocados
MILD

CONCORD FOODS
SALSA
SEASONING MIX
JUST ADD: Tomatoes & Onion
HOT

Display Concord Foods' Guacamole Mixes and Salsa Seasoning Mixes in the produce department to
Increase Avocado and Tomato sales today!

Contact your Concord Foods' broker or Concord Foods at 508-580-1700, ext. 319 (customerservice@concordfoods.com) to request a marketing package. *Visit online at* www.concordfoods.com

ORGANIC PRODUCE SHOWCASE

MORE ON NEXT PAGE →



**A&A
ORGANIC FARMS**

"Don't Panic, It's Organic"

Featuring this Fall:

Hard Squash, Ginger, Asparagus,
Tomato on the Vine,
#15 Beef Tomato, Red Grape Tomato
Canada Only:
12x125g Gooseberry from Peru

Certified Organic Produce

Celebrating our 9th year of business!
Thanks for your support.

(831) 768-0300

www.aaorganic.com



www.doubledfarms.com

GROWER • PACKER • SHIPPER
CERTIFIED ORGANIC

Asparagus, Blueberries, Broccoli,
Cabbage (red & green), Garlic, Red & Yellow
Onions, Sweet Corn, Melons

Sales: Gurdeep Billan, Aaron Winslow,
& Chris Carbajal

559.884.0107

ddfarms@doubledfarms.com

www.doubledfarms.com

Coalinga, CA



**Grateful Harvest[™]
ORGANIC**

More than just a
Great Line.

PRODUCE • SALAD DRESSINGS • MEAT

Grateful Harvest is more than just a great line of organic foods—it's a comprehensive organic program to help you succeed in organic retailing. From the highest quality produce, delivered on-time and in top condition, to effective merchandising and marketing tools that help you spread the word and create sales, you can rely on the leader in organic distribution since 1982—Albert's Organics.

Questions? Call Simcha Weinstein
at 1-828-298-7776, or visit
www.albertsorganics.com



A UNFI Company

THE FLAVORS OF VENTURA COUNTY

DEARDORFFFAMILYFARMS.COM

SALES DEPARTMENT: DAVE, DOUG & PAUL

805.200.5215

FAX

805.483.1286

ALL CALIFORNIA GROWN PRODUCT
NEW ORGANICS FOR 2011



CELERY • BROCCOLI • ROMAINE • SPINACH • CILANTRO • PARSLEY • CUCUMBER
LEAF LETTUCE GREEN & RED • CABBAGE GREEN, RED & NAPA • BOK CHOY BABY & REGULAR • COLLARD GREENS
DAIKON • RADISH • KALES BLACK & GREEN • CHARDS GREEN, RED & RAINBOW • BEETS • GREEN BEANS
VINE RIPE & ROMA TOMATO • ZUCCHINI • SQUASH • BELL & HOT PEPPERS • STRAWBERRIES

ORGANIC PRODUCE SHOWCASE



- ✓ Dedicated to organic food for 27 years
- ✓ Extensive year-round supply of farm-fresh produce
- ✓ Experienced, knowledgeable sales staff
- ✓ Unparalleled food safety system



Earthbound Farm: The Organic Solution

Sign up for our trade-only website for convenient anytime access to POP, sell sheets, product photos, logos, and product information at EBFarmTrade.com

San Juan Bautista, CA
Yuma, AZ
TEL 888-624-1004
FAX 831-623-7886

Earthbound Farm: The clear choice for your organic program



Here are just some of our items available through fall:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Apples & Apple Slices | Frisée | Radichio |
| Beets | Garlic | Romaine Hearts |
| Blueberries & Strawberries | Green Onions | Salad Mixes |
| Broccoli & Broccollette | Heirloom Lettuces | Spinach |
| Carrots | Herbs | Summer & Winter Squash |
| Cauliflower | Iceberg Lettuce | Sweet Bell Peppers & Hot Peppers |
| Celery & Celery Hearts | Kiwi | Tomatoes |
| Citrus | Onions | Washed Whole Lettuce Leaves |
| Cucumbers | Pears | Yams |
| Dried Fruit | Potatoes | |
| Fennel | Power Meals & Salad Kits | CALL FOR COMPLETE LIST |



The BRC logo is a trademark of the British Retail Consortium, used under license.

Arvin, CA
ORGANIC CALIFORNIA CARROTS
Baby Peeled Carrots
Cello Carrots - 100% hand packed
25# & 50# Table size & Jumbo carrots
Year-round supply for your convenience!
call Andrew, Eric, Chris and Rob
661-854-3156
KERN RIDGE GROWERS
A small California Carrot Shipper with over 30 years experience

ATTENTION ALL BUYERS

use



directories when you are ready to buy. For additional copies of this directory or any other, please call

561-994-1118

and ask for the

Directory Sales Department

Email: info@producebusiness.com

ORGANIC PRODUCE SHOWCASE

Christopher Ranch™
Organic



Christopher Ranch
Organic Garlic



Ask for it by name!

**BULK • PEELED
 JARRED • PACKAGED
 SPECIALTY ONIONS
 GINGER • SHALLOTS**

www.christopherranch.com



**KROEKER
 FARMS**

*We grow red, yellow, and russet potatoes,
 onions, carrots, cauliflower, broccoli, garlic,
 green cabbage, grains, oilseeds, and hemp.*

Office: 204-325-4333

Fax: 204-325-8630

E-mail: Garry@kroekers.com or
wayne@kroekers.com

www.kroekerfarms.com 



From field to table, your premier source for top quality organic produce in the Southeastern USA. Personalized service is our mission, supporting local organic farmers is our passion.

Toll Free: 877.952.1198 • Fax: 941.358.6551 • sales@globalorganics.ws • www.globalorganics.ws

Giorgio
 America's Favorite Mushroom



**GIORGIO ORGANIC MUSHROOMS.
 THE PREMIER BRAND, NATURALLY.**

Giorgio organic mushrooms are America's favorite. We grow our mushrooms in a fully organic environment and they are certified organic by PCO (Pennsylvania Certified Organic). In fact all Giorgio farms are MGAP (Mushroom Good Agricultural Practices) certified by the USDA. It's why we are the natural choice for organic mushrooms and so much more.

Equal Opportunity Employer

Giorgio Fresh Co. | 347 June Avenue, Blandon, PA 19510
 800.330.5711 | www.giorgiofoods.com

A Fresh Perspective On Merchandising Onions

By overcoming challenges, stocking appropriate varieties and effectively merchandising, retailers can give the onion category a boost. **BY LISA WHITE**



PHOTO COURTESY OF NOA

According to industry insiders, retailers should display both loose and bagged onions.

Onions are ubiquitous. Customers either need them or they don't. "While seasonality can affect movement, average onion sales per store/per week are steady," says John Shuman, president and director of sales at Shuman Produce Inc., a year-round onion supplier based in Reidsville, GA.

So the challenge remains; how can retailers get consumers excited about this category? Fortunately, social media and the food channels have helped bring more awareness to the produce segment, of which onions are a big part. There is a lot of potential for these products from a retail standpoint. "At 20 pounds per capita, onions are the third largest vegetable commodity in terms of per-capita consumption in the United States," says Marty Kamer, vice president of Greencastle, PA-based Keystone Fruit Marketing Inc. "Retailers are the vehicle to get the product in the hands of consumers."

By addressing the host of challenges, making sure to stock the appropriate varieties and effectively merchandising these products, retailers can breathe new life into the onion category.

Biggest Challenges

Because onions are a commodity, there are a number of challenges in terms of merchandising. "I'd say the biggest challenge is the idea that onions are just a staple ingredient and that you don't need to promote them," says Matt Curry, president of Brooks, OR-based Curry & Co. Inc. "Numerous retailers think that onions can just be a steady year-round item and don't try to take advantage of the unique selling seasons that exist."

Nevertheless, it's important not to take onions for granted. "Almost all recipes include onions in some shape or form," says Wendy Brannen, executive director of the Vidalia Onion Committee, based in Vidalia, GA. This creates a built-in sales tool. However, for this reason, it's important to differentiate onion types, while letting consumers know that it is not just an ingredient, but also a food flavor enhancer. "This can be accomplished by getting consumers excited about onions as a fresh version of a spice," Brannen says.

With so many onion varieties, sometimes it can be difficult to commit the space. But not to worry. According to Richard Pazderski, director of sales and marketing at Bland Farms

LLC, headquartered in Glennville, GA, "Small displays are key. It's important to stay on top of seasonal demand."

When it comes to loose versus bagged onions, some retailers approach this as an "either-or" concept where merchandising is concerned. "Today's consumers want choices," reminds Sherise Jones, marketing director at the Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Committee, headquartered in Parma, ID. "Whenever possible, retailers should display both loose and bagged onions."

A key challenge for retailers is educating consumers about the flavor profile of each type of onion. "Retailers tell us one of the biggest challenges is store labor," Kamer says. Educating staff on the different onion types and nuances can go a long way in increasing sales of these products.

Capitalizing On Trends

To make this category as profitable as possible, retailers need to keep an eye on the various onion trends. Experts concur that sweet onions are the category driver as the fastest-growing segment. "The sweet onion has become dominant in the category, as it is used

We make buying sweet onions easy - year round!



Domestic onions you know and trust.

We offer you the best and most consistent domestic sweet onions from March-December. From the legendary Vidalia fields in Georgia to the fertile soils in the Northwest to our growing Texas program, our delicious, hand-picked sweet onions help drive your sweet onion sales.

Imports keep sales moving.

We balance our domestic programs with the best growers from Chile and Peru. You never miss a sweet onion sale.



We certify all of our onions.

Don't settle for anything less than Certified Sweet Onions. Our onions keep your customers coming back time and time again.

Sweet onions are our pride and joy. We love when customers tell us they were

CURRY & COMPANY™



pleasantly surprised by the sales lift received when they went with a Curry & Company sweet onion program. Let's start building on your existing program now.

“An increased emphasis on flavor definitely has the potential to give the onion category a boost. Onions also play a key role in many ethnic and gourmet dishes, which continue to grow in popularity.”

—Kathryn Hilker, Potandon Produce LLC

for salads, stir fry, rings and sandwich toppings,” says Maria Brous, director of media and community relations for Publix Super Markets, based in Lakeland, FL.

The versatility of this onion type is part of what has propelled its growth. “Sweet onion use is continuing to increase,” recognizes Brian Kastick, president of OSO Sweet Onion, based in Charleston, WV. “It’s an affordable luxury that adds flavor and volume to recipes.”

There has also been a steady increase in red onion sales, especially in the foodservice segment. “More chefs and restaurateurs are using the color differential as part of attractiveness with this onion type,” says David DeBerry, category director at Frontera Produce Ltd., in Edinburg, TX.

The popularity of red onions was noted in a recent menu trends study by the Greeley, CO-based National Onion Association (NOA). “In the last 10 to 15 years, we’ve definitely seen more red onions across all categories and dining segments,” says director of public and industry relations, Kim Reddin. “I’m also willing to bet that culinary trends translate easily to retail.”

The focus on regional varieties and buying local has had an impact on the onion segment as well. “We believe the trend from local to locale has benefited the Vidalia sweet onion in that it is an item well-known for its flavor and the area in Georgia where it is grown,” Shuman of Shuman Produce says.

The increased focus on local product has been beneficial for regional sweet onions, which often serve large local geographic regions. “For example, Washington State’s Walla Walla onions are considered a Northwest onion and appeal to all the neighboring states,” Curry of Curry & Co. says. “Our Georgia Vidalia onion program is quite popular in the Southeast and is seen as a local onion.”

More people today are incorporating their food of choice into traditional recipes. “For example, Vidalia onions are sweet and not typically a component in Tex-Mex recipes,” explains the VOC’s Brannen. “But there is no reason not to use sweeter onions in authentic Mexican dishes.”

With ethnic cooking on the rise, it pays to remind consumers about the versatility of onions. “An increased emphasis on flavor definitely has the potential to give the onion category a boost,” says Kathryn Hilker, trade marketing coordinator for Potandon Produce LLC, headquartered in Idaho Falls, ID. “Onions also play a key role in many ethnic and gourmet dishes, which continue to grow in popularity.”

The Power Of Cross-Merchandising

Publix Super Markets promotes Vidalia onions heavily in May and June. “We tie them in with our Produce for Kids promotion, which supports the Children’s Miracle Network and its affiliated hospitals,” Brous says. “A portion of the onion sales is donated from our supplier to Produce for Kids.”

Providing consumers with recipes that allow cross-merchandising of other products with onions can help grow sales in this category. “Whereas some produce is meant to be eaten raw, with others it’s more about combining them into different dishes,” explains Bland Farm’s Pazderski. “It’s important to make it easy for consumers to do this.”

Cross-merchandising onions outside of the produce department increases visibility and can inspire impulse purchases. “Retailers need to make onions more visible within the store, provide meal solutions and capitalize on POS material,” contends Rick Antle, president and CEO at Salinas, CA-based Tanimura & Antle Inc. “Grilling season defines summer cooking season, and onions are ideal on the grill or in building the perfect burger. Merchandise onions in the meat department and offer consumers visuals of meal solutions or simple recipes.”

Tanimura & Antle’s Artisan Sweet Italian Red Onion packaging has been redesigned to communicate this onion’s premium value, flavor and quality. “Our consumer bags have a new look, as does our display carton that holds 2- and 3-lb. consumer bags,” says Diana McClean, the company’s director of marketing. “We’ve also just started shipping a new retail floor display bin in two sizes. The small bin



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHUMAN PRODUCE

holds 40 pounds of loose onions, while the larger bin holds up to 120 pounds. Both bins give retailers a chance to cross-merchandise onions throughout the store, especially with burger or kabob fixings, which are featured meal suggestions shown on the bins.”

Promoting onion purchases through POS material, or even a small display in the meat department or near the seasonal item section, may prompt consumers to make an onion purchase as an impulse buy. “Produce retailers should encourage this type of buying practice to increase their overall onion sales,” Jones of the Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Committee says. “Tomatoes, lettuce and onions displayed with condiments and hamburger buns are great for a summer barbecue display. A small display of dry or canned beans, seasoning, onions and tomatoes is nice for a football season chili.”

Take Advantage Of Technology

The National Onion Association recently launched an area on its Web site designated for retailers that provides merchandising information. “Technology creates more opportunities for retailers to merchandise onions and other produce in a convenient, appealing way for consumers,” Reddin says.

There are a number of consumers who may be curious about the different onion varieties and flavors but don’t know exactly how to take advantage of the various types. “Retailers should take advantage of displays, messaging, in-store sampling and cooking demonstrations to give customers ideas on how to use onions,” Hilker of Potandon says.

Signage that calls attention to the different onion attributes, such as ‘sweet,’ ‘mild’ or ‘bold’ provides consumers with more insight into



A SWEET SUMMER CATCH.

VIDALIA ONION SEASON IS ALMOST COMPLETE!

Dandy® Vidalia onions are what your customers really want! Book your order today and stock the sweetest and most desired onion of the year. Recent reports from the Vidalia® Onion Committee show that nearly 75% of consumers named "Vidalia onions" as their favorite sweet onion variety. Even more importantly, a third of those consumers were willing to pay more for a Vidalia onion than any other sweet onion.

Dandy® has been putting its stamp on Vidalia® sweet onions for decades. The Vidalia sweet onion peaks during the spring, April through August. Book yours while quantities are available!



1-800-342-DUDA or dudafresh.com

**JOIN OUR
COMMUNITY.**



@Dandy_Fresh



Dandy Fresh Fruits and Vegetables



DudaFreshProduce



Duda Farm Fresh Foods, Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of DUDA. Distributed exclusively by Duda Farm Fresh Foods, Inc., dudafresh.com

DeBRUYN

PRODUCE

HOME OF

“Speedy Sweets”®

**GENUINE
SWEET ONIONS
Year-round**

AUGUST - JANUARY

Peru / Chile

FEBRUARY - APRIL

Mexico / Texas

APRIL - AUGUST

Vidalia, GA
Texas - Arizona

SALES

1-800-733-9177

Margret DeBruyn
Kevin Hubbard
Betty Aguirre

FLORIDA SALES

954-788-6707

Ralph Diaz
Mike Diaz

*Lab Tested For Sweetness
Onsite Quality Control*

their purchase. “To achieve optimal promotional impact, we suggest creating a year-round promotional plan that includes all onion category segments and maintains the category pricing structure,” Shuman Produce’s Shuman says. “Consumers want choices that fit their lifestyle and family size. Therefore, we recommend including both bulk and bagged items in the sweet onion display.

Shuman Produce has created a cross-merchandising program for retailers that includes a co-op Vidalia season promotion featuring recipes complemented by the sweet flavor of RealSweet Vidalias. The promotion is featured on the 5-lb. bag of RealSweet onions. “This promotion has been very effective in providing value for price-conscious consumers and the entire program has been very successful at retail,” Shuman says.

In addition, RealSweet sweet onion bags include recipes on the back of the package, and a QR code leads to more recipe suggestions. “Technology has greatly enhanced consumers’ ability to connect with a product on a personal level, and we’ve used online videos to develop that connection,” Shuman says. With a scan of the QR code on the rear of our packaging, consumers can learn about the

growing, harvesting and packaging process of RealSweet onions while at the store. “The idea of local is more about understanding the product and its locale,” Shuman says. “Through the use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, we leverage the power of the internet to bring the RealSweet story to consumers, no matter their distance from our fields.”

The company also provides retailers with colorful RealSweet bins that can enhance the visibility of the retail display. “We recommend that sweet onions are placed in a central location in the produce department and incorporate a secondary display during the weeks leading up to late summer and fall holidays,” Shuman says.

