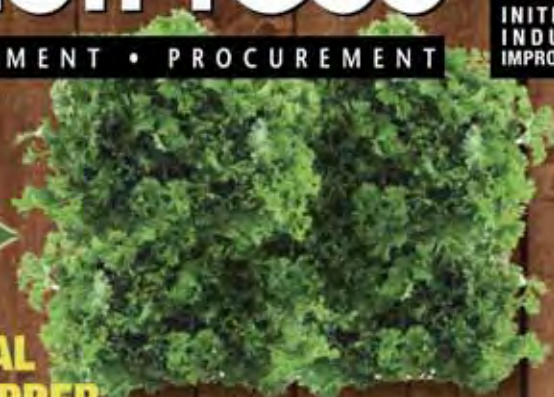


producebusiness

MARKETING • MERCHANDISING • MANAGEMENT • PROCUREMENT

25
YEARS
INITIATING
INDUSTRY
IMPROVEMENT



THE
23RD ANNUAL
MYSTERY SHOPPER
REPORT



DO YOUR
PRODUCE ASSOCIATES
KNOW
THE DIFFERENCE?



INSIDE:

THE PUNDIT LOOKS AT FRAUDULENT FARMER'S MARKETS
SPRING MERCHANDISING • FLORIDA SPRING VEGETABLES
WHOLESALE CUSTOMER SERVICE • AVOCADOS • MEXICAN IMPORTS
BERRIES • PALLETS • PACKAGING AND TECHNOLOGY • TRANSPORTATION
REGIONAL PROFILE: DALLAS • DRIED FRUIT AND NUTS • BLOOMING PLANTS
MASTERS OF MERCHANDISING SUPPLEMENT



100% Natural, Naturally

Ask for our 9
All Natural DOLE Salad Kits.

At Dole, we are proud to announce that our kits have gone all natural. No artificial preservatives, no artificial ingredients, no artificial anything. In response to the ever-increasing customer demand for food free of artificial additives and artificial preservatives, everything in our 9 delicious, complete and ready-to-eat DOLE kits is all natural, even the dressing. And the best part, they still taste great! From the Southwest Salad Kit to Asian Island Crunch, our new All Natural DOLE Salad Kits are here to keep customers, and your sales, healthy and happy.

To learn more, please contact your Dole sales representative or visit dole.com/saladkits

©2010 Dole Fresh Vegetables, Inc. TM & © Dole Food Company, Inc.





COVER STORY

21 THE 23RD ANNUAL MYSTERY SHOPPER REPORT
 Do your produce associates know the difference between basil and parsley? Yams and sweet potatoes? Spanish onions and sweet onions? Can they recognize flavor differences between green bell peppers and red bell peppers? See what our mystery shoppers discover.

COMMENTARY

- 8 THE FRUITS OF THOUGHT**
Food Crisis At Core Of Middle East Unrest
- 154 RETAIL PERSPECTIVE**
Adapting To The Reality of Consolidation
- 156 EUROPEAN MARKET**
How To Boost European Fruit Consumption

IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 THE QUIZ**
- 6 WASHINGTON GRAPEVINE**
- 10 TRADE SHOW CALENDAR**
- 12 PRODUCE WATCH**
- 15 RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES**
- 17 COMMENTS AND ANALYSIS**
- 151 FLORAL WATCH**
- 157 INFORMATION SHOWCASE**
- 158 BLAST FROM THE PAST**

SPECIAL FEATURES

18 FROM THE PAGES OF THE PERISHABLE PUNDIT
 Fraudulent Farmer's Markets 'Detrimental To Legitimate Farms, Retailers And Consumers'

FEATURES

- 30 TURN UP THE SALES HEAT WITH SAVVY SPRING MERCHANDISING**
Working with produce-heavy holidays and smart sales techniques, spring is the perfect time to put your produce department to work.
- 37 FLORIDA SPRING PRODUCE KEEPS SHELVES STOCKED**
Months ahead of the rest of the country, Florida's spring produce brings retailers additional sales rings and consumers a bounty of fresh produce after a long winter.
- 44 WHOLESALE PASS THE TEST OF TOUGH TIMES**
By focusing on long-time customers and offering services that go above and beyond the call of duty, wholesalers find a way to work through a tightened economy.

131 LOOKING DOWN THE ROAD AT MEXICAN IMPORT ROUTES
 Rapid growth of Mexican greenhouses south of the Texas border and improved highways have opened the door for more produce reaching East Coast buyers via Texas.

138 HOW WILL TRACEABILITY AFFECT RIGID PACKAGING?
 Rigid packaging, earth-friendly materials and industry-wide automation are becoming the name of the game.

142 TRACKING TRANSPORTATION LOADS: INSTANT ACCESS
 Seeking to reduce costs, decrease food safety concerns and ensure on-time deliveries, the produce industry embraces tracking technology.

145 REGIONAL MARKET PROFILE: DALLAS
 As the Dallas Farmer's Market improves and continues to draw consumers, the area's wholesalers and distributors look to increase business by adding new staff and focusing on core business strategies.

134 SUPPORT SYSTEMS: QUESTIONS FOR PALLET PROVIDERS

DEPARTMENTS

MERCHANDISING REVIEWS

- 119 Eight Tips To Grow Your Avocado Sales**
Smart promotions, stickered ripe fruit and varied displays keep avocados in consumers' baskets.
- 125 Eight Ways To Make Berry Sales Blossom**
Keep berries top of mind with careful and creative merchandising techniques.

DRIED FRUIT AND NUTS

148 Dried Fruit And Nuts Score Incremental Sales In Produce
 With dried fruit and nuts, you can make a hat trick by winning over athletes, spectators and your sales goals without even breaking a sweat.

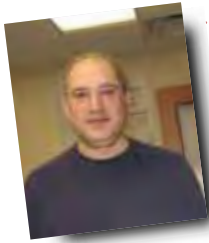
FLORAL AND FOLIAGE MARKETING

152 Showcase Blooming Plants As Potted Treasures
 After nearly an unbearable winter for too many, floral retailers can boost sales by enticing consumers with long lasting blooming plants.



Masters of Merchandising
 starts on page **51**

THIS MONTH'S WINNER



Yuri Zilber
Produce Buyer
Air Stream Foods
Philadelphia, PA

For 10 years, Yuri Zilber has worked as a produce buyer for Air Stream Foods. "I am in charge of the East Coast purchasing for the company," he says. Air Stream is a broadline distributor for airlines.

When asked to specify his duties, Yuri exclaims, "I'm a fireman! I put out fires, doing whatever needs to be done." Typically, that means he organizes deals for daily buying, sets pricing for company sales associates and oversees contract bid work.

"Prior to joining Air Stream, I had my own company called Amazing Foods with a partner," says Yuri. "When we sold the company, I ended up at Air Stream a few years later."

Yuri makes a happy home in the produce business, noting, "You always have to be on top of things. I like the action; it's very dynamic."

When it comes to PRODUCE BUSINESS, he has only recently begun reading the magazine. "It comes to me at our office. It has some insightful articles and I find it helpful for what I do."

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 May issue of PRODUCE BUSINESS. The winner must agree to submit a color photo to be published in that issue.

WIN A CONVECTION OVEN

This convection oven has an automatic rotating carousel to cook foods evenly, and accommodates up to a 12-inch pizza or a 3-lb. roast. Cooking time is reduced by up to 30 percent in this oven, which bakes — with or without convection — and boils from 250-450 degrees F. Includes removable and adjustable racks, a digital control panel, a baking pan, removable drip tray, non-stick interior and stainless steel interior.



QUESTIONS FOR THE MARCH ISSUE

- 1) Name three team members at Maurice A. Auerbach Inc. _____
- 2) The America Trades Produce Conference takes place in which city? _____
- 3) What is the phone number for DNE World Fruit Sales? _____
- 4) Name three ingredients used in Marie's Salad Dressings. _____
- 5) What vitamin is found in Monterey Mushrooms' products? _____
- 6) Name three brands marketed by Trinity Fruit Sales. _____

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:
MARCH QUIZ PRODUCE BUSINESS • P.O. Box 810425 • Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425

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. Prevor
 JPrevor@phoenixmedianet.com

PUBLISHER/EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
 Ken Whitacre
 KWhitacre@phoenixmedianet.com

SPECIAL PROJECTS EDITOR
 Mira Slott
 MSlott@phoenixmedianet.com

ASSISTANT EDITOR
 Amy Shannon
 AShannon@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
 DLvine@phoenixmedianet.com

PRODUCTION LEADER
 Jackie Tucker

PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT
 SUNSHINE GORMAN
 FREDDY PULIDO

DIRECTOR OF ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS
 JASON KAHAN

TRADE SHOW COORDINATOR
 Jackie LoMonte
 JLoMonte@phoenixmedianet.com

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
 Meredith Auerbach, Carol Bareuther,
 Julie Cook Ramirez, Bob Johnson,
 Sandy Lee, Kim Morgan, Jodean Robbins,
 Barbara Robison, Jon VanZile,
 Trisha Wooldridge

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. Prevor, 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



MORE

IS more!



77% **MORE** CONSUMERS SPEND WHEN
STRAWBERRIES
ARE IN THEIR CART

BLUEBERRY PURCHASES
SOARED **{ 17 }** PERCENT LAST YEAR
MAKING THEM THE COMMODITY WITH THE HIGHEST YEAR-TO-YEAR GROWTH

BLACKBERRY
PURCHASES **{ 7% }** IN THE PAST YEAR
JUMPED

Red Blossom



A LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT ON REGULATORY REFORM

By Julie Manes,
Director of Government Relations,
United Fresh Produce Association

Dear Mr. President,

On January 18, the *Wall Street Journal* published an opinion piece that you wrote calling for a complete review of all government regulations. While we appreciate the importance of such a review, and the diligence needed to evaluate each regulation, the United Fresh Produce Association has highlighted several areas in which specific regulatory reforms are needed to enhance the competitiveness of America's fresh fruit and vegetable industry.

Make OSHA Regulations Protective Not Only Of Workers, But Also Of Businesses

There is a clear need on the part of the produce industry to ensure that any regulations that affect businesses will balance the needs and safety of workers with the sustained viability of the business itself. In light of concerns raised about recent proposed rules from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration on issues such as noise standard enforcement and reporting on musculoskeletal disorders, OSHA has had to withdraw both proposals. This demonstrates an explicit need for the federal government to do more outreach to the business community to be fully aware of the impact of proposed regulations.

Ensure EPA Regulatory Action Minimizes Economic Consequences And Maximizes Opportunities

The produce industry needs to cooperate and collaborate with federal policymakers to make sure that regulatory action on issues such as climate change will minimize economic consequences and maximize possible opportunities. Through education and outreach, we need to ensure that reporting on chemical usage from the Environmental Protection Agency accurately conveys the safety standards that products must meet before they are released into the market.

Create Labor Regulations That Allow Produce Industry The Workforce It Needs To Thrive

Given the dependence of the fresh fruit and vegetable industry on a workforce that is heavily populated with workers from other countries, it is necessary for the industry to work closely with federal regulators regarding proper enforcement of immigration policies. However, too many times, those enforcement efforts have been excessive and unnecessarily disruptive. There are troubling signs that your administration and some in Congress will continue to place an emphasis on enforcement and employer sanctions, rather than engage in a meaningful effort to reform immigration laws in order to maximize compliance.

Enforce Health Care Reform That Accounts For The Unique Needs Of The Ag Sector

As efforts to reassess, and potentially replace, parts of the Patient

Protection and Affordable Care Act passed last year, it is critical to make sure the needs of agricultural employers are taken into account. We are different than other businesses in a number of respects. These factors include our dependence on a seasonal workforce; the fact that portions of our workforce may already have health coverage from their native countries; additionally, because we are not price-setters, our ability to pass on the cost of health care benefits is limited; and finally, given the seasonal nature of a large part of agricultural work, employees may work for multiple employers in a year.