Shuman Produce also recently launched a social media campaign using Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to connect with consumers. “Using Facebook, we’ve been able to share photos of the growth and harvest of this year’s crop of RealSweet onions,” Shuman says. “We also conduct contests and share recipes through Facebook and Twitter.”

Eye-Catching And Secondary Displays

Displays help drive sales, especially in the

CAPITAL CITY FRUIT
1505 North Avenue, Norwalk, Iowa 50211
Phone: 515.981.5111

*When you want it,
Where you want it,
How you want it.*



*Shippers and Distributors of Quality
Fruits & Vegetables for over 60 years*



ososweetonions.com

**The world’s
premier
sweet onion
is now available
year round!**

OSO Sweet Onions
are just a phone call away.
Contact: **Mark Breimeister/
National Sales Manager**
248-681-9020
or email:
MBreimeister@ososweetcompany.com



UNLIKE ANY OTHER ONION ON EARTH.™



producebusiness

MARKETING • MERCHANDISING • MANAGEMENT • PROCUREMENT

How To Make Things Grow

Whatever your role in the produce industry, the key to a blossoming bottom line is knowledge. About major trends and developments, and the people behind them.... About new sales opportunities around the world.... New packaging and transportation technology.... New ideas in marketing and promotion.... New retail strategies.... New equipment and services.... New techniques for managing individual businesses, and their personnel, more efficiently.

And your Number 1 source for all of the above is **PRODUCE BUSINESS**, the industry's only monthly business magazine serving all buying segments. And the most widely read of any publication in the field. If you're not receiving every important issue, call to start your subscription without delay. It's the only way to be sure you're getting all the knowledge you need. And growing the way you should.



Call Today to Reserve Your Subscription

561-994-1118

Ext 109

www.producebusiness.com

CONFIDENCE

What's it worth?

The recent outbreaks of foodborne illness demonstrate the difficulty of identifying a "smoking gun" and the devastating impact it can have on produce suppliers.

We've developed exacting processes to protect the integrity of our onions from seed to store. Every step is monitored and tracked.

We covered everything so you can focus on the most important things; keeping your customers healthy, happy and safe.

Food Safety. It's just good business.


PERI & SONS[®]
F A R M S 

Where good things grow.[™]

White, Yellow, Red, Sweet & Organic Onions.
 775-463-4444 • PeriandSons.com

producebusiness
MARKETING • MERCHANDISING • MANAGEMENT • PROMOTION

To get ahead in the produce business, you need to stay ahead of the produce business.



PRODUCE BUSINESS is the industry's Number 1 source for insights and analysis.

For subscription information, please visit www.producebusiness.com or call 561-994-1118

“We have seen some awesome merchandising using stand-alone bin displays, value-added offerings, multi-size strategies, demos, recipes and cross-merchandising tie-ins. All of the basic tools still exist, but retailers now have a multitude of merchandising options they can use.”

— Marty Kamer, Keystone Fruit Marketing Inc.

onion category. Maintaining a year-round assortment of these products in different packs is key to enhancing the appeal to different demographics. “Start with the basics, which include quality onions and consistent sizing,” advises Curry & Co.’s Curry. “Remove loose onion skins, and arrange onions with the natural color breaks, assuming you’re carrying all three colors.” Curry says. “Differentiate your sweet onions from your standard yellow onions to try to capture all the premium dollars that sweet onions should add to your category. Train checkers to look for sweet onions and do a quick training each time you change your sweet onion region, as the sweet onion shape isn’t always consistent.”

During promotions, retailers can increase display sizes or implement secondary displays to cover the additional volume. Incorporating additional educational point of purchase materials, including nutritional information, can help make even more of an impact.

Communicating about local onion varieties also is a good idea. When someone walks into a produce department, is it obvious that there are local onions available or does a person need to search to discover that? “If possible, retailers should run promotions with local growers and their families, giving customers the opportunity to meet with the grower and learn about the crops,” Curry says.

If retailers are having promotions at the start of the month or during a peak promotion time, they should be sure to allocate enough shelf space. “Stores need to have specials clearly displayed and take the time to make onion displays look fresh,” Curry says.

Also, take advantage of all advertising mediums. Is the promo price on a video billboard or screen outside? Is there a recipe in the circular? Make sure to also take advantage of social media to announce special prices. Curry & Co. recently partnered with one of its customers for a sweet onion presentation, describing each variety, the corresponding season and characteristics. “We then created some simple POS, which called attention to the

sweet onions,” Curry says. “By tying these pieces together, we had a successful promotion with a nice boost in sales.”

Curry & Co. offers customers custom POS material for onions. “Retailers need to think of POS material like a billboard on the side of the road,” Curry says. “It has to be quick, attention-grabbing and include a bold heading and a few simple bullet points providing the necessary information.”

Because onions are a commodity and can be easily overlooked, placement of these products at the store level is key. “Onions serve as a great color break between avocados and tomatoes,” says Ira Greenstein, president and owner of Direct Source Marketing, based in Mount Kisco, NY.

Large waterfall displays in the front of produce departments can provide additional selling opportunities. “One of the challenges suppliers have is differentiating between the various types of sweet onions,” Greenstein explains. “With so many varieties being marketed as ‘sweet,’ it has become detrimental to the category.”

Educate Consumers And Learn Their Preferences

Retailers can look at this as an opportunity to educate consumers on the various types of onions and their different attributes. As onion sales correlate with meals eaten at home, recipes need to be incorporated into merchandising programs for stores to increase onion usage and sales of these products.

Onions Etc. Inc., located in Stockton, CA, does this by including a shopping list on the back of its onion bags. This has increased incremental sales of these items by 15 to 20 percent. “Onions are not like apples or grapes. People will only eat so many of them,” says Derrell Kelso, Jr., president and CEO at Onions Etc. “This product is typically not a snack. Onions are most often cooked when used.”

By increasing the visibility of all types of onions, retailers can provide their customers with options for different uses. “It can take

more labor, creativity and knowledge, which can be challenging,” Kelso says. “But as more people increasingly eat at home, they buy more produce.”

It’s important to be aware of regional preferences in terms of onions. Retailers are in a good position to get a handle on this. “Retailers have their own ideas on what works best within their demographic,” DeBerry says. “There are so many different onion trends and characteristics in different geographic areas and demographics; it’s hard for us to know more than retailers.”

Although sampling onions may be more challenging than other produce, retailers can accomplish this by pairing sautéed onions with crackers or another complementary product.

There are a number of retailers that have renewed their focus on this category to help bring it more to the forefront. “We have seen some awesome merchandising using stand-alone bin displays, value-added offerings, multi-size strategies, demos, recipes and cross-merchandising tie-ins,” Keystone’s Kamer says. “All of the basic tools still exist, but retailers now have a multitude of merchandising options they can use.”

Trend Spotting

Keystone Fruit Marketing’s chef Dave Munson provides retailers with culinary trend information. “Due to the massive onion consumption in this category — some 350 truckloads each day — retailers need to pay attention to this category,” Kamer says.

During June, July and August last year, Keystone Fruit Marketing instituted a Walla Walla sweet onions campaign that included saturating targeted areas of Los Angeles near food markets with transit shelters touting foods made with these onions. In addition, radio drive-time traffic reports in Los Angeles and the Pacific Northwest promoted these products.

The VOC’s Brannen says several retailers contact her throughout the year to ask about trends and promoting onions at the store level. “First, it’s important to create a dialogue with the people marketing fresh produce,” Brannen says. “It’s important to be as informed as possible about the product and how it can be used.”

The goal is not to get retailers to stock more of one onion variety, but to educate staff and consumers about the different types of products and their uses. There are many resources available to accomplish this, whether utilizing recipe cards, demos or cooking classes. For example, the VOC recently partnered with the

Universal Music Group Nashville to collaborate on a promotional event celebrating Vidalia onions and country music. As part of the campaign, the Committee conducted a search for the perfect musical lyrics in its Vidalia Onion Jingle Contest, while offering free music downloads from songs in the Universal Music catalog. Country singers who were featured on marketing materials included Vince Gill, Billy Currington, Gary Allan and Ashton Shepherd. The marketing program combined on-bag promotional bursts, POS support, print and

trade advertising, a retailer display contest and radio ads.

“When you take onions for granted, your customers often do, as well,” asserts Curry & Co.’s Curry. “Creative and clean onion displays with the right amount of shelf space can drive sales. We have some store groups we work with that have stores with more than double the white onion sales of certain stores, or they have really strong bag sales. Identify these niche markets within your onion category, and you can experience a nice sales increase.” **pb**

**We've got your onion needs
COVERED!**

- Onions sized to specification
- All varieties packed year-round

GURDA GARDENS
845-374-5741 • Fax: 845-374-7204
jacalyn@gurdagardens.com
GOSHEN, NY


"We deliver within hours throughout the East Coast."



Peru, the principal producer to the US for fresh asparagus, supplies retailers with quality asparagus year round and benefits US consumers with a healthy and nutritious fresh vegetable 365. Retailers can count on consistent, quality Peruvian Asparagus to build sales and offer ample displays throughout the year. To assist retailers in managing the category, The Peruvian Asparagus Importers Association (PAIA) has developed a Category Management Plan Outline for Fresh Peruvian Asparagus, available from the association office – prestige@1scom.net or at 817-793-3133

ALPINE FRESH AYCO FARMS CARB AMERICAS CRYSTALVALLEY FOODS CUSTOMIZED BROKERS GOURMET TRADING COMPANY

PAIA THE PERISHABLE SPECIALIST PROGRESSIVE PRODUCE ROSEMONT FARMS a C.H. ROBINSON COMPANY SOUTHERN SPECIALTIES TEAM PRODUCE



YOUR ASPARAGUS GROWER
Toll Free (800)292-8777
PH (305)594-9117 FAX (305)594-8506

JOHN LYONS - JLYONS@ALPINEFRESH.COM - (305) 594-7517
MIKE SERENO - MSERENO@ALPINEFRESH.COM - (786) 464-8818
GREG FLEMING - GFLEMING@ALPINEFRESH.COM - (305) 594-2929
ANDY GARCIA - AGARCIA@ALPINEFRESH.COM - (305) 594-0933
MAURO SANGIO - MSANGIO@ALPINEFRESH.COM - (305) 594-8909
GREG MILLS - GMILLS@ALPINEFRESH.COM - (786) 464-0960
EMILY OTTENWALDER - EOTENWALDER@ALPINEFRESH.COM - (704) 454-8854

Loading locations:
Miami, Philadelphia, McAllen, Yuma, Los Angeles, Gilman



Green & White Asparagus
52 Weeks a Year

Sno Peas, Snaps, French Beans & Baby Vegetables
2950 NW 74th Avenue • Miami, FL 33122

800-359-5631
sales@crystalvalleyfoods.com

Please Contact: Jay, Jay T., John, Veronica,
Bobby, or Rick




YEAR ROUND IMPORTER OF ASPARAGUS FROM PERU
On The Ground Inspection

Delray Beach, FL - contact Lloyd or David
561.496.0390
lloydhc@hccoproducts.com
davidhc@hccoproducts.com

Los Angeles, CA - contact Jan or Ray
310.401.1810
janhc@hccoproducts.com
rayhc@hccoproducts.com

HARVEST CROWN COMPANY, INC.
Los Angeles • Delray Beach



Asparagus Green & White

954-788-6800
www.aycofarms.com
Deerfield Beach, FL

OUR SALES TEAM IS READY TO SERVE YOU

LETTUCE CLEAR YOUR ASPARAGUS IMPORTS

customized **Brokers**
A CROWLEY Company

(305) 471-8989 • www.customizedbrokers.net



Go Green

- ✓ Be on the cutting edge
- ✓ Less Packaging Material
- ✓ Fuel Savings
- ✓ Transportation Savings
- ✓ Less Kitchen Waste
- ✓ Overall Savings = \$\$\$

Learn about this exciting new program!
Contact a representative today


Los Angeles, California (213) 895-6000
Miami, Florida (305) 991-4077



YOUR OFFSHORE PRODUCE SOURCE

<u>Headquarters</u> Jeff, Hilda, Scott (954) 786-0000	<u>Los Angeles</u> Pat Ramirez (424) 477-5530
<u>New Jersey</u> Danny Pollak (732) 655-4223	<u>Export Divisions</u> John Brown (415) 992-7500

See Us at
THE NEW YORK PRODUCE SHOW AND CONFERENCE,
Booth #424



GREEN, WHITE & PURPLE ASPARAGUS AND BERRIES
310.216.7575 gourmettrading.net



San Francisco, CA
415-285-0400 • Fax 415-824-4844
Leo Rolandelli, General Manager
Chris Brazeel, Sales Manager • Brian Best, Sales

Lodi, CA
209-367-0990 • Fax 209-367-4116
Eric Steigers, Sales

Export Grade & Custom Packs Available

ALPINE FRESH AYCO FARMS CARB AMERICAS CRYSTALVALLEY FOODS CUSTOMIZED BROKERS GOURMET TRADING COMPANY

PERUVIAN ASPARAGUS - UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS!



- HIGH IN NUTRITIONAL VALUE
- VIBRANT DISPLAYS & VARIETY MIX & MATCH - GREEN, WHITE & PURPLE
- DELICIOUS FLAVOR PROFILES
- QUALITY AND QUANTITY ASSURED
- VERSATILE PREPARATIONS
- VALUE ADDED SOLUTIONS AVAILABLE
- EXCELLENT FOR GRILLING
- CROSS MERCHANDISING AVAILABILITY
- HIGH RING CUSTOMERS

HARVEST CROWN HARVEST SENSATIONS JACOBS, MALCOM & BURTT KEYSTONE FRUIT MARKETING NORTH BAY PRODUCE



Tracy, John, Dan, Shawn, Matthew
800.498.1577
 asparagus@keystonefruit.com



PROGRESSIVE PRODUCE
 Gary, Cory
800.900.0757
 asparagus@progressiveproduce.com



Asparagus

Sales Handled By:
 Will Gonzalez, Allan Sanchez,
 & Javier Mendez-Ruiz

800-505-0665
305-592-5562
 email: mike@teamproduce.com



NORTH BAY PRODUCE
Fresh Produce Since 1984
 Year-Round Availability on
 Asparagus, Blueberries,
 Blackberries, Apples,
 Snow Peas & Sugar Snaps

Our mission is to furnish our global customers with a diverse uninterrupted supply of high quality produce while providing superior customer service at prices that optimize both customer value and grower/member returns.

Mark Girardin, Vic Cotner, Nick Osmulski,
 Ryan Lockman & Ken Korson
231-946-1941 • Fax: 231-946-1902
www.northbayproduce.com
 P.O. Box 988 • Traverse City, MI 49684



a C.H. Robinson Company
Fresh Peruvian Asparagus
Growing with you
365 Days a Year

Contact Walter Hoffmann
 walter.hoffmann@rosemontfarms.com
 or Fabian Sojos
 fabian.sojos@rosemontfarms.com
561-922-7201
 Boca Raton, FL 33431 USA

ASPARAGUS 365

**Peruvian Asparagus:
 Why Buy Import?**

- Peruvian Seasons Complement U.S. Growing Region – Enabling Retailers to Sell Asparagus 365 Days a Year.
- World Class Food Safety and Quality.
- Peru Represents Over 51% of Total Supply.
- Supports U.S. Jobs and Labor Force.
- Of Every \$ Spent on Imports an Estimated 70 Cents Remains in the United States.
- Up to 10% Anticipated Category Growth in 2011.

To become part of our dynamic association that is positively impacting the future of the fresh asparagus industry, please contact:
 Priscilla Lleras e-mail: prestige@1scom.net



Tel: 817-793-3133




Frank A. Ramos
 T 305.477.9906
 F 305.477.9975
 C 305.986.1969
 E frank@theperishablespecialist.com

9831 N.W. 58th Street, Unit 131
 Doral, Florida 33178

CUSTOMS BROKER
 theperishablespecialist.com



Premium Asparagus
 Green • White • Value-Added
 Year-Round Availability
 East & West Coast Distribution

Pompano Beach Los Angeles
 954-784-6500 • 714-228-9099
 SouthernSpecialties.com

HARVEST CROWN HARVEST SENSATIONS JACOBS, MALCOM & BURTT KEYSTONE FRUIT MARKETING NORTH BAY PRODUCE

Mushrooms: The New Superfood

Bursting with goodness, mushrooms take their rightful place on the American table. **BY JULIE COOK RAMIREZ**



Shrink runs especially high in the mushroom category and retailers must keep a close eye on displays throughout the day.

Ask any marketer to describe the ideal product and they would likely portray an offering that's perfectly aligned with every consumer trend currently in circulation. These days, that would entail being healthful, tasty, exotic, versatile and upscale, which sounds like a perfect description of mushrooms.

Over the past decade, mushrooms have gone from being a foodie favorite to being a ubiquitous part of the American diet. From white tablecloth restaurants to casual dining establishments to fast food chains, mushrooms are on the menu everywhere, and in every daypart. Mushrooms frequently turn up in omelettes for breakfast, in salads and casseroles at lunch, and on burgers, pizzas, steaks and pasta dishes at dinnertime.

"Mushrooms are universal," says Joe Caldwell, vice president of corporate marketing at Monterey Mushrooms Inc., Watsonville, CA, and chair of the San Jose, CA-based Mushroom Council. "That have versatility that is so much beyond anything else, be it for breakfast, lunch or dinner, Mediterranean, Asian and Latin meals. It just fits into everything."

According to Bill Litvin, vice president of sales and national account manager for

Giorgio Foods Inc., headquartered in Temple, PA, the distinctive taste and texture that make mushrooms so appealing is known as *umami*. Defined as the fifth taste after salty, sweet, sour, and bitter, *umami* is Japanese for "good flavor" or "good taste." Most often described as a savory, brothy, rich and meaty taste sensation, *umami* is sensed by special receptor cells present on the tongue. "Their savory flavor and texture make mushrooms a great addition to a wide variety of dishes, especially meatless entrees," says Litvin. "It gives them a lot of substance."

Along with their unique taste, mushrooms bring a nutritional aspect to meals that is practically unmatched. Naturally low in sodium and boasting bountiful amounts of vitamin D, along with B vitamins, potassium, amino acids, antioxidants and powerful cancer-fighting properties, mushrooms are the ideal fit for anyone trying to go low-carb, low-sugar, low-fat, or low-calorie.

"Mushrooms are a nutritional powerhouse," asserts Gary Schroeder, president of Oakshire Mushroom Farm Inc., located in Kennett Square, PA, which markets the Dole brand of mushrooms. "It's not just us jumping up and down saying, 'Buy my product!' We have the medical community as the driver."

Mushrooms are not only nutritious, but

also an effective means of weight control, particularly when used as a meat alternative. In fact, Schroeder cites not-yet-published research from Johns Hopkins University revealing that merely substituting mushrooms for meat on a regular basis can result in a virtually effortless 20-lb. weight loss.

The reasons for weight loss are simple, adds Paul Frederic, senior vice president of sales and marketing at Avondale, PA-based To-Jo Mushrooms Inc. "When you add mushrooms to a recipe, it boosts the flavor very nicely, so you get satiety," says Frederic. "When you enjoy your meal and you feel satisfied, you generally eat less."

Retailers stand to benefit by taking advantage of mushrooms' meat substitution potential and merchandising them where other meat substitutes are sold, according to Bart Minor, president of the San Jose, CA-based Mushroom Council. They should also consider other cross-merchandising options, such as sliced mushrooms with bagged salads or steaks, for example.

"Mushrooms aren't just for the produce department anymore," declares Fred Recchiuti, general manager of Basciani Foods, in Avondale, PA. "When they put sliced mushrooms in a meat display case, they increase their sales because someone buying a steak will add

“We believe social media is the way to get us closer to the consumer. It has given us another vehicle to disseminate recipes and have consumers share their stories and opinions with us.”

—Gregory Sagan, *Modern Mushroom Farms Inc.*

mushrooms to his or her plate.”

In the case of bagged salads, Minor reports, Mushroom Council tests have conclusively proven that the biggest problem faced by grocers who sell mushrooms next to bagged salads is they have to keep restocking them.

Austin, TX-based Whole Foods Market Inc. makes appropriate use of cross-merchandising, such as selling mushrooms and potatoes together during the holidays or selling specialty mushrooms with other “specialty departments,” such as wine, cheese, and olives. Still, the much-lauded upscale chain recognizes it could be doing more, according to Brent Demarest, regional produce purchasing team leader for the South region of Whole Foods, based in Braselton, GA. “We could probably do a better job with (cross-merchandising),” he admits. “We don’t cross-merchandise a whole lot with other departments.”

Getting The Word Out

When it comes to giving consumers ideas for incorporating mushrooms into their daily menus, catching their attention at the point of sale is key because people often fail to buy mushrooms simply because they didn’t think of them, according to Schroeder. It can be difficult to get point-of-sale materials in front of the consumer, particularly in the case of large chains, because stores prefer a “clean look” and want to avoid the clutter of promotional materials scattered through the departments.

“Educational material can be a challenge at retail,” acknowledges Giorgio’s Litvin. “Getting materials into the stores can be tough, and executing it well can be difficult. No one wants sloppy displays.”

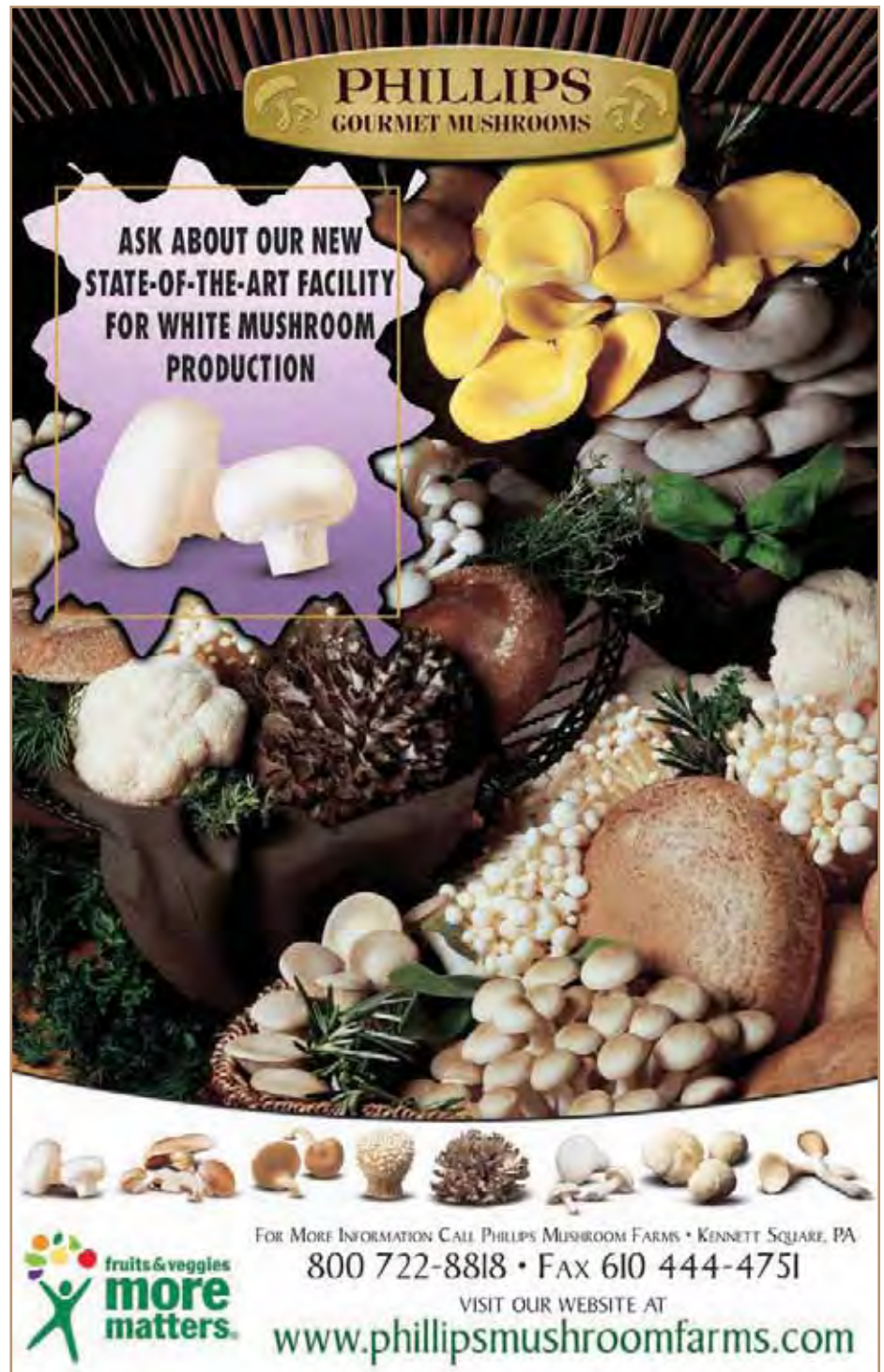
While such a challenge may seem insurmountable, it’s actually relatively innocuous, simply because mushrooms have a built-in advantage. With roughly 96 percent of the mushrooms purchased in the United States sold in packages, that gives suppliers “a little

billboard” on which to communicate directly to consumers at the point of sale, according to Minor.

It can be difficult to fully utilize that “billboard,” however, because the growing prevalence of private label mushrooms, along with each chain’s individual “brand standards,” often prevent the supplier from incorporating additional information on the package. With 75 percent of purchase decisions made at the store, that’s a big issue, says Jane Rhyno, director of sales and marketing at Highline

Produce Ltd., based in Leamington, Ontario, Canada. “There’s a tremendous opportunity to educate consumers more than what has been done in the past,” she says. “But with the lack of on-pack information and POS signage, it’s very difficult to inspire consumers if they don’t know what to do with mushrooms.”

Consequently, suppliers are going more high-tech in their efforts to educate consumers and provide them with recipes and serving suggestions. Highline started a Facebook and Twitter program aimed at directly connecting



PHILLIPS
GOURMET MUSHROOMS

ASK ABOUT OUR NEW
STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITY
FOR WHITE MUSHROOM
PRODUCTION

fruits & veggies
more matters.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL PHILLIPS MUSHROOM FARMS • KENNETT SQUARE, PA
800 722-8818 • FAX 610 444-4751
VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT
www.phillipsmushroomfarms.com

with the end consumer. Meanwhile, Kennett Square, PA-based Modern Mushroom Farms Inc. recently rolled out a new Web site featuring over 100 recipes and is currently in the progress of building recipes delivered on video to show consumers how easy it is to cook with mushrooms. Like Highline, Modern Mushroom also launched a Facebook page and is eagerly adding new “friends” to their network. “We believe social media is the way to get us closer to the consumer,” says Gregory Sagan, Modern Mushroom’s senior vice presi-

dent of sales and marketing. “It has given us another vehicle to disseminate recipes and have consumers share their stories and opinions with us.”

Mushroom suppliers are also increasingly relying on Smart Phone technology, incorporating Quick Response (QR) codes on their packages for consumers to scan with their Web-enabled phones. Similar to barcodes, QR codes provide the ability to link the consumer to digital content on the Web. “There are just so many more options to get the word out,”



says Litvin.

At the other end of the spectrum is sampling, a tried-and-true approach to introducing consumers to a particular product or usage. According to Litvin, sampling is particularly helpful in luring those consumers who assume they don’t like mushrooms into the category. “There are still a lot of people who have never tried a mushroom,” he says. “They say, ‘I don’t like mushrooms,’ but they don’t know that for a fact because they have never even tasted them.”

To counter that attitude and introduce non-mushroom-eaters to the category, Highline focuses its sampling efforts on three different blends — exotic, sauté and restaurant. This strategy is more effective than simply demo-ing white mushrooms, says Rhyno, because the blends are convenient and ready-to-eat.

Sampling and in-store demos can also be an effective means of introducing even the most dedicated mushroom lovers to new ways to prepare them. Lakeland, FL-based Publix Super Markets Inc. frequently uses mushrooms as an ingredient in its Publix Apron Meals, according to Maria Brous, director of media and community relations. Meanwhile, Whole Foods incorporates Portabellas as a non-meat alternative in its Giving Grill outdoor grilling events held in front of its stores during the summer months, when mushroom sales tend to decline. Whole Foods has also incorporated mushrooms into its cooking classes, using such exotic varieties as Oyster mushrooms.

Branching Out

Consumer recognition of more exotic

ALWAYS GROWING.

Let us put our consumer-first thinking, pesticide-free mushrooms, convenience formats and environmental packaging where it counts the most - on your shelves.

Proudly Celebrating 50 YEARS IN BUSINESS

Highline MUSHROOMS

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER @HIGHLINEMUSHRMS AND FIND US ON FACEBOOK

CALL US TOLL FREE 1.866.454.7696

highlinemushrooms.com

mushroom varieties has soared in recent years, according to Basciani's Recchiuti. No longer are shoppers content to pick up a package of white mushrooms or even Portabellas. They are actively seeking Shitakes, Oysters and Maitakes.

According to Caldwell of Monterey Mushrooms, one driver for the growing interest in exotic mushrooms is Generation Y coming of age. The Mushroom Council has seen more interest in mushrooms from young people, who tend to be much more exploratory and willing to try new things.

However, Recchiuti calls the growth in exotic mushrooms a "bleed-over from the foodservice side," adding that "the more educated consumers are, the more they are going to know about these exotic varieties."

Not surprisingly, exotic mushrooms are in high demand at Whole Foods locations across the country. According to Demarest, Whole Foods customers are increasingly looking to buy foraged mushrooms such as Porcinis and Morels, rather than cultivated varieties. Such specialty mushrooms serve as a point of differentiation for Whole Foods shoppers. "The foraged and specialty mushroom category definitely sets us apart from a lot of our

competition," says Demarest. "You can go to any store and get white mushrooms and Portabellas, but there are not a lot of stores that have an organic Shitake mushroom or Porcinis or Morels."

Without a doubt, specialty mushrooms carry a higher price point, so retailers must be careful about how many exotic mushrooms to stock — or whether to stock them at all. Decisions over what varieties to carry and how much space should be dedicated to mushrooms should be based on a number of factors, including the demographics of your customer base. In Canada, for example, exotic mushrooms tend to be in greater demand than in the United States, due to the sizeable Asian population, according to Rhyno of Highline. Since mushrooms are a staple of Asian cuisine, King Oysters, Enokis and Shitakes have all become big sellers.

"It's all about understanding the market segments that you have in your community and getting the right mix on the shelf for those consumers," says Schroeder of Oakshire Mushroom.

For Whole Foods and its highly educated, higher income customer base, stocking a number of exotic mushrooms makes sense.

Other stores may find there is a demand for such varieties, but that whites and Shitakes still make up the lion's share of the chain's mushroom sales. That's not to say the occasional exotic mushroom shoppers aren't worth catering to; on the contrary, they are typically the kinds of shoppers most retailers dream of.

"Not everybody wants a Shitake, but there may be enough people who are willing to spend the money who will come to your store if you have a good mushroom section," says the Mushroom Council's Minor. "You may not get a boatload of people, but you may get the right people coming into the store, with fatter wallets."

Some retailers are scared away by the pricing of specialty mushrooms, according to Joe Salvo, president of Ponderosa Mushrooms & Specialty Foods, located in Port Coquitlam, British Columbia, Canada. In order to build consumer loyalty to their stores as reliable places to find exotic mushrooms, retailers must commit themselves to an exotic mushroom program and stick with it. "If you put the right product at the right price in front of the consumers on a consistent basis, and they can trust it, count on it and plan a meal on it, they will buy it," he says. "It will build up the cate-



"Providers of Premium Quality Fresh Mushrooms"

We provide overnight service to the Pacific North West and Western Canada

PREMIUM BC MUSHROOMS are only a call away...

1-866-CHAMPS1

hrm@champsmushrooms.ca
www.champsmushrooms.ca




BEEF UP YOUR PRODUCE SALES WITH GIORGIO MUSHROOMS.

We've been in the mushroom business for three generations, enhancing our status as the premier brand, year after year. We have the variety, quality and reputation your customers demand. Our fresh mushrooms meet the most rigid inspections and certifications. Our expertise with Vendor Managed Inventory (VMI) makes it easy to do business with us. Let us bring the art and science of growing sales to your produce section.

Equal Opportunity Employer

**Giorgio Fresh Co. | 347 June Avenue, Blandon, PA 19510
800.330.5711 | www.giorgiofoods.com**

gory, but it takes time. You can't just toss it if you don't see the kind of sales you want in the first week."

Overcoming Challenges

At the same time, retailers must be cognizant of shrink, a concern for the entire produce category, but particularly for mushrooms, which face potentially high rates of shrink due to the perishability of the product. While shrink for packaged mushrooms averages eight percent, bulk mushroom shrink can be 25 percent and even higher for exotic varieties, according to Rhyno. Such figures have led some retailers to eliminate bulk mushrooms from their offerings altogether, she says.

When it comes to reducing shrink, it's all a matter of common sense. Don't stack mushrooms too high; remember to rotate your stock; and remove poor quality mushrooms from the display.

"Retailers need to pay attention to the mushroom section — keep it full, but not overfull," says Harvey Mitchler, director of sales and marketing at Champ's Mushrooms Inc., based in Aldergrove, British Columbia, Canada. "Loading it up in the morning and then forgetting about it does not work. The mushroom

section needs to be freshened several times throughout the day."

Unfortunately, some retailers are hesitant to remove less-than-fresh mushrooms, mistakenly believing that doing so will lower shrink rates. What they fail to recognize is that consumers will not buy mushrooms that don't appear fresh. In the end, therefore, shrink rates soar and customers confronted with less-than-fresh displays will probably shop somewhere else the next time they need mushrooms. "If poor product is a part of your display, it just slows down the whole movement, so culling the shelves is really important," says To-Jo's Frederic

Scheduling mushroom deliveries several times each week has proven an effective means of reducing shrink for both Whole Foods and Publix, according to Demarest and Brous. Most importantly, says Frederic, be sure to maintain the cold chain. Not only will the proper temperature extend the life of the mushrooms, it will help keep them looking fresher longer.

"It's not only the fact that it gives them an extra two days on the shelf, it makes them still look good on the fourth and the fifth day, so they are more appealing to buy," explains Kevin

"The foraged and specialty mushroom category definitely sets us apart from a lot of our competition. You can go to any store and get white mushrooms and Portabellas, but there are not a lot of stores that have an organic Shitake mushroom or Porcinis or Morels."

— Brent Demarest, Whole Foods Market Inc.

Donovan, national sales manager at Kennett Square, PA-based Phillips Mushroom Farms LP. "That greatly reduces shrink."

With more exotic varieties and value-added offerings flooding the mushroom section, retailers have found themselves having to carefully consider just how much of their produce department they should dedicate to mushrooms. Once again, demographics and consumer preferences play a significant role, so there is no "one-size-fits-all" answer. However, there are some general rules of thumb to consider.

The Mushroom Council has determined a minimum of six linear feet as appropriate. Meanwhile, Giorgio recommends a 4-ft. section with four to five shelves for "average" size stores and an 8-ft. section for larger stores. With new items hitting the shelves practically every week, Donovan cautions retailers to maintain a focal point in the mushroom display. Otherwise, they lose the impulse buy factor.