Encourage Americans To Get Involved — And Stay Involved — In Agriculture

Congress must pass tax legislation that will incentivize young Americans not only to embark on careers in agriculture, but more importantly, to stay in the agriculture industry. One step toward this goal is the passage of permanent estate tax relief. United Fresh supported legislation passed by Congress last year that extended estate tax relief for two years. Because the agriculture industry is a land-based, capital-intensive industry, farmers have few options for paying estate taxes when they are due.

Resolve The Mexican Cross-Border Trucking Dispute

Your administration has taken a positive step in releasing a pilot program concept document earlier this year that outlines safety requirements for resumption of the cross-border pilot program. We hope that the federal government will do everything it can to continue this positive momentum and come to a resolution that will lead to the end of the Mexican government's current practice of retaliatory tariffs that hurt the produce industry.

Reach Out For Feedback On Hours Of Service

On the subject of the domestic trucking industry, your administration has recently issued a proposed revision of the rules on hours of service. While the industry is still assessing this rule and how it will impact the produce industry, this unfortunately seems to be another case of proposed regulations impacting an industry without sufficient outreach to that industry to determine how best to pursue both public and worker safety without the loss of productivity and potential loss of jobs.

Enforce Food Safety Regulations Based On Risk

Just before Christmas last year, Congress passed the first major food safety legislation in more than 70 years. It will have a profound impact on every segment of the produce chain. As such, it is crucial that the implementation of the new food safety law is directed toward specific risk and not a one-size-fits-all approach to regulating.

Your neighbors on Pennsylvania Avenue are looking forward to continued progress.

The United Fresh Produce Association



AMERICA TRADES PRODUCE
The U.S. / Mexico Trade Conference



March 30 - April 1, 2011
McAllen, Texas Convention Center

If you are looking for new and innovative ways to connect with industry colleagues and policy makers who influence fresh produce imports from Mexico, then the America Trades Produce Conference is just the event for you.

Co-hosted by The Fresh Produce Association of the Americas and Texas Produce Association, this event has been meticulously designed to provide timely industry updates, trends and opportunities in an intimate setting which also allows for unprecedented interaction between industry leaders and policy makers from both sides of the border.

The 2 ½ day conference offers three different tour packages, golf, networking events and dynamic interactive sessions with influential speakers such as:

Dr. Gustavo del Castillo - Economics Professor - College of the North Border - Tijuana
Dr. Roberto Coronado - Economist - Federal Reserve Bank - El Paso
Lic. Gabriel Padilla Maya - General Coordinator for Trade Promotion & Export - ASERCA
Dr. Islam Siddiqui - U.S. Chief Agricultural Negotiator - White House Trade Representatives Office
Tom Stenzel - President & CEO - United Fresh Produce Association
Dr. Domenic Veneziano - Director, Division of Import Operations & Policy - Food and Drug Admin.
Eric Viramontes - CEO - AMHPAC
Karla Whalen - PACA Chief - U.S. Department of Agriculture / PACA
Dr. Bob Whitaker - Chief Science and Technology Officer - Produce Marketing Association
Stephen Whitney - President and CEO - Fruit and Vegetable DRC
Dr. Richard Wike - Associate Director - PEW Research Center

Attendees will include:

- Mexican growers and distributors
- U.S. importers, distributors and buyers
- Customs brokers
- Mexican and U.S. government officials (FDA, DOC, US & Mexican Customs, SAGARPA, PACA, etc.)



To learn more, visit: www.americatradesproduce.com

FOOD PRICES AT CORE OF MIDDLE EAST UNREST

By James Prevor
President & Editor-in-Chief



We had Paul Revere and Lexington and Concord and the “shot heard ‘round the world.” One day in the history of the Arab world, the story that may be told might be of 26-year-old Mohamed Bouazizi, a Tunisian produce vendor, whose cart was seized by the police because he allegedly couldn’t afford the bribes they demanded. Bouazizi, we are told, despairing at the impossibility of the situation of a poor

man in a corrupt country, doused himself with lighter fluid, lit a match and set not only his own body aflame — he died two weeks later — but set aflame protests in Tunisia that took down long-time Tunisian dictator, Zine El-Abidine. The protests spread to Egypt, Bahrain, Libya and other places.

The issue of food prices seems to pop up everywhere in these protests. In Egypt, many experts point to the fact that wheat prices have doubled this year, and that this poor country is the world’s largest importer of wheat. These experts sometimes blame Ben Bernanke, Chairman of the Federal Reserve, for the unrest, pointing out that he has inflated the dollar and that commodities are priced in dollars, making it even more difficult for countries to buy items such as wheat.

This is probably just a smidgen of the story. In addition to weather problems in Russia, Australia and other production centers, the rising powers of Asia have reached levels of affluence where there is little flexibility in how they buy commodities such as wheat. In other words, these countries are rich enough that if wheat is expensive, they will just pay more, and consumption does not dramatically drop. The elasticity of demand for food drops as it accounts for a smaller portion of consumer expenditures.

In a place like Egypt, where much of the population spends more than 50 percent of disposable income on food, price increases lead to destitution quickly. Although it is rarely the destitute that protest, it is, instead, those who thought they had opportunities and see them slipping away.

Americans may not always realize how lucky they are. The latest, 2009 statistics demonstrate that consumers spent 5.5 percent of their disposable income — that is income after taxes — on food to consume at home. They spent another 3.9 percent on food away from home. So, all in all, Americans spend only 9.4 percent of their disposable income on food. Because these numbers include restaurants and prepared foods, much of this money is spent on “atmospherics”

and convenience. The hard-core food budget is far less. The price of commodities, such as wheat, can double and barely dent the budget for most American consumers.

The percentage Americans spend on food has also been dropping steadily. In 1960, it was 17.5 percent of disposable income; in 1970, it was 13.9 percent; and now we are at 9.4 percent. Continuing this trend in the United States and exporting it to places such as Egypt won’t be easy.

For the most part, the relative cost of food doesn’t really have that much to do with the food industry. Yes, Egyptian wheat farmers are less than half as productive as U.S. farmers and less than a quarter as productive as U.S. wheat farmers working on irrigated land. But the big reason why food costs so little in the United States is not that our production methods produce food so inexpensively; it is that our incomes are so high.

This is why advocates for local or for small-scale can argue with a straight face that U.S. food prices are too low. They mean that we are sufficiently rich that we can elect to support other values with our money. Of course, whether people actually want to support the values that these advocates proffer is very much an open question.

Prosperity in the world depends on many things, including changing cultures of corruption and building secure property rights to encourage savings and investment. The food industry does have a part to play, though, and we shouldn’t assume that our low-cost food supply is guaranteed forever.

In fact, an anti-technology bent, opposing genetically modified foods and endorsing food production based on aesthetic values such as local and small-scale can pose great problems down the road.

We need to remember when we promote organic items and things of that sort, we are promoting an option for affluent people — we are not propagating a serious response to the world’s need for food. In fact, many of the limitations on food production in poor countries around the world are caused because land reform laws have kept average farm size too small-scale, because they don’t use synthetic fertilizers, and they reject GMOs out of ignorance and fear.

What the future holds for the Middle East is unknown. Almost half the women in Egypt are illiterate. Rumors that the Israelis have planted sharks in the Red Sea are widely accepted as facts. It is hard to imagine a Jeffersonian democracy quickly rising from the ashes of the revolution. We can only wish the people in these countries well.

We can also set an example by rejecting anti-scientific approaches to food production and by recognizing the great blessing inexpensive food is for the people of the world — ourselves included.

pb

In a place like Egypt, where much of the population spends more than 50 percent of disposable income on food, price increases lead to destitution quickly.

PASSION

FOR EXCELLENCE IN EVERYTHING WE DO



ALL IN ONE PLACE

SAVE TIME. SAVE MONEY. SAVE MILES.

COMMODITIES • FRESH-CUT VEGETABLES • PARTY PLATTERS • VEGGIE SNACKS • CLUB PACKS • SALADS



BROCCOLINI IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF MANN PACKING COMPANY, INC.

Salinas, CA • www.veggiesmadeeasy.com • 800.884.MANN

MARCH 3 - 5, 2011
SOUTHERN EXPOSURE 2011

To promote the consumption of fresh fruits & vegetables in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky and Virginia through good fellowship, cooperation and mutual interest among its members.

Conference Venue: Caribe Royale Resort & Convention Center, Orlando, FL

Conference Management: Southeast Produce Council, Inc., Sun City Center, FL

Phone: 813-633-5556 • **Fax:** 813-653-4479

Email: info@seproducecouncil.com

Website: www.seproducecouncil.com

March 8 - 10, 2011
WORLD FLORAL EXPO 2011

The international floriculture trade fair for the US flower buyer.

Conference Venue: Miami Airport Convention Center, Miami, FL

Conference Management: HPP Exhibitions, Amsterdam, Holland

Phone: 305-969-3301 • **Fax:** 305-436-3772

Email: melvin@hpp.nl

Website: www.hppexhibitions.com/floriculture

March 9 - 11, 2011**ANTAD 2011**

Mexico's largest retail and supermarket show.

Conference Venue: Expo Guadalajara Convention Center, Guadalajara, Jalisco Mexico

Conference Management: US Agricultural Trade Office (ATO), Washington DC

Email: Tobitha.Jones@usda.gov

Website: www.antad.org.mx

March 17 - 18, 2011**AGRITRADE 2011**

AgExport presents the 15th edition of the most important international agricultural trade fair in Central America designed to increase international business opportunities.

Conference Venue: Hotel Casa Santo Domingo, Antigua, Guatemala

Conference Management: AgExport, Guatemala

Phone: 502-242-23559 • **Fax:** 502-242-23434

Email: agritrade@agexport.org.gt

Website: www.comunitatis.com/agritrade

March 30, 2011**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA EXPO 2011**

Since 1965, the Fresh Produce & Floral Council has been providing unique networking and business growth opportunities for professionals in the produce and floral industries in California. Our members include growers, shippers, wholesalers, brokers, distributors and retailers of produce and/or floral items.

Conference Venue: Alameda Fairgrounds, Pleasanton, CA

Conference Management: Fresh Produce & Floral Council, La Mirada, CA

Phone: 714-739-0177 • **Fax:** 714-739-0226

Email: info@fpfc.org

Website: www.fpfc.org

March 31 - APRIL 2, 2011**PBH ANNUAL MEETING 2011**

PBH will celebrate its 20th anniversary at the 2011 annual meeting at the Monterey Plaza.

Conference Venue: Monterey Plaza Resort & Spa, Monterey, CA

Conference Management: Produce for Better Health Foundation, Hockessin, DE

Phone: 302-235-2329 • **Fax:** 302-235-5555

Email: salston@pbhfoundation.org

Website: www.pbhfoundation.org

April 13 - 15, 2011**CPMA 2011**

This annual convention and trade show provides a unique opportunity for industry leaders to connect with peers and

enhance business opportunities in Canada, while also offering a combination of education and networking opportunities.

Conference Venue: Palais des Congres de Montreal, Montreal, Canada

Conference Management: Canadian Produce Marketing Association, Ottawa, Ontario Canada

Phone: 613-226-4187 • **Fax:** 613-226-2984

Email: vmarcu@cpma.ca

Website: www.cpma.ca

April 27, 2011**NEW ENGLAND PRODUCE & FLORAL EXPO 2011**

NEPC Produce & Floral Expo

Conference Venue: Boston Convention Center, Boston, MA

Conference Management: New England Produce Council, Burlington, MA

Phone: 781-273-0444 • **Fax:** 781-273-4154

Email: nepc2@rcn.com

Website: www.newenglandproduce.com

MAY 2 - 5, 2011**UNITED FRESH 2011**

The United Fresh Marketplace features marketers and merchandisers of fresh produce for retail, foodservice and wholesale levels of trade.