These days, consumers have no shortage of mushroom options. From pre-sliced and pre-stuffed to exotic blends and microwaveable mushrooms in savory sauces, suppliers are making sure there is truly something for everyone and that mushrooms continue to take advantage of the many converging trends that seem to be guaranteeing a bright future for this often underestimated category.

"Mushrooms have a tremendous future ahead of them and fit every single trend we see taking place right now," says Minor. "We have barely scratched the surface of opportunities that are out there for mushrooms." **pb**

Basciani
MUSHROOM FARMS

"Our Mushrooms Aren't Just Picked...
They're **CHOSEN.**"

**Celebrating 61
Years of
Marriage and
86 Years of
Growing
Mushrooms.**

**CALL MICHAEL BASCIANI TO FILL YOUR ORDERS
ALL YEAR ROUND 610-268-3044**

Speaking Frankly About Fresh-Cut Fruit

National distributors offer retailers convenience and profits with pre-packaged fresh-cut fruit. **COMPILED BY JENNIFER LESLIE KRAMER**



Food safety and cold chain management throughout the process are key to increased sales.

As consumers focus more on health and well being, fresh produce is becoming more of a diet staple. However, many consumers prefer not to be bogged down in slicing and dicing their favorite fruit. They rely on retailers, who often depend on regional and national distributors to help them add nutrition and flavor to their meals, be it breakfast cereal, an afternoon snack or a guilt-free dessert, in an easy and labor-saving manner.

With that in mind, *PRODUCE BUSINESS* spoke to three giants in the category to find out the future of fresh-cut fruit. They include: Dionysios Christou, vice president marketing, Del Monte Fresh Produce, Coral Gables, FL; Tristan Kieva, director of marketing, Ready Pac Foods Inc., Irwindale, CA; and Tony Freytag, marketing director, Crunch Pak LLC, Cashmere, WA

PRODUCE BUSINESS: Can you estimate the percentage of fresh-cut fruit that is processed in-store versus at local/regional fresh-cut processors?

Dionysios Christou: From a macro point of view, about 30 percent of the total market processes fresh-cut fruit in-store. In regards to

conventional retailers, it is safe to say that about 40 percent of fresh-cut fruit is processed in-store. Club and convenience stores typically do not process fresh-cut fruit in-house.

Tony Freytag: It is hard to estimate due to the nature of the business, but an educated guess is 80 to 90 percent fresh-cut processing is done by third-party, local/regional fresh-cut processors; very little is done in store.

Tristan Kieva: I don't have any estimates as a whole for which chains and locations are cutting in the store versus being brought in via processor.

PRODUCE BUSINESS: As a processor with national reach, what advantages do you offer retailers that they can't get in store with their own staff?

Dionysios Christou: We are proud to say that our fresh-cut program offers significant advantages to our customers. Our strong quality systems allow us to provide consistency throughout our fresh-cut produce facilities, which is very important for retailers with a national footprint. Our fresh-cut products are always ready-to-go and produce the same results from coast to coast.

Cutting fresh-cut fruit in-store also

increases the retailer's liability. Providing retailers with our fresh-cut fruit can reduce safety issues and Workers' Comp claims. It all comes back to food safety, as we provide vertically integrated products and utilize tight inspections at facilities. We practice HACCP-based programs, making sure that our quality and food safety always exceed the most stringent standards in the industry.

Tony Freytag: We are the sliced apples experts. We developed the perfect recipe of vitamin C and calcium to prevent spoilage and maintain the crispness of an apple after it's sliced. Our breathable packaging allows the sliced apples to receive the right mixture of oxygen while emitting carbon dioxide; that combination ensures the apples maintain optimum quality throughout the supply chain and deliver an excellent snacking experience.

That is an expertise that is too difficult for a retailer's staff to try and duplicate in-store. In addition, multiple customer demographics means you must offer multiple products, sizes and package styles. We pack more than 40 different SKUs in sliced apples to meet the various needs of different consumer groups. Most retailers don't have the resources to meet the slicing or packaging demands.

Time is Money

Calling Tom Lange Company for a global supply of produce is proven to make the procurement process more effective. By design, we can provide the finest produce in the market through our worldwide network of trusted growers and partners. But we also provide logistics support, quality control, 24/7 customer service and custom solutions—all at competitive prices. The Tom Lange family of companies will go the extra mile to cover all of your produce needs so you don't have to. Make one call to Tom Lange, your time will be well spent.



Tom Lange Company International
Seven Seas • Seven Seas Berry Sales

Global Fresh Import & Export
Lange Logistics

Corporate Headquarters • 755 Apple Orchard Road • Springfield, IL 62703-5914
Phone: 800-637-8051 • Fax: 217-786-2570 • www.tomlange.com



PHOTO COURTESY OF READY PAC FOODS INC.

Tristan Kieva: Ready Pac offers unsurpassed HACCP and overall food safety programs to ensure the products that they are delivering throughout a chain and on a national level meet the safety standards and maintain superior quality. In addition, we have the ability to achieve consistency of product offerings from store to store within a chain, which is helpful to the retailer who is implementing seasonal schematics. And finally, Ready Pac uses proprietary processing to ensure quality and extended shelf-life solutions.

PRODUCE BUSINESS: *Has there been any packaging/processing progress in broadening the distribution reach of fresh-cut fruit?*

Dionysios Christou: What really kick-started the advent of fresh-cut fruit was “Jet Fresh-Cut Pineapple” from Hawaii and subsequently with the introduction of Del Monte Gold® Extra Sweet Pineapple with a superior taste profile. Pineapple turned out to be the fastest growing segment of the fresh-cut category. With this experience, we are focused on broadening taste variations and expanding our prolific taste categories.

Del Monte’s fresh-cut fruit program always focuses on providing a unique, high-quality product, as well as a superior service to our customers. We believe that innovative packaging is necessary to distinguish our fresh-cut fruit from all of the rest.

One recent example was the opportunity to provide our fresh-cut fruits in a multi-pack, offering versatility to various consumers. Del Monte’s 4 Pack Fresh Cut Fruit Cups present consumers with our high-quality fruit in a smaller container, suggesting great ideas for any lunch box or snack time filler.

Tony Freytag: Fresh-cut produce is everywhere; from pharmacies to fast food restaurants to video stores.

Because our packaging has a 21-day shelf



PHOTO COURTESY OF DEL MONTE FRESH PRODUCE

life, we are seeing more and varied distribution for fresh-cut apples. Our products are in drug stores because the larger chains in that channel are going beyond the pharmacy and expanding their offerings in snacking and meal solutions to shoppers.

Convenience stores is another growing

channel; shoppers want healthy choices when they “grab and go;” we created a snack cup that fits in a car cup holder that holds fruit (apples or grapes) on the bottom and snacking dip in the lid.

We’ve had distribution for some time in club and mass retailers, but we’re starting to

see distribution into non-traditional retail outlets such as Blockbuster Video and Toys R Us stores.

Tristan Kieva: There have certainly been advances within the areas of procurement, packaging and processing since the early days of the fresh-cut fruit category. However, that being said, fruit is a much more challenging category than fresh-cut salads and vegetables. There are many factors at play within the fruit segment that offer increased challenges to overcome.

PRODUCE BUSINESS: Have there been any advances in the variety of fruit that lend themselves to processing?

Dionysios Christou: We have extended our line to include exotic fruits such as mangos, kiwis, blueberries, etc. Fresh-cut fruit is maintaining quite a strong following. The demand for fresh-cut fruit is on the rise and it is popular amongst a broad spectrum of consumer segments.

Knowing when to distribute these new fresh-cut items is crucial to our success. Del Monte provides seasonal fruit only when it is at its best, assuring that the fruit is available at its peak. Being seasonably smart helps level

Are you getting your FAIR SHARE?

Single Serve Lunch Salads is the fastest growing segment within Packaged Salad

- Segment is growing at +18% versus year ago
- Segment represents over \$100,000,000 in retail sales that are incremental to salads in bags
- Single Serve Lunch Salads leverage consumer “brown bagging” trend

Which Brand Can Help You Capture YOUR Fair Share of This Growth?

READY PAC BISTRO® BOWL SALADS!

- Created the segment and today has a 73% share
- Generate the most Dollars to the Single Serve Salad Segment Growth
- Unlike Deli Salads, Nearly 50% of Sales Occur During the Weekend as a Pantry Load Purchase
- Have Fewer Than 300 Calories Per Bowl

Source: DRIer calculation based in part on data reported by Nielsen through its SCANTRACK Service for the Packaged Salad Category for the 52 week period ending 5/18/11 for the Total U.S. market



Corporate Headquarters
4401 Fountains Avenue, Irwindale, CA 91706 (800) 800-4088
Visit our website at www.readypac.com



From A Retail Point Of View

PRODUCE BUSINESS spoke with Paul Kneeland, vice president of produce and floral at Kings Supermarket, in Parsippany, NJ, and Raul Gallegos, senior director of produce and floral at Carson, CA's Bristol Farms, to get an insider's look at what retail produce executives think of the fresh-cut fruit category.

PRODUCE BUSINESS: What is the one thing that keeps you awake at night when it comes to fresh-cut fruit?

Paul Kneeland: Food safety is the biggest issue that keeps us up at night. It is important to partner with reliable processors who are trusted, have a good facility and cleaning standards, and purchase product for processing that is from reliable growers that meet quality and taste specifications.

In-store cut product is a bit of a gamble because of facility concerns, lack of consistency, time and temperature, and food handling. There is also the temptation to reduce departmental shrink by cutting up culls, which can reduce product integrity and shelf-life. Done correctly however, this can be very profitable.

Raul Gallegos: Food safety and flavor consistency of

product are incredibly important.

PRODUCE BUSINESS: Do you see any potential for expanding the category in the future?

Paul Kneeland: The category is definitely expanding. People want convenience. The challenge in the future is to offer fresh-cut produce at a reasonable retail. The value equation works in a good economy, but contracts in a bad economy where people choose to cut their own product.

We have just begun to offer organics in the category, as we believe the future trends in organics will remain positive. We are at the beginning, but I am hopeful we will have great results.

Raul Gallegos: Convenience continues to be the driving force, and our opportunities lie in offering some additional unique fruit combinations or varieties keeping value as a focus. **pb**

out the supply and demand aspect for our fresh-cut fruit.

Tony Freytag: We continue to source the best quality product possible. We work with the best growers to source the best quality

apples that we know will meet the Brix and pressure standards we've set to deliver an excellent eating experience.

Tristan Kieva: We have seen over the years within the apple segment that it continues to

grow in terms of varieties available and some that lend themselves better or have certain attributes that are more aligned with processing. Another segment that continues to show strong growth rate is berries, but that is against a very low base.

PRODUCE BUSINESS: Where is the optimum location in the produce department for displaying fresh-cut fruit?

Dionysios Christou: Fresh-cut fruit should always be in a prominent location that is well lit. It is important that the product is clearly visible and in a convenient space. Placing fresh-cuts in the first refrigerated case is always recommended. Fresh-cut fruit is typically an impulse buy, so it must comply with consumers' attraction to unique products and location. We also recommend to pair fresh-cut fruit with other convenient food products, such as in the lunch and deli departments for the on-the-go consumer.

Tony Freytag: Ideally, grocery supermarkets would create a destination category that groups all items, and complementary items together in a well signed location. The worse thing retail can do is put fresh-cut products on an island that is unrefrigerated.

Tristan Kieva: "Optimum" varies based on individual retailers and their category needs. Cold chain management is critical for fresh-cut fruit, so first and foremost it must be merchandised for cold chain integrity. Generally speaking fresh-cut fruit is best merchandised within the value-added cold case. **pb**

CRUNCH PAK®

Fresh Sliced Apples

Sales:
Jennifer Dietrich
jenniferd@crunchpak.com

509-782-7753
Fax 509-782-0869

Cashmere, WA

Slicing in Washington and Pennsylvania

PROUD SPONSORS OF THE NEW YORK PRODUCE SHOW AND CONFERENCE

Spotlight On The Windy City



With a diverse variety of ethnic populations and a growing number of successful independent retailers, Chicago is proving it's the place to be for fresh produce. **BY LISA WHITE**

Incorporated as a city in 1837, Chicago has benefited from its central location. Not only does 50 percent of U.S. rail freight pass through the city, but its O'Hare airport is one of the nation's busiest. The City of Big Shoulders' approximately 2.6 million residents are a part of 77 distinct communities. These diverse neighborhoods house more than 7,300 restaurants, and the Chicagoland area boasts more than 660 chain supermarket locations. Its reputation as a restaurant city and eco-friendly focus has helped create a thriving produce industry in this town.

"We have some of the best restaurants in the country," says Peter Testa, owner and president of Testa Produce Inc. a Chicago-based produce supplier to foodservice and retail operations in town. One would be hard-pressed to find an ethnic eatery that is lacking in the Second City. From Ethiopian to Mediterranean, Polish to Vietnamese, all of the world's foods are represented in and around the city.

Chicago is most well known as the home of deep-dish pizza and has more recently received accolades for its world-renown chefs and restaurants. "Produce that is local, including mixed greens, apples and blueberries, are around consistently," says Boris Kirzhner, chef and owner of Chicago's Saloon Steakhouse.

It's not just the eateries that boast diverse produce ingredients.

The city is well known for its many ethnic retail markets that service its 100 neighborhoods, including Chinatown, Greektown, West Rogers Park's extensive Indian population and the Mexican-American Pilsen section.

"The larger chains are better on average, but don't come near the independents [in terms of produce offerings]," says Adi Mor, owner and president of Wheeling, IL-based Garden Fresh Fruit Market Inc., a retailer with eight stores in and around the city.

The more than 10 million residents of Illinois and the nearby states of Wisconsin and Indiana can reap the rewards from produce on both the East and West Coasts, in addition to Michigan, which is a big supplier to the region. The Chicagoland area is in step with the rest of the country when it comes to buying local in an effort to be more sustainable and environmentally friendly. This is evident by the number of restaurants and markets selling produce from area farms and surrounding states.

The city is not only a Toddlin' Town, but also has proven it's a produce town. Fruits and vegetables are big business in the Windy City.

Plenty To Go Around

Midwesterners are known for their loyalty, and this is espe-



Fred Plotsky, Cool Runnings



Lisa Strube, Strube Celery & Vegetable Co.



Peter Testa, Testa Produce Inc.

cially true when it comes to the area's supermarkets. The region's long-standing chains — Jewel, which is owned by SuperValu, and Dominick's, now a Safeway chain — have area store counts totaling 183 and 81, respectively, according to *Chain Store Guide's MarketScope* report. Discount chain, Aldi, also has become a prominent player with 146 area stores.

There are more than 500 other supermarket locations, according to the Guide, which points to Chicagoland's thriving independent and ethnic markets. "I don't know if it's unique, but we're seeing more independents growing and giving national chains a run for their money," says Greg Mandolini, owner and president of Mandolini Co. Inc., located at the Chicago International Produce Market (CIPM). "These stores are more responsive to what's happening in the marketplace. They see what's happening in their store and have a quick reaction, rather than having to go through corporate."

One notable new player, and one that

has received much attention in recent months, is Mariano's Fresh Market, a division of Roundy's, with two units in the Chicago area. A number of new stores in the city and surrounding suburbs offer more than 700 produce items from across the country, which includes more than 10 varieties of fresh mushrooms, peppers and tomatoes daily. The brainchild of former Dominick's executive, Bob Mariano, who now heads Roundy's, the stores are being touted as "supermarkets of the future" for an extensive focus on sustainability, which includes an emphasis on organic and locally sourced food items.

Good Customer Base

"There is a mass market for produce store-wide. It's not just the chains, but also independent grocers who come out and buy from us several times a week," says Nick Gaglione, owner and president of Dietz & Kolodenko Co., a produce wholesaler located on the CIPM. "This area has a good customer base for us. It's not just Jewel and Dominick's, but also smaller chains

like Treasure Island and Tony's Finer Foods [that bring in the business]."

Coosemans Chicago caters to independent retailers, including Treasure Island, helping them grow their business. This was not always the case. "When I started in this business, we catered to the larger supermarket chains. But much of this business has gone by the wayside," says Mark Pappas, president of Coosemans Chicago Inc., based at the CIPM. "Now they have different owners [that are not local]. Plus, the large chains keep merging and get purchased by large firms. We don't do much business with them now, though back in the day they were the bulk of our business." As independent retailers like Garden Fresh have expanded their stores, companies like Coosemans have benefited.

There is no shortage of produce in the Windy City. With five locations in the city's tony north suburbs, Sunset Food Mart is well known for its upscale offerings and produce variety. "As far as our locations, we're nicely situated in the upscale areas by the north shore of Chicago, and our customer counts continue to increase," says Vince Mastromauro, produce and floral director. "Those areas demand and expect the quality that we deliver."

He says customer spending habits are being directed where they feel most confident, so consistency and quality are key components for produce items. "Our customers come to expect variety, especially in summer fruit," Mastromauro says. Sunset Foods carries between five and eight varieties of plums, peaches and nectarines.

"Affluent customers who are well traveled will ask us for obscure produce they had on vacation, and we will do our best to hunt it down," Mastromauro continues. "This is a competitive industry, so it's important to have the right mix of fresh fruit



and vegetables. It's not just about saying it, but doing it."

The big box and club stores have had an impact on the Chicago area's retail segment. "In the past, there was a lot more supply than demand because big stores like Wal-Mart and Costco didn't have the distribution in small towns like they do now," Garden Fresh Market's Mor says. "Today, they pull a big chunk of available produce that is out there."

Price ranges also are higher than years ago, because demand has outpaced supply. The result is rising and fluctuating produce prices. Still, Mor says Chicago customers benefit from the influx of independent supermarkets due to the increased competition. "We've increased our produce department by 10 percent in the past three years," Mor says. "This is the core of our business, making up about a third of our store sales."