Conference Venue: Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, New Orleans, LA

Conference Management: United Fresh Produce Association, Washington DC

Phone: 202-303-3424 • **Fax:** 202-303-3433

Email: united@unitedfresh.org

Website: www.unitedfresh.org

May 11 - 13, 2011**SIAL CANADA 2011**

This international tradeshow, dedicated to food industry professionals, targets the North American market.

Conference Venue: Palais Des Congres De Montreal, Montreal, Canada

Conference Management: Imex Management Inc., Charlotte, NC

Phone: 704-365-0041 • **Fax:** 704-365-8426

Email: Erich@ImexManagement.com

Website: www.imexmgt.com

May 11 - 14, 2011**HOFEX 2011**

The 14th International Exhibition of Food & Drink, Hotel, Restaurant & Foodservice Equipment, Supplies and Services.

Conference Venue: Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre, Hong Kong, Hong Kong

Conference Management: Overseas Exhibition Services Ltd, London

Phone: 442-078-402146 • **Fax:** 442-078-402111

Email: hofex@oesallworld.com

Website: www.hofex.com

May 21 - 24, 2011**NRA SHOW 2011**

The National Restaurant Association Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show is the largest single gathering of restaurant, foodservice and lodging professionals in the Western Hemisphere.

Conference Venue: McCormick Place, Chicago, IL

Conference Management: National Restaurant Association, Chicago, IL

Phone: 312-853-2537 • **Fax:** 312-853-2548

Email: kskibbe@restaurant.org

Website: www.restaurant.org/show

May 21 - 24, 2011**AMERICAN FOOD FAIR 2011**

The largest gathering of restaurant and foodservice professionals in North America.

Conference Venue: McCormick Place, Chicago, IL

Conference Management: NASDA, Fairfax, VA

Email: aff@naylor.com

Phone: (703) 934-4700 • **Fax:** (703) 934-4899

Website: www.nasdatradeshow.org

Premium
Quality
Peppers.

365 Days
A Year.



PRIME
TIME

THE PEPPER PEOPLE
www.primetimeproduce.com

COACHELLA, CALIFORNIA USA
Sales Phone 760.399.4166

NOGALES, ARIZONA USA
Sales Phone 520.281.4993





Watch Slideshow
On Your Smartphone



THE NEW YORK
PRODUCE SHOW
AND CONFERENCE

Presented by
EASTERN PRODUCE COUNCIL
AND
PRODUCE BUSINESS

SAVE THE DATE
NOVEMBER 7-9
2011



IT ALL HAPPENS
IN NEW YORK

WWW.NYPRODUCESHOW.COM

TRANSITIONS

THE GIUMARRA COMPANIES LOS ANGELES, CA

Marco Nuques has joined Giumarra VBM's West Coast sales team based in Vernon, CA. He previously worked as trading manager for Global Pacific Produce Inc. He brings more than 10 years of experience in the produce industry, and will be responsible for managing key retail accounts and developing new business.



Ruth Campos-Martinez has joined Giumarra VBM's sales team. She previously worked in Giumarra VBM's West Coast office for three years, most recently as operations manager. On the sales team, she will coordinate shipments and build relationships with new and existing customers.



Jon Palecko has joined Giumarra VBM's East Coast sales team based in Avondale, PA. He will develop retail accounts and help manage orders. He previously worked as a distributor sales representative for Phillip Rosenau Co., and a quality control specialist for the Oppenheimer Group.



DRISCOLL STRAWBERRY ASSOCIATES INC. WATSONVILLE, CA

Kevin Murphy has been promoted to president of Driscoll's of the Americas from his current position as senior vice president of supply and operations. He will assist in leading the development of Driscoll's strategic direction. Driscoll's of the Americas will join the recently expanded Driscoll's of Europe and Driscoll's Australia business units.



IPPOLITO INTERNATIONAL LP SALINAS, CA

Mark Roth has joined the sales team. He will be handling sales for existing customers, developing new business and overseeing commodity management. He brings 25 years of experience in the produce industry, including the most recent two years with Chieftain Harvesting, as well as 16 years with Mills Family Farms.



U.S. APPLE ASSOCIATION VIENNA, VA

Allison Parker, MS, RD, has been selected to oversee USApple's National Apple Month (NAM) program. She is a registered dietician and USApple's director of consumer health and education. She will provide staff leadership for the NAM Committee, a separately funded, self-sustaining program aimed at increasing apple consumption.



COLUMBIA MARKETING INTERNATIONAL WENATCHEE, WA

Mike Nicholson has joined the domestic sales team. His duties will include working with current and future customers on growing CMI category share. With sales experience in both export and domestic markets, he has accumulated a wide range of sales experience representing Washington shippers of fresh apples, pears, cherries and apricots.



VIVA GLOBAL MARKETING LLC NOGALES, AZ

Erika Anne Lopez has joined the international team of strategic marketing managers. A media expert with more than 15 years of experience in the media industry, she will bring her special event planning expertise to VGM and assist with other special projects.



NEW PRODUCTS

ROASTED IMPORTED HAZELNUTS

A.J. Trucco, the Bronx, NY, has announced the availability of roasted, imported vacuum-packed hazelnuts in a colorful and informative 7-oz. container. This new item is imported from Italy. A.J. Trucco is a leading importer of Italian kiwifruit, chestnuts and internationally sourced dried fruit, nuts and garlic.



ULTRA SHIELD POTATO BAG

Fox Packaging, McAllen, TX, released results from a Michigan State University study that showed its Fox Combo Ultra Shield potato bag blocked more than 99 percent of all visible light and over 90 percent of ultraviolet light. Available in 1- to 2-lb. sizes, the poly/mesh bag has the added benefit of a two-layer poly film that protects potatoes from light damage.