Catering to Chicago's large Hispanic population, Tony's Finer Foods, based in Itasca, IL, has eight stores in the city and suburbs. "We've seen an increase in the popularity of mangos and papayas during the summer," says Jesse Soto, produce buyer. "People are wanting something other than the standard apples and oranges."

He says years ago it was easier to find more Hispanic items in the city than in its suburbs, but this is no the case. "There are Hispanics all over the Chicago area," Soto says. "But non-Hispanics also are eating more Latin products, like jalapeno peppers."

Forging Relationships With Foodservice

Chicago has more five-star restaurants, including Alinea, Arun's, Avenues, Charlie Trotter's, Everest, Seasons and Tru, than any other city in the United States. This town also has a number of world-renowned celebrity chefs that include Rick Bayless, Art Smith, Grant Achatz and Rick Tramonto. Its more than 7,000 restaurants serve up everything from hot dogs to haute cuisine.

Chicago's bounty of restaurants are spotlighted at its annual Taste of Chicago festival, which is the largest entertainment festival in the country, attended by more than 3.5 million people annually, according to *Explore Chicago*.

In 2008, the Illinois Restaurant Association, in partnership with the city, launched its first Chicago Gourmet event

in Millennium Park that included gourmet food, wine and celebrity chef demonstrations. The event featured 50 of the top U.S. and international culinary professionals paired with master sommeliers and 200 wineries.

"There is a smaller group to sell to, but the independent restaurants are still around," says Testa of Testa Produce. His company has seen a major move toward local produce by Chicago restaurateurs. "They think local produce is fresher and less

expensive, although 90 percent of it isn't," he admits. "Because these items are considered more eco-friendly, they are perceived to be better [overall]."

Kirzhner at Saloon Steakhouse says utilizing local produce can be a challenge when the weather isn't cooperating. "Lately, some of the local produce has suffered due to the weather, so we've had to outsource products from other companies," he says.

The Midwest has only a small window — typically three to four months — to grow

La Galera Produce
Your #1 Mexican Source in the Midwest

Sales
Pepe Vega Jr., Paco Vega Jr.,
Pepe Vega Sr., Pedro Valadez,

Warehouse
2404 S. Wolcott • Units # 29 - 30 • Chicago, IL 60608

Tel: 773-446-6161 (62)
Fax: 773-446-6165

Growers Importers & Distributors
of Mexican Produce



Mark and Greg Mandolini, Mandolini Co.



Mark Poremba, Mike Smietana, Steve Argires, Mike Couwenhoven, Linda Trovato and Luis Arellano, J.A.B. Produce

produce. Saloon Steakhouse sources its blueberries, apples, potatoes and some lettuce varieties out of Michigan. "During the winter months, there are only certain local areas where produce is available," Kirzhner says. "Storms and heat affect us."

He has seen increased interest in white and purple asparagus, along with purple broccoli and purple and orange cauliflower. "These items are familiar, but different," Kirzhner says. Saloon Steakhouse side dishes include traditional

steakhouse vegetables such as spinach, broccoli, green beans and potatoes. "Although there is only a certain time frame to grow and sell produce and it's almost impossible to keep prices stable, this is still a good area for produce."

Hopleaf is a popular city restaurant that opened its door almost two decades ago. It is known for utilizing sustainable agriculture in its seasonal dishes. "We have tried to be supporters of local, sustainable produce, which fits in with the rest of our

concept," says owner Michael Roper. "It doesn't make sense not to buy local," even though when the restaurant first opened, it was difficult to find locally produced fruits and vegetables. "There were great producers in Michigan and Wisconsin growing wonderful items, but they hadn't figured out how to get it into the Chicago-area marketplace back then," Roper explains.

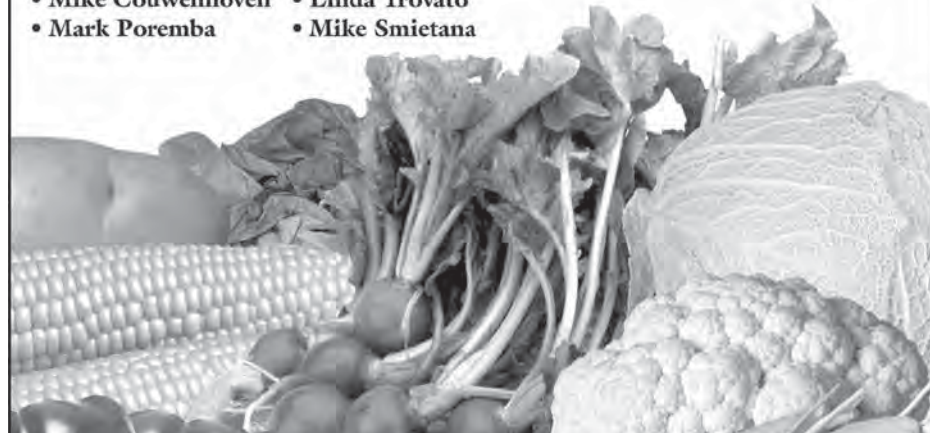
Now, Hopleaf's produce is delivered every week, and the restaurant also has

JAB PRODUCE

**Selling Top Quality Vegetables and Berries
From Growing Regions Across the
United States, Canada, and Mexico.**

SALES:

- Steve Argires
- Mike Couwenhoven
- Mark Poremba
- Luis Arellano
- Linda Trovato
- Mike Smietana



CHICAGO INTL. PRODUCE MARKET
2404 S. Wolcott Ave. - Unit 23 - Chicago, IL 60608
Tel (312) 226 7805 - Fax (312) 226 5154

Philip Balsamo Company



Chicago



XXXX ★★★★★

**Shippers Agents
Since 1945**

630-575-8000
Fax: 630-575-8004

Nick Balsamo



sourced ingredients from the Green City Market, one of the city's first farmer's market. "Most of the vendors at this market are people we were already doing business with anyway," Roper says.

The first farmers Hopleaf bought from were a Wisconsin co-op that delivered organic produce to the restaurant. "We still buy from providers year-round, but with a seasonal menu, we won't have items like spring greens in February," Roper continues. Instead, the restaurant makes use of less conventional vegetables, such as beets and turnips.

What's lacking, he says, is that Chicago doesn't have a market district that is both wholesale and retail like Philadelphia, Seattle and Montreal. "It's a shame, because mixing wholesale produce with public items is exciting," Roper says. "It creates a European-style market that would be good for the city."

Roper doesn't utilize the CIPM because of his restaurant's lack of storage space. "It's not practical for us to drive down there and buy in bulk," Roper explains. "Instead, we buy from vendors who buy from the CIPM. We get deliveries every day."

He adds that the best time of year is fall, when there is no shortage of produce. "We can get anything here," Roper says.

Even with many of the best restaurants in the country, there is a lot of competition in the foodservice produce segment for wholesalers. "Still, it's a definite benefit being located close to downtown, where most of our restaurant business is located," Testa says. From his vantage point, the foodservice industry is on the way to recovery. "People like to eat out. More people grew up eating out today, so when they have money to spend, they'll pay for restaurant food."

The Rise Of Independents

A recent *Chicago Sun Times* article detailed how a federal grant has brought produce snacks into the city's elementary school classrooms three days a week. The selection included unique varieties, such as star fruit, jicama, uglifruit, mango and rutabaga. With limited grocery stores in low-income neighborhoods and the absence of produce in fast food outlets, this is typically the first exposure many of these children have to both traditional and less common fruits and vegetables. Still, in the age of retail consolidation, the Chicago area has been fortunate to maintain an

"Competition is good for everyone. You pick up business from those that leave, and it serves as a wake-up call to get on your game. If you don't properly handle the 30 percent of additional business you get when your competitor goes out of business, you won't survive."

— Mark Pappas, Coosemans Chicago Inc.



Strube
Since 1913
CELERY AND VEGETABLE CO.

Your First Choice for Produce in the Second City.

Strube Celery & Vegetable is Chicago's largest and oldest receiver and distributor of a full line of quality fresh fruits and vegetables. Established in 1913, Strube is a nationally recognized produce wholesaler that has grown a strong reputation in the industry demonstrating dedication for moral and honest dealings. Strube knows when and where to safely purchase quality fresh products from around the world to best suit your fresh produce needs.

www.strube.com
2404 S. Wolcott (Unit 16-20) | Chicago, IL 60608 | 773.446.4000

Side Note

SYNERGIES AT THE CIPM

CIPM merchants provide value-added services to buyers that include ripening, custom repacking, custom packaging, full truckload service, forward distribution and daily delivery. The produce market also has long-term relationships with local growers in the region. This has been valuable with the recent trend in sustainability and purchasing locally grown fruits and vegetables.

“No one wanted to get away from the terminal market philosophy,” says Tim Fleming, Jr., vice president and general manager of vegetables at CIPM-based Strube Celery & Vegetable Co. “We didn’t want satellite companies spread throughout the city. The benefit is we get customers all on the same block, which is convenient. There is definitely an advantage to keeping everyone in one place.”

Mirroring the industry in other parts of the country, there has been consolidation amongst produce suppliers. As a result, many companies have increased their product lines. “Some of our suppliers have consolidated, and we’ve increased our product lines. We consider ourselves a fruit house with veggies,” says Nick Gaglione, owner and president of Dietz & Kolodenco Co., a produce

wholesaler located on the CIPM.

Mark Pappas, president of Coosemans Chicago Inc., based at the CIPM, says there has been some consolidation in the CIPM, with tenants coming and going. Yet, this consolidation has been good for business, rather than detrimental. “Consolidation helps companies like us connect with new customers we wouldn’t normally do business with,” he points out. “There is only so much business to go around, so it’s survival of the fittest.”

The companies that have survived have done so due to good business principals. “Competition is good for everyone. You pick up business from those that leave, and it serves as a wake-up call to get on your game,” Pappas says. “If you don’t properly handle the 30 percent of additional business you get when your competitor goes out of business, you won’t survive.”


With more wholesalers relying less on specializing, everyone has become a better buyer. “This leads to better inventory, better shippers to better compete and results in a better industry overall,” Pappas says. “It makes the companies that survive better.” **pb**

extensive number of independent retailers, many of which service these lower-income areas.

The area’s growing Hispanic demographic has been credited for the increased number of independent grocers — many of them ethnic supermarkets — throughout

the city. Rather than dozens of stores, these retailers may have four or five outlets. “There has definitely been a rise of independent retailers,” says Tim Fleming, Jr., vice president and general manager of vegetables at CIPM-based Strube Celery & Vegetable Co. “The little mom-and-pop retail stores are

now mini-chains. What used to be a little store in a Polish neighborhood now has four locations throughout the city. That’s the strength of the industry right now in Chicago, and it speaks to the independent retail segment. They can beat chains at their own game by offering more value without



COOL RUNNINGS


“THE PROFESSIONALS AT PUTTING PERISHABLE LOADS ON THE ROAD”

FRED • MORRIE • LARRY • KEISTER • KRIS • PATTY • MANDI • KELLIE • SUE • NANCY • MIKE • MARC

800-522-5623

SERVING THE PRODUCE INDUSTRY SINCE 1986

XXXX



Mandolini Co.

Ph: 312-226-1690
Fax: 312-226-1833

Greg Mandolini • Mark Mandolini
Rick Balcaitis

*Chicago’s Fresh
Fruit Specialists*

2404 S. Wolcott Ave.
Unit 28
Chicago, IL 60608

XXXX

the overhead."

Unlike larger chains that have a distribution network, the independents are more apt to take advantage of the deals the CIPM has to offer. "Independent retailers are in tune with the demographics of the areas they service and their produce sections reflect that," Mandolini of Mandolini Co says.

This has been beneficial to CIPM, which was built for \$58 million back in 2002. The 26 acres of the 436,000-square-foot market has 22 independent produce merchants who sell produce from 48 states and more than 20 countries. "It seems that when the produce market consolidated in 2002, there were a lot of little guys all over the city," says Fred Plotsky, president of Cool Runnings, a produce transportation company headquartered in Kenosha, WI. "There were a lot of mergers. Now, many wholesalers sell more produce than they did before. Over time, many of the smaller guys took their business to the bigger companies and joined them."

Overcoming Challenges In The Windy City

Similar to other parts of the country, there are a number of challenges Chicago's wholesalers face. These include rising transportation and insurance rates, overhead costs, operating expenses, fuel prices and labor costs. "Today it's more difficult to make the margins we're accustomed to," Gaglione says.

Yet, Chicago's wholesalers benefit from being surrounded by big customers and fruitful states. "Chicago, being centrally located, has its advantages," Gaglione says. "There is no shortage of produce here."

Canadian hothouses and Michigan produce aren't far away, notes Pappas.

"There are also a lot of farms in southern Indiana, Michigan and southern Illinois," adds Fleming. "Many customers who buy vegetables from me in the summer will drive to Michigan in the winter to get better deals than I can. They have the time and the resources to go directly to the farmers."

The majority of Dietz & Kolodenko's produce is not sourced locally. Summer fruit is from California, apples are from Washington, Chile and New Zealand.

The focus on healthful eating also has had a positive effect on produce trends in the area. At Strube, summertime is slow for vegetable sales and busier for fruit. There has been a pickup of tomatoes, specifically

Heirloom, grape and cherry and red vine-ripe varieties.

"We're seeing an increased interest in imported apples and different varieties, such as Fujis, Galas and Pink Ladies," Gaglione says.

"Ten to 20 years ago, produce houses were healthy, but slowly everyone has become a jack of all trades," says Pappas of Coosemans Chicago. "There are now more specialty items along with conventional produce." Capitalizing on the popularity of

organic produce, the company has begun offering some of these products. "We still specialize in hard-to-find or specialty items that are more high end. We're dabbling in everything now, and we don't see this changing in the near future."

Along with increasing costs, another challenge is the winter and inclement weather, which impacts efficiency and produce availability. "For example, years ago there was a lot more corn available in early summer. Now it's much less preva-

La Hacienda

SPECIALIZING IN MEXICAN PRODUCE AND GROCERIES FOR 40 YEARS

Carlos Juarez Mario Gonzalez Rocío Vega Adolfo Vega Jr Erika Villanueva

We sell fresh fruits and vegetables along with Mexican groceries, spices, and restaurant supplies.

(312) 243-2755

3000 S. Ashland Ave, Unit 4
Chicago, IL 60608

OFFICIAL DISTRIBUTORS OF EL GALLITO PRODUCTS

Side Note

BUILDING FOR BETTER DISTRIBUTION

A testament to Chicago's thriving produce industry is Testa Produce's new facility, which may be the first LEED platinum certified refrigerated foodservice distribution facility in the United States. Located in Chicago's Back of the Yards neighborhood, the 91,300 square-foot facility includes individual temperature-controlled zones ranging from 0 to 60°F, an eco-friendly ammonia glycol refrigeration system and the first free-standing wind turbine in the city of Chicago. Other features include water efficiency with a 765,085 gallon external retention pond, green roofing, deliver trucks running on bio-diesel fuel, LED lighting, solar panels and an aggressive recycling program.

Eclipse Distributing Inc., a produce transportation company based in Chicago, IL, also recently moved into a new building. The company relocated from Shorewood to Elburn, near where most of its employees live. "Many of our employees live around that area, so they'll save drive time and money in fuel costs," says Brent Schmit, president. "It's a good time to invest in commercial real estate and it also gives us room to grow in the next few years."

Despite the truck shortage going out to California, the company has done well with its current customers. "We're not looking for extra business and have not pursued new avenues," Schmidt says.

"We take care of the people who take care of us year-round."

The company mainly deals with local shipments in Illinois, Wisconsin and Indiana. "One of the biggest disadvantages of the business is that freight costs have doubled," Schmidt admits. "We will be looking to expand in the next few years, when the economy picks up and the availability of trucks increase, but the goal now is to keep everything close to the vest."

Even with consolidation, the trucking companies remain busy. "There are less people to truck to in terms of produce receivers in Chicago," says Fred Plotsky, president of Cool Runnings, a produce transportation company headquartered in Kenosha, WI. "This is because wholesalers are becoming more of a one-stop shop, and this limits competition. It's still there, but not as much as before."

From a distribution perspective, the logistics have become more streamlined. "When I got into this business in the mid 80s, a guy selling a load of potatoes would make three stops," Plotsky says. "Now, with consolidation, the smaller companies go to the truck to get product. So instead of the truck making three drops, it makes only one. It's up to the wholesalers to worry about distributing product. There are smaller loads, and they are customer-driven."

pb

lent," Pappas says. He attributes this to local farmers slowly selling off their land and corn being sold to the energy industry. With the housing crisis, farm sales have

grinded to a halt.

Also, Chicago is one of the hardest hit areas in terms of high gas prices. "The gas crisis started in Chicago, and the city is

always No. 2 or 3 on the list as far as the highest gas prices," Pappas says. "Plus, the city is one of the top states in the red."

Some companies are noticing a drop in

TESTA PRODUCE, INC.
 Green by Nature... Greener by Choice
 Chicago's Premier Wholesale Distributor for Quality Produce, Sustainability, and Food Safety Assurance

**Sustainable
 Specialty
 Seasonal
 Organic
 Fresh
 Local**

- Renewable Energy Powered Facility
- Water Efficiency System
- Solar Hot Water Production
- Pursuing LEED™ Platinum Certification

Chicago, IL
 p. (312) 226- 3237
 f. (312) 226- 3410
 e. info@testaproduce.com
 w. www.testaproduce.com

Testa Produce, Inc
 @testaproduceinc

something fresh is coming this summer.