NEW SALAD BLEND

River Ranch Fresh Foods LLC, Salinas, CA, has introduced Heritage Blend, a proprietary salad blend that offers a robust and distinctive alternative to traditional spring mix blends. The specially formulated variety of petite red and green lettuces features a medley of compact leaves in an array of shapes, textures and vibrant colors.



SMALL-SIZED PUMPKINS

Sakata Seed America Inc., Morgan Hill, CA, has introduced Hijinks, a small-sized pumpkin variety that weighs seven to nine pounds. These very uniform pumpkins have smooth, deep orange skin with nice square shoulders and medium-deep ribbing. Seed is available for immediate sale through Sakata distributors.



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

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.

Contact Blue Book to improve your sales results in 2011:
www.producebluebook.com or 630-668-3500.



Blue Book Services | *Profit from Experience*

630.668.3500 | info@bluebookservices.com | www.producebluebook.com

ORGANICS BRAND

Deardorff Family Farms, Oxnard, CA, has introduced its new Deardorff Organics Brand. The new label offers an array of USDA-Certified Organic items, including celery, broccoli, romaine, green leaf, red leaf, green cabbage, red cabbage, napa, bok choy, baby bok choy, spinach, cilantro, collards, daikon, kale, parsley and many varieties of chards.



COMPREHENSIVE RECIPE COOKBOOK

Earthbound Farm, San Juan Bautista, CA, founder, Myra Goodman, has released *The Earthbound Book: 250 Recipes for Delicious Food and a Healthy Planet*, a three-tiered resource and helpful reference guide full of easy-to-follow tips, cooking primers and detailed ingredient information. It also serves as a guide for making kitchens more eco-friendly.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

NMB RELEASES BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES MANUAL

The National Mango Board, Orlando, FL, has released its *Mango Postharvest Best Management Practices Manual*, a guide designed to improve mango quality at each step of the mango supply chain. The publication is the culmination of nearly four years of research and analysis conducted by a team of mango experts led by Dr. Jeff Brecht of the University of Florida.



PFK RAISES \$194,000 FOR PBS KIDS

Produce for Kids, Orlando, FL, raised more than \$194,000 last fall as part of the "Eat Smart for a Great Start" campaign. The funds benefit PBS KIDS, which provides content, resources and tools that support the positive development of the whole child. PFK also continued its annual nationwide teacher outreach as part of the 2010 fall campaign.



MANN PACKING PLANS NATIONAL SALAD MONTH PROMOTION

Mann Packing Co. Inc., Salinas, CA, has partnered with Litehouse Foods to plan a cross-promotion in May for National Salad Month. The promotion will include an instant redeemable coupon and joint recipes. The two companies collaborated in February to promote the 2011 Chinese New Year. A third joint promotion is also planned for October.



SANTA CRUZ BERRY FARMING GEARS UP FOR STRAWBERRY SEASON

Santa Cruz Berry Farming, Watsonville, CA, has been formed by Fritz Koontz (pictured), a former partner in Beach Street Farms LLC. The new company will specialize in organic, but will also grow conventional strawberries. Koontz will continue to grow and ship organic and conventional strawberries while developing, growing and marketing proprietary varieties.



FPAA: DISTRIBUTORS RECEIVE PRODUCE DESPITE WEATHER IN MEXICO

Fresh Produce Association of the Americas, Nogales, AZ, reported growers and distributors expect to have steady but reduced volumes throughout the growing season, despite low temperatures the first week of February. West Mexico has a variety of microclimates, meaning that while some fields were damaged, growers from other areas will still have marketable supplies of key items.



PECO PALLET CROSSING BORDERS NOW SHIPPING TO MEXICO

PECO Pallet, Yonkers, NY, is now shipping its signature red wood block pallets to manufacturers and retailers in Mexico. In December, 2010, the company registered PECO Pallet Mexico as a legal entity and an authorized importer of Record. This enables PECO Pallet's customers to easily transport goods on PECO pallets across the U.S. border, to and from Mexico.



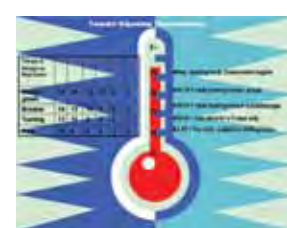
REDLINE SOLUTIONS APPLICATIONS RECEIVE VALIDATION

RedLine Solutions Inc., Santa Clara, CA, announced its RedLine Cooler and RedLine Field traceability solutions applications successfully completed Motorola Solutions' Enterprise Mobility Validated Solution Program. RedLine also leveraged Motorola's Solution JumpStart program to develop its enterprise mobility solution.



FARMER'S BEST ADDS HANDLING SECTION TO CATEGORY GUIDE

Farmer's Best, Nogales, AZ, has added a new section to its Maximizing Tomato Marketing Guide, which was introduced last season. The new tomato handling and ripening section includes excerpts from U.C. Davis' post-harvest programs and features a colorful thermometer handout indicating ideal transit and arrival temperatures for the fruit.



RAIN FAILS TO DAMPEN 2011 CALIFORNIA ASPARAGUS CROP

California Asparagus Commission, Stockton, CA, announced its California asparagus growers expect production to be on time in March, despite unseasonably wet and cool weather. All asparagus growing regions in California are reporting normal harvest timing and volume prospects. Growers expect steady demand for the crop.



SUNNYRIDGE FARM PLANS NEW DISTRIBUTION CENTER

Sunnyridge Farm, Winter Haven, FL, announced plans for a new distribution center in Hawthorne, FL. The new facility will feature over 26,000 square feet of distribution and packing space and will service growers in the fast-growing Hawthorne region. It is expected to be complete by the end of March 2011. Initially, the facility is slated to handle blueberry needs.



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

Health And Nutrition Claims Work For Produce: Hard, But Not Impossible To Make Money!