“Now, with consolidation, the smaller companies go to the truck to get product. So instead of the truck making three drops, it makes only one. It’s up to the wholesalers to worry about distributing product.”

— Fred Plotsky, *Cool Runnings*

business in terms of quantity. “People aren’t buying as much these days,” says John Lamm, sales manager at distributor Tom Lange Co. Inc., headquartered in Springfield, IL. Although he specializes in apples and citrus, the company deals in all types of produce. “People are buying what they need, but not in great quantities.” Nonetheless, the consolidation has not affected Tom Lange. “The way we buy and sell has always been the same,” he adds. “We’re always trying to find new things, but we end up selling the same items we always sell.”

The company has begun dealing with more local growers that offer diverse products, but many of Tom Lange’s customers are more concerned with price than place

of origin. “Still, Chicago is a great place to sell to,” Lamm says. “We’re central, and a lot of people like to come here.”

Fleming agrees that it is expensive to do business in Chicago with high fuel and labor costs as well as a union-based market. “It’s about trying to make a profit while keeping costs down,” he says.

Chicago, IL-based Agrow Fresh Produce Inc.’s business is geared toward retailers. “Our business has not changed. We’ve had no decline in volume,” says Ed Romanelli, vice president of sales and marketing. Ever since the consolidation of the larger retail chains and the closing of many Dominick’s stores, there has been a greater influx of independent retailers. “We do much of our selling to Central Grocers, which has taken

care of our business.”

Today’s retailers are able to get the product they need for the day, without having to hold on to extra inventory. “Stores can get produce as quickly as needed,” Romanelli adds. “Retailers who buy direct and miscalculate what they need are stuck.”

The disadvantage in doing business today is fighting pricing. “Anyone can beat anyone else in terms of pricing,” Romanelli contends. “If you’re fighting the FOB price, then your idea of delivering product when a customer needs it on time and fresh works against them.”

While a year ago, unique produce items were tough to move, that may be changing. “People are buying upscale items again, but not in the same quantities as in the past,” Romanelli says.

Chicago is a large and diverse city that brings in many different products. Produce companies are motivated to do business in this city because it is supported by so many ethnicities. “Chicago is a great city with a wonderful ethnic base. It has incredible restaurants and stores of all types,” Pappas says. “There are more advantages than disadvantages in doing business here.” **pb**



Could E-Verify devastate your workforce?

Help Shape the Government Policies that Impact Your Business

The industry’s most prominent and influential executives unite with the nation’s most powerful policymakers at United’s Washington Public Policy Conference. Join produce industry colleagues for strategic, face-to-face dialogue with lawmakers and staff at key congressional offices, plus top-level meetings with Obama Administration officials.



The Produce Industry’s Most Powerful Public Policy Event

E-Verify • Food Safety • Nutrition

October 3 - October 5, 2011

The Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill

Register Today at www.unitedfresh.org or 202-303-3400

Selling Organic Tropicals And Bananas

The category remains strong as consumers focus on health and well being. **COMPILED BY JENNIFER LESLIE KRAMER**



While tropicals don't comprise a significant part of the organic category, sales remain strong.

Despite the struggling economy, the organic tropicals and banana category remains strong. While only a small percentage of sales are organic, consumers are becoming more aware of their purchases, how they affect the community — locally, nationally and internationally — and the results their eating habits have on their health and bodies. However, due to the price difference, it's important both retail executives and consumers alike are educated on the advantages of purchasing organic products.

PRODUCE BUSINESS reached out to a few distributors of organic tropical fruit and bananas to see where the category is headed, including Dionysios Christou, vice president marketing, Del Monte Fresh Produce North America Inc., Coral Gables, FL; Bil Goldfield, communications manager, Dole Fresh Fruit Co., Westlake Village, CA; Mayra Velazquez De Leon, president, Organics Unlimited Inc., San Diego, CA; and Simcha Weinstein, director of marketing, Albert's Organics Inc., Bridgeport, NJ.

PRODUCE BUSINESS: In the tropical fruit and banana category, are you seeing a growth in organic supplies and sales? If so, why?

Dionysios Christou: We have seen a small, yet steady growth in our organic banana market, mainly due to the increase in health-conscious consumers. With organic and health food markets on the rise, it is easy to acknowledge the increase in consumer demand for organic foods. It is our responsibility to meet these demands and cater to consumers' wants and needs. Organic fruits have a high retail price; so while Del Monte Fresh Produce strives to meet the demands of consumers, we must simultaneously acknowledge economic trends. Consumers will always react to the economy, and it is important to recognize that organic fruits, at this time, are simply an advantage and not a necessity.

Bil Goldfield: Organic supplies have been tight, due to unusually harsh weather conditions earlier this year, but demand continues to grow. Production costs for all bananas — not just organic — have been on the rise, but the costs to maintain organics has seen an

even higher uptick. Despite this however, the organic banana category is strong.

Mayra Velazquez de Leon: I see growth in organic sales, as people are more conscious of their health. The trend is now to work out and eat healthier.

Simcha Weinstein: We are seeing steady growth in this segment of our sales, much of it fueled by growth in the sales of Fair Trade product. More and more of our customers are moving toward Fair Trade bananas. Part of this success is because we provide some key opportunities for our customers to market these bananas and help their retail shoppers understand the value that their purchase will have on communities around the world. On our Web site, we have pretty thorough and detailed information about Fair Trade (including a video), and we also provide retailers with Fair Trade POS signage, so their customers will be aware that the product is Fair Trade and also understand what that involves. We also create many signs for our retailers to download that are available on our Web site.

“Consumers these days demand much more from their retailers than simply buying their products. They want to know where the product comes from, how it was grown, and what type of carbon footprint it made along the way.”

— Simcha Weinstein, Albert's Organics Inc.

PRODUCE BUSINESS: What percentage of overall sales of tropical fruits and bananas are organic?

Dionysios Christou: Organic bananas account for a very small percentage of our overall sales, but they have shown continuous growth patterns.

Mayra Velazquez de Leon: I would say it's about 30 percent.

Simcha Weinstein: Because we are a certified organic wholesale distributor, and because we have been selling a complete line of fresh organic produce since 1982 — we don't just carry a few categories — almost all of our sales in any category are with organic foods.

PRODUCE BUSINESS: Is it harder to grow these categories organically?

Dionysios Christou: Growing organics is much more difficult as it requires completely different agricultural practices. It is also necessary to have the proper infrastructure to accommodate those practices. We are working with all state, regional and national organization guidelines in doing so.

Mayra Velazquez de Leon: Growing organically is expensive and takes a lot of effort from growers to keep pests away. We

sometimes don't fight diseases, we just live with them. This way, the effect is not bad and the use of chemicals is not needed.

Simcha Weinstein: The key to selling any category of organic foods at the retail level is education. Consumers these days demand much more from their retailers than simply buying their products. They want to know where the product comes from, how it was grown, and what type of carbon footprint it made along the way. If you carry organic foods, you need to be able to comfortably and easily have the answers to those questions. Even aside from simply having the answers, being proactive and having signage within the store that explains what organic is and how choosing this food impacts the environment and local communities is an excellent way to go. If you carry organic, it's best to also be knowledgeable about what you sell.

PRODUCE BUSINESS: What convinces consumers to buy these categories organically, despite the price difference? What do you see down the pipeline for the continued growth of these categories?

Dionysios Christou: There are no conclusive scientific studies that prove that organic



producebusiness

TO GET AHEAD IN THE PRODUCE BUSINESS, YOU NEED TO STAY AHEAD OF THE PRODUCE BUSINESS.



PRODUCE BUSINESS
IS THE INDUSTRY'S
NUMBER 1 SOURCE FOR
INSIGHTS AND ANALYSIS.

FOR SUBSCRIPTION
INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT
WWW.PRODUCEBUSINESS.COM
OR
CALL 561-994-1118

wholesum
HARVEST

simple, natural & wholesome...
ORGANIC PRODUCE
THE WAY IT SHOULD BE

growers of wholesum organic produce

TOMATOES · CUCUMBERS · PEPPERS · EGGPLANT · SQUASH · MANGOS

P. 520 281 9233 | F. 520 281 4366
sales@wholesumharvest.com
www.wholesumharvest.com

USDA ORGANIC

primus labs.com
when food safety counts

CERTIFIED ORGANIC

bananas are better for you than conventional ones, especially with reputable suppliers such as Del Monte that have stringent agrichemical policies and practices that ensure compliance with all applicable food safety regulations. The idea of organic food seems to be reassuring to some consumers who believe that it provides them with a sense of a healthier lifestyle.

Organic fruit supply is generally fueled on the trend of health food markets and organic grocers — a true example of complementary markets. We expect that the growth trend, albeit from a very low base, will continue. As the industry grows, and as the demand for organics grows, we will increase our supply.

Bil Goldfield: With the increased education and communication companies like Dole are doing in sustainable farming and greater transparency into the farmers and farming process, consumers are more interested in purchasing organic. Retailers have done a good job in setting the pricing at a reasonable premium to conventional.

Mayra Velazquez de Leon: The consumer needs to be educated on what “organic” means; if they are, they will definitely go for organic. Some people think that if there is a “peel” or outer casing to the fruit, it doesn’t need to be organic, but the chemicals are absorbed by the plant and into the fruit regardless. I see the organic category growing year after year as we see consumers looking for healthier options.

Simcha Weinstein: People choose to buy organic foods for a variety of reasons, but the most popular reasons are, 1) for their own personal health and well being (including family members), and 2) because they share a concern for our natural resources and are aware of the detrimental environmental impact of using chemical fertilizers and pesticides in our food growing system. Basically, eating organic foods is a lifestyle choice. Even during these challenging economic times, we have seen that the organic industry remains solid and continues to show growth. People will indeed make sacrifices during a difficult time, but they also hold tighter to their principles and what they value. More and more Americans seem to value what they put into their bodies.

As for tropical fruits — and let’s say bananas specifically — a very solid percentage of bananas sold are purchased for children. They make a great snack, and when parents are buying for their kids, they will easily pay a little more for what they feel is going to be a healthier purchase.

pb

Raisins: The Solar-powered Grapes Of The Produce Department

A year-round, healthful snack, raisins have a multitude of uses and work best merchandised with fresh produce. **BY PAULA HENDRICKSON**



Raisins are a year-round staple, but are most popular during Halloween, fall baking, Easter and back-to-school time.

Just a few years ago, raisins were typically found either in the baking aisle or the snack food aisle. These days, it's becoming fairly routine to find raisins in the produce department, or placed immediately adjacent to it. "One of the claims our industry is making — and we have scientific evidence to show it — is that the nutritional value of dried fruits is equal to that of fresh fruit, so we're trying very strongly to say that dried fruit is an alternative to fresh," says Larry Blagg, senior vice president of marketing for the Fresno-based California Raisin Marketing Board. "Our contention is that dried fruit is available year-round and should be included in produce. We've been talking about that for probably 10 years."

The Importance Of Placement

Retailers, it seems, are listening. "We have all varieties [of raisins] available for our customers. Eighty-five percent of sales come from standard raisins, but the demand for organic and jumbo is growing. The produce aisle sells the most raisins," says Greg Calistro, executive director of produce and floral for Save Mart, headquartered in Modesto, CA, which currently carries 35 SKUs and will add

two more organic SKUs in the fourth quarter.

Research done by the National Raisin Company, based in Fowler, CA, supports Calistro's observation. "Generally, the retailers that post the highest sales velocities are those that merchandise dried fruit in produce. The data suggests dried fruit is not only a logical fit being close to fresh fruits, but dried fruit offers lower shrink and favorable seasonality trends as well," reports Jane Asmar, National Raisin's vice president of sales and marketing.

Joe Tamble, vice president of sales for Sun-Maid Growers, in Kingsburg, CA, says that despite how well raisins sell in produce departments, 60 percent of dried fruits are still positioned in the center of the store, with only 40 percent in or adjacent to produce departments. "Organic continues to be an important segment of the dried fruit category," he adds. "It's small, but it's a segment that continues to have very loyal users."

Asmar reveals organic raisins make up a 2.5 share of dried fruit dollars and a 2.0 share of dried fruit pounds. "Organic dried fruit dollars are up 5 percent versus the conventionals, which have posted a 1 percent increase in sales," Asmar reports, noting that private label organic dried fruit makes up approximately

half of all organic dried fruit sales.

"The whole dried fruit category performs very well in produce," Tamble says. "In fact, when compared to center store, or grocery, the sales of the whole dried fruit category can increase up to 30 percent when shelved and positioned in produce. We encourage permanent placement of the category in produce departments. After all, it's fruit!"

Organic or not, being dried may offer an advantage. "Raisins sold in the produce department are typically very profitable," notes Miranda Ackerman, marketing director of Mariani Packing Co., based in Vacaville CA. "They are usually held to the standard margin requirements of the rest of the produce department, which can be highly perishable. With raisins being a high-margin item and having an extremely long shelf-life, they add to the overall percentage profit of the produce department."

Those aren't the only reasons raisins sell so well in the produce aisle. "I think it can be attributed to health-minded consumers shopping the produce area and seeing value in dried fruit when looking for ways to provide nutritious options for their families," says Jeff McLemore, North American product manager

“When you think about it, with California raisins, you’re getting anywhere between 1,000 and 1,200 pieces of fruit per pound — whole grapes that have essentially had the water removed.”

— Larry Blagg, California Raisin Marketing Board

at Yuba City, CA-based Sunsweet Growers Inc. “They’re probably buying produce, too, but also have the opportunity to buy something a little more shelf-stable.”

Growers agree that packaged raisins have a 12 to 24 month shelf-life, with virtually no spoilage or waste. Blagg of the California Raisin Marketing Board points to some other advantages raisins have over fresh produce. “Raisins have no seasonality, so you can get our product year-round at pretty consistent pricing,” he says. “When you think about it, with California raisins, you’re getting anywhere between 1,000 and 1,200 pieces of fruit per pound — whole grapes that have essentially had the water removed.”

Year-Round Promotional Opportunities

Unlike highly seasonal fruits and vegetables that experience peak sales at certain times of year, raisins are never out of season. Even so, Sun-Maid’s Tamble says raisins have four key consumption periods per year: back-to-school, Halloween, fall holiday baking and Easter. “During other times of the year, we work with our retail partners to get product back up on display,” he says.

“Putting them in the month-long savings guides during non-Holiday times, along with merchandising them with fresh produce displays, really helps build added category sales,” suggests Save Mart’s Calistro.

National Raisin Company’s research suggests that a large part of raisin sales are impulse purchases. “The category is impulse-oriented, meaning raisins react well to in-store promotions,” Asmar says.

Shoppers who might only think of raisins as an ingredient for oatmeal cookies probably assume raisins will be found in the baking aisle. Seeing a raisin display in the produce department will cause them to consider new uses for raisins. “The decision is usually instantaneous if they see a display of six-pack raisins or dried fruit,” Tamble says. “They might make a recipe like GORP: Good Old Raisins and Peanuts. It’s basically homemade trail mix.”

Playing up convenience and health benefits is also a good way to draw consumer attention.

“Raisins are uncomplicated to display and promote,” Asmar says. “They have high household penetration; they don’t require special handling or refrigeration; they’re well priced for all consumer segments and they’ve got a great promotional track record.”

Cross-promotions and secondary displays can drive impulse purchases by suggesting various uses for raisins. Tie them in with oats, for instance. “For topping oatmeal or with oatmeal cookies,” Mariani’s Ackerman specifies, “or with salad fixings for a Waldorf or spinach salad with raisins.”

While secondary displays are a critical component in promoting raisins, McLemore of Sunsweet contends they’re most effective when aligned with cross-promotions. Sometimes the ones that work best are promotions with products from across the store because then you get visibility in multiple aisles.

New-style Promo Tools

As Sun-Maid Growers fast approaches its 100th year in business, Tamble says the company is exploring the promotional promise of QR codes — the small squares that resemble stamp-sized pixilated bar codes. Consumers with smart phones can download any number of QR reader apps enabling their phone to scan the codes — found directly on the packaging or in ads — and link to information to learn more about the product.

“We’re excited because the growth of smart phones continues to escalate year after year and we believe it’s here to stay. It’s a great way to reach our younger consumers,” Tamble says. “There’s the possibility of linking directly to our Web site, where we can provide recipes, but also linking into health and wellness sites.”

About four years ago, the California Raisin Marketing Board instituted a novel way of spreading the word about raisins’ nutritional attributes. It enlisted registered dietitians — Super RDs and Supermarket RDs — to tout raisins’ benefits. While Super RDs take the pro-raisin message to the airwaves, Supermarket RDs go straight to stores and speak directly with consumers. Each registered dietitian represents multiple clients, offering shoppers a

wide range of nutritional information. “It’s helping get the results of our research out, and it’s helping people better understand the nutritional value of dried fruit,” says the California Raisin Marketing Board’s Blagg. If we can tell this story — and have people with credibility tell this story — it helps everybody.”

Blagg says chains including Wegman’s, GiantEagle, HEB and Kroger already have Supermarket RDs. “If stores have drugstores and are filling prescriptions and have testing for blood pressure and that sort of thing, why not have a registered dietician?” he questions. “Why not take it one step further and provide preventive advice for living a more healthful lifestyle? I’m delighted to see some of the supermarket industry starting to embrace the concept.”

Raisins Are Grapes, Too

While the average shopper likely knows raisins are simply dried grapes, few, if any, think of them as fruit. It’s more likely that they see raisins as sweet snacks or extra bits of flavor to sprinkle on cereal or into a salad. Getting consumers to view raisins as the nutritional equivalent of their undried counterparts is best done by positioning them in the produce department. Mariani’s Ackerman says raisins can be put in several locations within or adjacent to the produce area. “Raisins are great to display under produce tables or on end caps during high-volume promotional periods.”

Blagg knows a lot of stores like to place raisins under produce counters, but prefers areas with greater visibility. “Ideally I’d like to have them in a section directly next to fresh produce or at the end of the produce section — either of those positions is pretty good. But the idea of trying to merchandise dried fruit underneath a fresh produce bin is kind of awkward.”

Save Mart’s Calistro ensures shoppers will easily find raisins in the produce section. “We merchandise them on gondolas,” he says. “And they’re also tied in with fruit displays throughout the produce department.”

Be it under a fresh produce counter, on a shelf adjacent to the produce section, or on a gondola, incorporating raisins into the produce department is a proven way of boosting raisin sales. “There’s a learning curve that goes on when a retailer switches raisins from center-store over to produce,” Tamble says. “But usually it doesn’t take long for consumers to learn that it’s not in the baking aisle, it’s in with fruits and vegetables. Once the consumers understand that, they run with it and they’re comfortable with it.”

pb

Make Way for the New Kid in the Box.



Introducing Yogurt Raisins Mini-Snacks.

With our Raisin Minis as one of our best selling items, our new Yogurt Raisins Mini-Snacks are sure to become another top seller in the dried fruit category.



AMERICA'S FAVORITE SINCE 1912
For more information contact sales@sunmaid.com
13525 South Bethel Avenue • Kingsburg, CA 93631
1-800-786-6243 or 1-800-SUNMAID

ANNOUNCEMENTS



FLORAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDED

Debbie Jackson, senior floral field buyer at SuperValu/Albertsons, received the Fresh Produce & Floral Council Floral Achievement award July 19th at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim, CA. Jackson was surprised with the award presented during the keynote breakfast before a significant audience of produce and floral professionals attending the Southern California Fresh Produce & Floral Expo.



Sept.14-17 • Rancho Mirage, Calif.
127th Annual Convention

SAF CONVENTION SET FOR SEPTEMBER 14-17

The Society of American Florists, Alexandria, VA, announces its 127th Annual Convention will be held September 14-17 in Rancho Mirage, CA. For more information, contact Laura Weaver at 800-336-4743 or lweaver@safnow.org, or visit the Upcoming Events page at www.safnow.org.



IFTF IN HOLLAND

HPP Worldwide, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, announces the International Floriculture Trade Fair (IFTF Expo) will be held November 2-4 at Expo Haarlemmermeer in Vijfhuizen, Holland. This will be an industry wide event serving all segments of the floriculture industry, especially breeders, propagators, growers, suppliers, importers, wholesalers and retailers.



NURSERYMEN'S EXCHANGE MOVING FORWARD

Floramoda Inc., Salinas, CA, recently purchased certain assets of Nurserymen's Exchange Inc., Half Moon Bay, CA. The Floramoda purchase provides financial stability and security for Nurserymen's Exchange and its employees. Monterey Peninsula Horticulture of Salinas is the parent company of Floramoda Inc., Growers Transplanting Inc. and Rocket Farms.

NEW PRODUCTS



ORNAMENTAL ARTICHOKEs

The Sun Valley Group, Arcata, CA, introduces long-stemmed artichokes as the newest item in its line of ornamental vegetables grown and harvested for cut floral bouquets and arrangements. Combined with colorful varieties of kale, cut flowers and enticing greens, the artichokes offer alluring texture, whimsy and dimension to floral creations made in-store or at home by consumers.



TOTE THIS

A-ROO Company LLC, Strongsville, OH, recently introduced an Orchid Gift Tote™ as fashionable plant transportation. Featuring a beautiful NOVA® Photo Graphik unmatched Hi-Def photo image, the tote promotes multiple orchid sales at one time because they are so easy to carry. The orchids are protected by the tote, making customers more secure about transporting delicate orchids.



PERSONALITY BOUQUETS

Sunshine Bouquet Company, Miami, FL, introduces Personality Bouquets. Customers enjoy choosing their favorite personality for each season. Dangler tags featuring personality traits offer hints for selection. Customers can choose to be a Fashionista for the fall, Holiday Hostess during the winter, an Ambitious Bombshell all spring and a Beach Bum through the summer.



PURPLE TURNS INDIGO

Silver Vase Inc., Homestead, FL, introduces Indigo Mystique™ as a sibling to its Blue Mystique™ orchid introduced January, 2011. The orchid features rich, deep fuchsia blooms that become indigo with different electric shades. Made with exclusive patented technology, Indigo Mystique is infused from the inside to transform flowers to fuchsia and then intense indigo.

Floral Watch is a regular feature of Produce Business. Please send information on new products, personnel changes, industry, corporate and personal milestones and available literature, along with a color photo, slide or transparency to: Managing Editor, Produce Business, P.O. Box 810425, Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425, or e-mail us at info@producebusiness.com

Dressing For Success

Fashion forward retailers know the value of accessorizing a floral department with a variety of containers that go from basic to fabulous. **BY MEREDITH AUERBACH**



Whimsical stand-by containers remain popular even as retailers upgrade selections of floral vases, baskets and pots.

It takes more than just a great bouquet of flowers or a potted plant to delight consumers these days. Just as important is what surrounds it. A fully realized visual concept — the wrap and ties, the basket, the vase or other container — complements the flowers or greens, completes the look and takes “how nice” to “wow!”

There’s no quicker or more economical way for a consumer to freshen a room than with color and design; to acknowledge or thank a friend or colleague; or celebrate a holiday. Arrangements, bouquets, plants, dish gardens and terrariums bring together current color and textural trends and are just as ready to change them next week, following the dictates of shelter magazines, HGTV and television’s “Project Runway.”

“We see the adoption of fashion styling by more and more people as a terrific opportunity for supermarkets to brand themselves as distinct and create closer ties with their customers,” says David Garcia, president of Pete Garcia Co., in Atlanta, GA, a sales and marketing company representing more than 20 domestic and international factories and importers of products for the floral industry. “We currently sell to wholesalers, growers and bouquet manufacturers and intend to

increase focus on supermarkets in association with our customers.”

The Industry Is Changing

China has long been the source of low-cost manufacturing of floral container materials, including glass, plastic, printed paper and plastic-based wraps. As long as you had a year to plan, design, produce and transport, China was the logical choice. Other contenders such as Vietnam, India, the Philippines and even the United States are becoming more competitive due to issues of inflation, currency fluctuations, smaller minimum orders, trust and timely deliveries.

Supermarket floral departments have become more targeted and specialized. They know their customers. They keep excellent records and maintain high levels of professionalism. They work with a process that plans up to a year in advance. Buyers work through company catalogs or in face-to-face meetings to decide what is needed based on historic use patterns and the need to control inventory.

Make Use Of Available Resources

“We send out color catalogs five times a year and participate in industry shows four to five times a year to give customers plenty of tools to

make choices throughout the year,” reports Audrey Schoener, customer service manager for Hill’s Imports, based in Quakertown, PA. Wholesale showrooms such as the Pete Garcia Company’s Flora-Mart make it possible to see products up close to evaluate their use.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PETE GARCIA CO.



THE
USA BOUQUET
COMPANY

1500 NW 95 Ave
Miami, FL 33172
800.306.1071



“We see the adoption of fashion styling by more and more people as a terrific opportunity for supermarkets to brand themselves as distinct and create closer ties with their customers.””

— David Garcia, Pete Garcia Co.

Angela Anderson, buyer, sales and marketing at Miami, FL-based Pots Co., describes the company’s experience: “Typically, supermarket chains ask what we have. They want to choose from about 50 items. We’ll send color photos, which they send out to stores to poll for likes and needs.”

These procedures lead to team relationships where suppliers and customers work together to share knowledge and experience about what works and what sells in different regions and neighborhoods. And custom items can be developed for large customers.

New Products Spark Interest

Plenty of innovation means that floral containers match consumer interest whether it is for new colors and styles or more fundamental issues like safety, recycling, sustainability and green practices.

David Garcia points to products available from their Flora-Mart showrooms demonstrating growth areas for his company, “Recycled glass vases produced in Mexico were introduced last year. We also offer unbreakable clear and colored clear containers in standard floral shapes. Lots of places either discourage or forbid breakable ceramic or glass container. Think of schools, hospitals, nursing homes and government buildings.”

Tim Daubert, buyer, sales and marketing for Pots Co., reports, “We see growing interest in recyclable pots made in China of corn, straw or rice that once disposed of, will break down within three to five years. We can develop a mold for about \$3,000 to produce decorative pots to fit over standard grower pots.”

Most supermarkets are slowly evolving to make strong use of outdoor items such as terracotta planters or lightweight fiberglass pots. Keeping it simple generally means it’s great to stock pot covers to make plants appealing; it’s definitely more complicated to staff and manage both an interior and exterior department successfully at the same time.

What’s Trending Today

“Hot colors like lime and turquoise dominate the market today,” says Audrey Schoener, “where we see it in pottery and glass and as

accents on metal.” Orange is another color that has moved from fashion to floral accent. Plastics such as melamine hold printing of strong uniform colors and change from season to season from spring pastels to bright summer prints and traditional holiday colors.

Schoener also notes, “Breast cancer awareness is a strong promotional icon that works well for retailer community activities. We can incorporate these symbols into our designs.”

Design companies work closely with color experts such as the Pantone Color Institute — who suggest looking for rich, reddish honeysuckle pink for the coming year — or establish their own color teams to fine-tune the palette. This approach is important to anticipate consumer response, which is quickly influenced by what is seen on television and the Internet news and photos.

Another trend capitalizes on the natural look of split wood baskets, twigs and moss in combination with fresh flowers, orchids or succulents. David Garcia says, “We expect to see these ideas combine in a resurgence of terrariums, the concept of a personal greenhouse.”

Hill’s Schoener continues, “Our line demonstrates how to use just a single flower or even a couple in dramatic ways in square glass vases that enable strong margins and easier department maintenance.

Value Drives The Process

All agree that today’s consumer is a very savvy shopper who demands good value and strong quality. Many are willing to drop the dollars if they perceive the products as problem-solvers or affordable indulgence. The design quality shown in a few still life presentations builds on the freshness and color of massed consumer bouquets and has the potential to increase sales. Still, at the end of the day, the majority of floral purchases are driven by impulse, and the appeal to the consumer must be there.

Pots’ Daubert says, “The market tends to set pricing, but costs are going up. Things were quite stable for seven years, then prices had to increase over the last couple years. Consumers will tell us how far and how fast we can go.”

pb

Create the Impulse

Impulse buys account for as much as 80% of total supermarket floral sales.

Besides a sign that says "Free Flowers", few things help create that impulse better than quality, dramatic lighting.



Capture your customers' attention and their floral purchases by setting your floral department apart from the competition with

BAERO

PERFECT FLORAL LIGHTING



BAERO North America, Inc.
10432 Baur Boulevard
St. Louis, MO 63132
314-692-2270
www.baerousa.com



- Call and ask us for a free live demonstration in your store -

TIMELY AND EXCITABLE



Instilled in my memory are the words the owner of 10 supermarkets told me long ago about gaining impact from charitable campaigns. He believed being one of the initial contributors with a significant amount always generated excitement in the community. As a very successful operator, his timely philanthropy helped generate a loyal customer following for his well operated and merchandised outlets.

The timely and excitable philosophy is particularly important when it comes to marketing products and companies. Regardless of the situation, this creates a mindset initiating consumer purchasing decisions. The opposite is true when what was once new becomes old without innovation. In the intervening time, competitors gradually not only narrowed the gap, but also offered more timely incentive opportunities. What was once dynamic in consumers' minds is no longer a catalyst. History shows nearly every organization that achieved considerable growth eventually hits a plateau, and possibly, a decline.

Recently, Wal-Mart has become a prime example. When Sam Walton opened the first store in 1962, he quickly became aware that operating at margins substantially below competitors resulted in growing sales and profits. This competitive differential generated sales per square foot levels formerly unheard of with corresponding levels of profit growth.

By the time a complete food offering was introduced in the early 90s, the groundwork had been laid for the timely and exciting consumer expectation of savings as the economy was slowing. Nearly two decades later, the Wal-Mart competitive savings advantage has narrowed considerably. Marketing studies show the distance consumers are willing to travel declines proportionally with pricing differential contractions, which now become even more enhanced by rising fuel prices.

First one and then another retailer began selling gas and then giving its qualified customers up to a 15-cent discount per gallon on a fill up. Those without the facilities to dispense gas have often tied in with major gas companies offering substantial discounts on gas company gift cards when the customer purchases a specific amount of groceries. A \$10 gas savings with a \$50 grocery purchase is approximately equivalent to a 70-cent-a-gallon discount. All serve to counter the formerly exciting big box savings advantage.

While these catch the consumer's attention, perhaps the most innovative approach to creating timely excitement has been Stop and Shop and Kroger's gas-saving trial balloon in selected markets. During a

designated month, for every \$100 grocery purchase, customers receive a 10-cent per gallon reduction on a full tank of gas. Purchasers of \$1,000 of groceries qualify for a dollar a gallon savings. The incentive to purchase only at the chains' stores is enormous, and purchasing in larger quantities is also a byproduct. The cost for the company, at most, is half a percent, but theoretically, the higher volume efficiencies should be a reasonable offset. Just look at their most recent quarters' sales and profit results. Congratulations to the creators for developing an outside-the-box timely and excitable marketing program.

Adding the competitive excitement generated by dollar stores and formats similar to Aldi, it's little wonder the Wal-Mart sales trend in the U.S. became stagnant during the past several years. Instead of being several steps ahead, the company is now firmly ensconced in the malaise of developed company aging highlighted with the many-

months-late June 29, 2011 Wal-Mart announcement of a 10-cent a gallon reduction on the price of gas in 18 states for their own credit card holders.

But what about produce promotional programs offering values creating consumer excitement and generating growing sales? Merchandisers have tried every trick imaginable with a mixture of pricing formats. However, regardless how stated, these become nothing more to

the consumer than a daily pricing ritual.

The challenge becomes developing a theme providing a true message of value, not only of price, but also of product edibility resulting in the acquisition of consumers' purchasing interest. By far the best program I have seen is Publix's "At Season's Peak." Explore the company's Web site and you will find over a dozen items periodically promoted throughout the year.

Consumers are informed not only by circulars but may be individually alerted by phone or email if they so choose. Items range from apples to pears, berries to melons, corn to tomatoes. Offering the program of both flavorful eating and reasonable pricing creates the timely excitement consumers not only experience now, but also for the future.

Including with these elements is the identification of grower/shippers, both local and distant where possible, which becomes another benchmark customers have come to rely on when making purchasing decisions. Combine all of the elements and the supermarket produce reputation is enhanced with store-wide operations reinforcing consumer expectations.

Predictably, same-store sales for many retailers have profitably increased in direct contrast to several years of declines by the largest retailer in the United States.

pb

The timely and excitable philosophy is particularly important when it comes to marketing products and companies. Regardless of the situation, this creates a mindset initiating consumer purchasing decisions.

By Dave Diver

Dave Diver is the former vice president of produce at Hannaford, and a regular columnist for PRODUCE BUSINESS.

I Expect Results.

"My team is out there every day strengthening our relationships and looking for opportunities. So I need quick and comprehensive solutions to help them achieve our goals. That's why we rely on Blue Book Services."

Blue Book Services' tools to help you succeed:

- New leads delivered real-time
- Customizable marketing lists
- Timely updates on customers
- Key account analytics

For 110 years, companies have trusted Blue Book information to build and strengthen trade relationships.

NEW! BBOS Mobile (for all smart phones) Quick way to get contact & rating info. Visit: m.bluebookservices.com



Blue Book Services | *Profit from Experience*

630.668.3500 | info@bluebookservices.com | www.producebluebook.com

CAN U.S. SMALL-BOX STORES ACHIEVE UK SUCCESS?



The convenience market in the UK is continuing to grow at a fast pace with the top four grocery retailers adding around 200 stores in 2010 — Tesco alone opened 155. The growth in this area is due to a combination of market- and consumer-led factors.

Similar to the United States, in the UK, the number of single households is growing and people are now leading busier lifestyles, creating a cash-rich, time-sensitive population. Alongside this, the UK population is ageing; by 2035, it is expected that 23 percent of the population will be 65 years old or over. This group will be less mobile, increasing the need of store proximity, as well as the need for different services and products. However, unlike the United States, the UK is facing market saturation in superstores and a severe lack of large sites. It is becoming increasingly difficult for the supermarkets to gain planning permission to open larger stores and, at the same time, there are a number of high street vacancies at smaller sites due to the vast number of banks, pubs and even retailers that collapsed during the most recent recession. This has created opportunities for many grocers to enter the convenience market.

In the UK, the majority of the big grocery players have or are planning to enter this market; Tesco and Sainsburys are well established players, but Morrisons and Waitrose are currently testing their new formats; M-Local and Little Waitrose, respectively. Even Wal-Mart-owned Asda, which has traditionally shunned smaller stores, has acquired a chain of over 100 discount stores this year, which are being converted to the smaller format Asda Supermarket banner.

Generally, in the UK, there are three types of convenience stores: neighborhood (residential), food-on-the-go (office areas, city centers, but also non-traditional locations such as hospitals) and those at transport hubs (tube stations, train stations, airports). These are all usually, but not exclusively, found in urban areas with high footfall. As such, many don't have car parking spaces. They consist of smaller-sized stores, around 3,000 square feet, offering everyday products — basic food items, drinks, newspapers and cigarettes. In addition, they also only sell a couple of brands within each product category due to being top-up stores — not weekly shops. This works well in the UK, where private label is widely accepted by consumers, accounting for 47 percent of the overall market. Using private label in a smaller setting also helps to buffer profit margins, given that the cost of doing business in urban areas is generally greater than in out-of-town locations. In the United States, however, private label penetration is much lower — 23.5 percent — so

retailers will need to have a strong brand focus, supported by private label, in order to be successful.