BY JOHN L. STANTON, CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF FOOD MARKETING, SAINT JOSEPH'S UNIVERSITY



Given Wal-Mart's new commitment to health and nutrition with fresh produce, one of the enduring questions among produce marketers is, "Does promoting the health/nutrition benefits of a product work?" I would not have the hubris to think that question can be definitively answered in this article, but there are some insights that might make

Consumers are immune to advertising and promotional messages so a press release alone is not enough. In-store marketing is an ideal way to get the message across when consumers are in the buying mode. Packaging should be innovative and intrusive. It should catch consumers' attention.

the decision more effective and expectations more realistic. The first question to ask is, "What do you mean work?" The easy answer is, "make more money." However, I am sure you guessed that it is not that easy because, among other things, one must specify over what period of time.

The first problem is that consumers do not often do what they say they will do. In the short run, it may be difficult to get consumers to act on what they plan. While numerous reports show that consumers have a substantial desire to change their behavior toward eating more healthful foods, they often don't. A Mintel report on Functional Foods in 2009 said:

"By and large, Americans have good intentions when it comes to diet and health. Nearly two-thirds of respondents claim to try to eat healthier foods these days, and more than half agree that they work at eating a well-balanced diet. Yet for many, healthy eating can be a challenge. Some 38 percent, an increase of four percentage points over 2006, say that they don't have enough time to prepare and eat healthy meals. Fewer than half claim to try to avoid empty calories or check food and beverage labels before purchasing them. Fewer than three in 10 claim to eat five servings of fruits and vegetables a day, as long recommended by Produce For Better Health's Five-a-Day program."

A second issue in promoting healthful foods is the fickle nature of the American consumer, which is fed by the media hyping every new research report by PR-hungry researchers. Each week, some new report hits the airwaves about how this "new" nutrient will cure something. Consumers have become inured against the constant barrage of what cures what.

Nutrition has become a fad, not a trend. Some of the really big media/press "nutrients stars" in the past were lycopene (remember when tomatoes were the big health food star?), vitamin E, vitamin C, zinc, beta carotene, and there was even more hype for diets like low-carb, Scarsdale, Calcium-based, Grapefruit and the Hollywood diet, to mention a few. Google trends also show that concepts like low-fat, low-cholesterol, low-salt and zinc are all trending down since 2003. It is important to note that vitamin D still has a positive growth

trend, as Google trends shows an upward trend in both vitamin D online searches and number of new releases. However, consumers are still searching for the fountain of youth that evaded Ponce De Leon so many years ago.

In the face of these obstacles, can produce make money promoting health and nutrition? To answer this question, one must consider both the long- and short-term benefits. Let's consider the short-term. By short-term, I mean look at whether sales increased more during the time period that a specific produce item is being hyped as having some important health value.

Let's look at some other products for examples. Blueberries were identified as a "superfood" around 2000. Using USDA disappearance data, blueberries had an average annual increase in sales of about 6 percent from 1980 to 1999, and from 2000 to 2009, the increase was 30 percent annually. For perspective, that was 73 pounds in 2000 to 292 pounds in 2009. At the same time, prices for wild blueberries grew from \$1.20 per pound to \$2.45 per pound (cultivated had a similar pattern). Spinach had about an average annual increase of 14 percent in sales from 1980 to 2000. However, from 2000 to 2007 it increased about 17 percent per year. Per-capita consumption went from .44 pounds to 2.2 pounds per year, the highest since the mid-1940s.

Not all the health and nutrition promotions were successful. Look at oranges. Oranges have been promoted as a nutritious food for years yet, per-capita consumption of orange juice has been steady or declining...and everyone believes oranges are good for you! Oats were called a "superfood" and were identified as a cure for just about everything, and its sales increased by 2 percent per year from 2001 to 2008, when the sales increased an average of less than 1 percent per year from 1974 to 2000.

Orange juice may also provide another lesson: The value of the media spotlight to create a sense of newness. The issue with

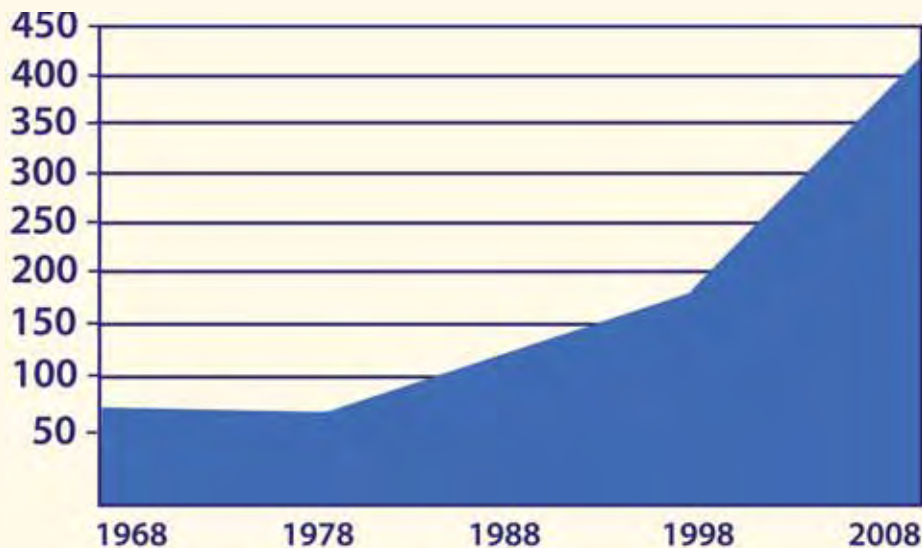
orange juice may be that everyone already believes that orange juice is good for you. Continuing the message may not be enough to motivate consumers to buy. On the other hand a “new” discovery about a food such as mushrooms and Vitamin D may attract new consumer interest for a new discovery. The media spotlight gives the marketer a new angle for the existing product. But remember, “new” doesn’t last forever!