With a busy society, many traditionally single-journeys are evolving into multi-purpose trips — visiting the store while picking up the children, on the way home from work, etc., — resulting in more frequent, but smaller, 'top-up' shopping trips. With these, retailers need to replenish their stock more often, and this may have an effect on perishables such as fruit and vegetables. Consumers are generally picky when it comes to fresh produce — especially with the look of the items, and therefore, frequent but small deliveries are important, which inevitably add cost into the business.

In the UK, most convenience retailers add a price premium to their items (compared to larger stores) due to higher rent (being in metropolitan areas) and additional operating costs, such as deliveries. The average item in a Tesco Express, for example, is 15 percent higher than its larger stores. However, some retailers decide to keep the prices the same across their formats in order to differentiate themselves; both Morrisons in the

UK and Wal-Mart in the UK and the United States have used this strategy; however, it is risky because they need to cover the extra costs of the smaller formats, and therefore, there will be pressure on suppliers to help retailers drive efficiencies.

Most UK retailers are diversifying into new technology, mainly Click and Collect, to provide more options for its shoppers. Click and Collect

works well within this market, allowing shoppers to order online and collect their orders from wherever is most convenient to them. The UK is the world's most sophisticated online grocery market so this concept works very well. However, in the United States, online grocery remains limited to pockets of urban areas, and therefore, such initiatives are bound to be more successful with non-food items. Wal-Mart's latest small-box concept, Wal-Mart Express, will use its own Click and Collect service as a means of differentiating from dollar stores and providing a wide assortment to urban shoppers who may not have access to a Super-center.

Although small stores have not traditionally been a priority for U.S. supermarkets, this will change in the next 10 years. In order to find new channels for growth, many retailers will look to underpenetrated urban markets where cash-rich, time-poor consumers would benefit from low prices and affordable foods. Like in the UK, U.S. consumers are increasingly leading busy lifestyles and also shifting their shopping habits, whether that is ordering online or buying more private label items. Growth in online, in particular, will cannibalize sales of some larger stores so retailers must be able to respond with new formats that meet the needs of the changing consumer.

pb

Although small stores have not traditionally been a priority for U.S. supermarkets, this will change in the next 10 years. In order to find new channels for growth, many retailers will look to underpenetrated urban markets where cash-rich, time-poor consumers would benefit from low prices and affordable foods.

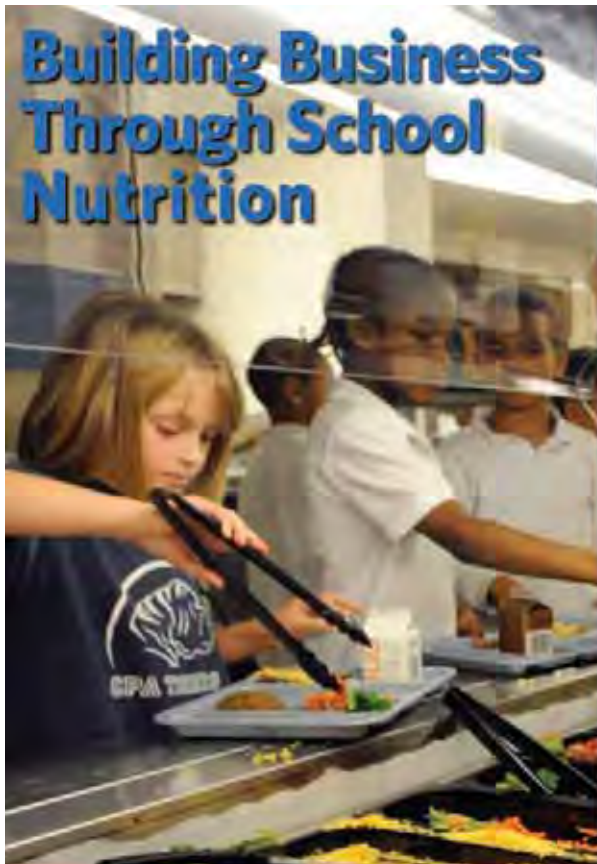
By Nicole Parker-Hodds

Associate analyst, Planet Retail, based in London, England

Receive supplier information fast using the PRODUCE BUSINESS Information Showcase. Here's How:
Contact the advertiser directly via the Website, e-mail, or phone listed in the ad.

COMPANY	PAGE #	PHONE	WEBSITE
A&A Organic Marketing, Inc.	69	831-768-0300	www.aaorganic.com
Albert's Organics	69	828-298-7776	www.albertsorganics.com
Alpine Fresh	80	305-594-9117	www.alpinefresh.com
Anthony Vineyards, Inc.	50	661-858-8300	www.anthonynineyards.com
APEAM (Avocado Producers & Exporting Packers of Michoacan)	60-61		www.avocadosfrommexico.com
Apio, Inc.	58	800-454-1355	www.apioinc.com
Asociacion Mexicana de Horticultura Protegida A.C.	67		www.amhpac.org
Ayco Farms, Inc.	80	954-788-6800	www.aycofarms.com
Baero North America, Inc.	109	314-692-2270	www.baerousa.com
Philip Balsamo Company	94	630-575-8000	www.phillipbalsamo.com
Basciani Foods, Inc.	86	610-268-3044	www.bascianifoods.com
Blue Book Services	111	630-668-3500	www.producebluebook.com
Borton & Sons Inc.	48	509-966-3996	www.bortonfruit.com
Brooks Tropicals	65	800-327-8833	www.brookstropicals.com
Capital City Fruit Co., Inc.	78	515-981-5111	www.capitalcityfruit.com
CarbAmericas	80	954-786-0000	www.carbamericas.com
Castle Rock Vineyards	50	661-721-8717	www.castlerockvineyards.com
Champ's Mushrooms	85	866-Champs1	www.champsmushrooms.com
Chelan Fresh Marketing	46	509-682-4252	www.chelanfresh.com
Christopher Ranch	71	408-847-1100	www.christopher ranch.com
Columbia Marketing International	43	509-683-1955	www.cmiapples.com
Concord Foods	68	508-580-1700	www.concordfoods.com
Cool Runnings, Ltd.	96	800-522-5623	
The Cranberry Network LLC	7	715-422-0410	www.thecranberrynetwork.com
CrunchPak	90	509-782-7753	www.crunchpak.com
Crystal Valley Foods	80	800-359-5631	www.crystalvalleyfoods.com
Curry & Company	73	800-929-1073	www.curryandco.com
Customized Brokers	80	305-471-9899	www.customizedbrokers.net
Deardorff Family Farms	69	805-200-5215	www.deardorfffamilyfarms.com
DeBruyn Produce Co.	76	800-733-9177	www.debruynderproduce.com
Del Monte Fresh Produce	116	800-950-3683	www.freshdelmonte.com
DiMare Fresh	40	209-862-2872	www.dimarefresh.com
Dole Fresh Vegetable Co.	2	800-333-5454	
Domex Superfresh Growers	47	509-966-1814	www.superfreshgrowers.com
Double D Farms	69	519-884-0107	www.doubledfarms.com
dProduce Man Software	28	888-PRODMAN	www.dproduceman.com
Duda Family Farms	75	561-804-1477	www.dudafresh.com
Earthbound Farm	70	888-624-1004	www.earthboundfarm.com
Eclipse Berry Farms, LLC	40	310-207-7879	www.eclipseberryfarms.com
Fagerberg Produce, Inc.	54	970-834-1353	www.fagerbergproduce.com
Faye Clack Marketing & Comm.	23	905-206-0577	www.ideaswithfourroots.com
Fox Packaging	39	956-682-6176	www.foxbag.com
Giorgio Fresh Co.	85	800-330-5711	www.giorgiofoods.com
Giorgio Fresh Co.	71	800-330-5711	www.giorgiofoods.com
Global Organic Specialty Source, Inc.	71	877-952-1198	www.globalorganics.ws
Gourmet Trading Company	80	310-216-7575	www.gourmettrading.net
Greenhouse Produce Company, LLC	40	888-492-1492	www.greenhouseproduce.net
Gurda Gardens, Ltd.	79	845-374-5741	
Harvest Crown Co.	80	561-496-0390	www.harvestcrown.com
Harvest Sensations	80	305-591-9173	www.harvestsensations.com
Highline Mushrooms	84	866-454-7696	www.highlinemushrooms.com
Honey Bear Tree Fruit Co.	48	800-551-6183	
Indianapolis Fruit Co.	98	317-546-2425	www.indyfruit.com
Inline Plastics Corp.	37	800-826-5567	www.inlineplastics.com
IAB Produce	94	312-226-7805	
Jacobs, Malcolm & Burt, Inc.	80	415-285-0400	

COMPANY	PAGE #	PHONE	WEBSITE
Jem D International	41	800-286-0691	www.jemdinternational.com
Kern Ridge Growers, LLC	70	661-854-3156	www.kernridge.com
Keystone Fruit Marketing, Inc.	81	800-498-1577	www.keystonefruit.com
Kroeker Farms Ltd.	71	204-325-4333	www.kroekerfarms.com
L&M Companies, Inc.	44	509-698-3881	www.lmcompanies.com
La Hacienda Brands, Inc.	97	312-243-2755	www.lahaciendabrand.com
LaGalera Produce	93	773-446-6161	
Tom Lange Co.	88	800-637-8051	www.tomlange.com
Mandolini Co.	96	312-226-1690	www.mandolinico.com
Mann Packing Company, Inc.	13	800-884-6266	www.veggiesmadeeasy.com
Anthony Marano Company	115	773-321-7500	www.anthonymarano.com
Marchini Marzano	40	877-899-9007	www.marchinifarms.com
MIXTEC Group	56	626-440-7077	www.mixtec.net
Mooney Farms	41	530-899-2661	www.mooneyfarms.com
Morris Okun, Inc.	5	718-589-7700	www.morrisokun.com
OsoSweet Onion Co.	81	866-236-5558	www.mucifarms.com
New Jersey Peach Promotion Council	31	973-744-6090	www.jerseypeaches.com
New York Apple Association, Inc.	45	585-924-2171	www.nyapplecountry.com
New York Produce Show And Conference	9	212-426-2218	www.nyproduceshow.com
North Bay Produce	81	231-946-1941	www.northbayproduce.com
North Weld Produce Co.	56	970-353-4950	www.northweldproduce.com
Ososweet Onion Co.	76	866-681-9020	www.ososweetonions.com
Pacific Tomato Growers/ Pacific Triple E	41	209-895-7500	www.sunripeproduce.com
Paramount Produce	26-27	800-528-NUTS	www.paramountpro.com
Peri & Sons Farms	78	775-463-4444	www.periandsons.com
The Perishable Specialist, Inc.	81	305-477-9906	www.theperishablespecialist.com
Peruvian Asparagus Importers Association	81	817-793-3133	
Phillips Mushroom Farms	83	302-622-8818	www.phillipsmushroomfarms.com
PMA Foundation for Industry Talent	33	302-607-2157	www.pmafit.com/getinvolved
Produce for Better Health Foundation	49	302-235-2329	www.pbhfoundation.org
Produce Marketing Association	52-53	302-235-2100	www.pma.com
ProducePackaging.com	38	800-644-8729	www.producepackaging.com
Progressive Marketing Group	81	800-900-0757	www.pmgstrategic.net
Ready Pac Produce, Inc.	89	800-800-4088	www.readypac.com
Rosemont Farms Corp/ C.H. Robinson Worldwide	81	561-922-7201	www.rosemontfarms.com
SAGARPA - Embassy of Mexico	34-35	202-728-1727	www.sagarpa.gob.mx
Sandri Sales, Inc.	50	805-792-3192	www.sandri.com
Southern Specialties	81	954-784-6500	www.southernspecialties.com
Spice World, Inc.	28	800-433-4979	www.spiceworldinc.com
Strohauer Farms	54	970-284-6260	www.strohauserfarms.com
Strube Celery & Vegetable Company	95	312-446-4000	www.strube.com
Sun-Maid Growers of California	105	800-786-6243	www.sun-maid.com
Sunlight Intl. Sales/ Jakov P Dulcich & Sons	21	661-792-6360	www.dulcich.com
Sunview Marketing International	50	661-792-3145	www.sunviewmarketing.com
Team Produce International, Inc.	81	800-505-0665	
Testa Produce, Inc.	98	312-226-3237	www.testaproduce.com
Turbana Banana Corp	62-63	800-TURBANA	www.turbana.com
U.S. Apple Association	26	717-432-0000	www.usapple.org/national
United Fresh Produce Association	99	202-303-3400	www.unitedfresh.org
United Fresh Produce Association	113	202-303-3400	www.unitedfresh.org
The USA Bouquet Co.	108	800-306-1071	www.usabq.com
Village Farms	41	877-777-7718	www.villagefarms.com
Wholesum Family Farms	102	520-281-9233	www.wholesumharvest.com
Kurt Zuhlik & Association	38	800-644-8729	www.producepackaging.com



Washington Public Policy Conference

The Produce Industry's Most Powerful Public Policy Event

Learn How Success on Nutrition Policy Is Creating Sales Opportunities

Victories on school nutrition policies are creating new business opportunities for produce foodservice distributors. Learn how industry leaders are already building produce sales for school salad bars and fruit and vegetable snacks. See how upcoming nutrition policy initiatives can create even more sales opportunities for produce.

E-Verify • Food Safety • Nutrition

October 3 - October 5, 2011

The Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill

Register Today at www.unitedfresh.org or 202-303-3400

FIVE GENERATIONS STRONG



It's no secret produce is a family business, but few companies can boast a legacy that stretches over five generations. Robert T. Cochran and Co., based on the Hunts Point Market, in the Bronx, NY, began when the original Robert Tom, great-grandfather of Richard Cochran, the company's current president, began selling his Delaware-grown peaches in New York City. "He thought he was getting a raw deal," says Richard, "so he figured he was better off doing it himself."

One generation after the next, the company was passed down through the Cochran family. Richard joined the company in 1975, and took the reins from his father when he retired in 1983. "Now I run the business with my son, Mike, who is our fifth generation."

While Richard is firmly ensconced in the produce industry now, it wasn't always a sure bet. "I studied electrical engineering at Carnegie Mellon so I would have something to fall back on, just in

case. But in the end, I joined the family business." Engineering, too must be in Richard's blood, as both his father, Robert "Tom," and his grandfather, Fletcher Cochran, were also engineers by trade. "They were civil engineers, but the buck stopped with me. My son, Mike, was a business major."

All that is water under the bridge now, and today, the company remains one of the oldest wholesalers in the country, selling a full line of fruits and vegetables. In 1962, the company found even more fame when Robert "Tom" posed for an ad (pictured above) featuring Marlex TR-101 Produce Bags. "One of the growers my dad received carrots from began using the bags and asked him if he would be in the ad for them," recounts Richard. "Carrots used to be packed in boxes, so at the time, those bags were revolutionary. In fact, shippers are still using them today."

The Blast from the Past is a regular feature of PRODUCE BUSINESS. We welcome submissions of your old photos, labels or advertisements along with suggested captions. Please send materials to: Editor, PRODUCE BUSINESS, P.O. Box 810425, Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425, or e-mail info@producebusiness.com



ANTHONY MARANO COMPANY

Produce is Our Passion. *Service is Our Commitment.*

We have a simple philosophy: our vendors are our partners and our customers' success is our mission. With over 65 years of experience, we have grown to be more than just the "tomato guys." Our team of experts is dedicated to knowing all of our products, anticipating your needs and delivering when you need it most.

- Largest full-line distributor in the Midwest
- 400,000 square feet of fresh produce
- Product traceability
- Advanced food safety program
- Located in the heart of Chicago
- Same day service

Interested? Come by for a visit.

3000 S. ASHLAND AVE. SUITE 100 • CHICAGO, IL 60608
PHONE: 773-321-7500 EMAIL: INFO@AMARANO.COM





MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH **TEACHER MONDAY**

OVER 54 MILLION CONSUMERS REACHED LAST YEAR.

This promotion is sure to attract crowds. Over 54 million consumers reached last year. As a destination within your produce department, Del Monte Fresh Produce "Teacher Monday" encourages consumers to Eat Healthy and Live Healthy.

The 2nd Annual "Teacher Monday" is an online contest where consumers vote for their favorite teacher and was created to support teachers and give them the tools they need to make eating healthy, fun and educational in the classroom. Winning teachers in the U.S. and Canada will receive \$750 in cash to purchase school supplies and \$250 in Del Monte Fresh Produce fruit gift certificates for classroom snacks. Winning teachers will be linked with schools in Del Monte Produce's growing regions, including Africa, Asia and Central America.

Over 30-million* on-product stickers and tags on pineapples,



bananas, fresh-cut fruits and vegetables, cantaloupe, grapes, avocados and tomatoes will alert shoppers to the promotion in-store, supported with channel strips, price cards, danglers and display signs. Del Monte Fresh Produce will also distribute recipe booklets and \$5 off coupons for fresh fruits and vegetables to consumers in 50 major markets across the U.S. and Canada. Consumers will be notified about giveaways via Twitter, Facebook and radio promotions.

Ask your Del Monte Fresh Produce representative about participating in our display contest exclusively for produce managers. Winning retailers will receive a free salad bar to be awarded to their favorite qualifying school.

Go to www.fruits.com to learn more or contact your Del Monte Fresh Produce representative to participate and help support schools in your community.

*Estimate

BE A PART OF BUILDING ON OUR SUCCESS OF LAST YEAR. 1 MILLION VOTES.

1,200 TEACHER REGISTRATIONS. 100 WINNING SCHOOLS. MAKING A DIFFERENCE.