Finally, there is the example of walnuts, which are a plant source of omega-3 fatty acids, another hot nutrient on consumers’ lists. Walnuts are an example of the difficulty of getting the facts right. A recent press release from the California Walnut Board reports, “Walnut harvest will be 17 percent higher than the previous year.” It also says, “Consumers continue to demonstrate a strong preference for walnuts...Nielsen reported in 2009 that omega-3 foods [which includes walnuts] bucked the recession and recorded a 42 percent growth last year.” However, it does not show how much walnut sales increased. However, USDA data shows a change in per-capita consumption, based on disappearance data, of almost no change averaging about 0.4 to 0.5 pounds.

Another reasonable question to ask is: Have other fruits and vegetables had increases in consumption similar to the superfoods mentioned above? In other words are these real increases or just part of an overall produce trend? Most research reports agree that consumers are not eating more fruits and vegetables. A report on WebMD highlighted a Johns Hopkins study that showed among U.S. adults, fruit consumption is holding steady, but vegetable consumption is headed down — even if you count French fries. Using this as a milestone, the increases shown above for the superfoods are substantial, as they have “bucked the trend.” The simple answer is that there may be positive short-term results from nutrition/health marketing, but expectations must be tempered.

However, the real value may be in the long-term. To look at the long-term, we have to go back far enough for a trend or fad to have come and gone — or stabilized. Using data from *New Product News* from 1989 to 1998, one can track the number of new products targeted to any nutritional

**North American Highbush Blueberry Production 1968 to 2008
Millions of Pounds**



GRAPH COURTESY OF U.S. Highbush BLUEBERRY COUNCIL

When blueberries were identified as a “superfood” around 2000, there was a spike in annual sales.

segment as a reflection of the consumer interest in that area.

The following claims were tracked in the study mentioned above: low calories, reduced fat, reduced salt, no calorie and high calcium. It appears that in every case the number of new products peaks after two or three years after some media PR event, and then, just as quickly, falls. The interesting issue is the final equilibrium level is almost always higher than the starting point. This failure to fall back to the same starting point is the long-term benefit of the campaign. The residual effect, which, if maintained for years, would far exceed the value of the short-term run.

It appears that the evidence suggests that marketing toward nutrition can be a profitable approach. However, here are some lessons that can be used to make the process more successful.

1. The short-run success comes from capitalizing on the fad aspect of the nutrient. When the spotlight falls in an area that your product excels, be sure to put as much resources against this as needed to ensure that consumers are aware of the “golden nutri-

ent currently in fancy.” In other words, get in and get out!

2. Use every marketing tool possible to get that message across. Consumers are immune to advertising and promotional messages so a press release alone is not enough. In-store marketing is an ideal way to get the message across when consumers are in the buying mode. Packaging should be innovative and intrusive. It should catch consumers’ attention. More knowledge does not change behavior.

3. Remember that the real objective is to create a habit of buying and be ready to shift your marketing programs to a continuity objective when the spotlight moves. Keep them coming back when the “reason” they came is gone. Don’t waste money beating the drum on a hackneyed topic.

4. The long-term results from a successful health/nutrition campaign may not be realized until the actual fad has moved on and you have a residual and permanent lift. If you believe the health and nutrition message, don’t give up too soon.



Saint Joseph's University, through the Food Marketing Department, offers both a BS and MBA in food marketing where food marketing is the largest major in the university. The department has a job placement center exclusively for food marketing majors. Besides degree programs, the department offers custom designed non-credit seminars for food industry companies.

Despite Ambiguities, Ride The Health Marketing Tide

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



Professor Stanton's article is exceptionally useful for the produce industry because so many firms and promotional organizations, and even the industry as a whole, default to health promotion without much evidence that this is particularly effective.

Even here, though, there is ambiguity between the impact of "news" regarding the healthful nature of a particular item and the promotion of that news. In other words, around the year 2000, blueberries may have been identified as a "superfood" and the blueberry industry may have promoted that fact and consumption of blueberries may have zoomed. But we don't know to what extent industry or corporate efforts caused that boom, as opposed to the general dissemination of information through media, schools, etc.

We also don't have very good information of the way the core characteristics of the product influence the way consumers react to health news. Blueberries are tasty, can be eaten raw and can easily replace other fruits, so one can increase one's consumption simply by putting blueberries on a cheesecake rather than strawberries.

It is also notable that we are not certain that the very kinds of promotion that might work for individual shippers of a specific commodity will also work for the overall produce industry — after all, a blueberry shipper need only take business from another blueberry shipper, and the blueberry industry need only take business from other berries. For the overall produce industry to increase consumption, it has to take business from the chip industry or the cookie industry or some other non-produce food.

This speaks to another concern, as we don't know the degree of passion such health reports create among consumers. Even a tepid observer of the news might hear something good about blueberries and toss them in the cart rather than another fruit. Getting them to reduce ice cream consumption so consumers can eat more blueberries is another matter entirely.

Of course, all this speaks to consumption, and the interaction of health news and

produce consumption can also be complex.

If some good news comes out about the health benefit of eating pears, the one thing we know is that pear consumption in the world will not increase much this year or next or the year after. It can't, because pear trees take years to produce fruit.

Possibly, if the good news drives up demand and the supply is fixed, prices may rise and so Dr. Stanton's question — will producers "make more money"? — would be answered in the affirmative.

Yet the flip side of this phenomenon also indicates that with certain crops, one could see a significant increase in consumption and no increase in profitability for individual players. Imagine a grower of a row crop with low barriers to entry. If this grower has a fixed acreage and all the increase in demand created by some positive health news is satisfied by new growers, then our original fixed quantity grower benefits not at all from increased demand.

So Professor Stanton's question about the producer making more money may then be answered negatively.

One other issue that may impact the way nutrition claims work is whether the claims happen to be true. Lots of claims are made and are even supported by individual studies. These studies, though, are often quite small and don't have the rigor to actually establish a sustained health benefit. Sometimes, even when a health benefit is established, it can be inconsequential. For example, studies may prove a particular item to be an excellent source of some nutrient that is plentiful and so few people need more of this particular nutrient.

Another issue is whether health marketing, even if effective, is actually the most effective way to spend money in the promotion of fresh produce. In other words, maybe the industry should just do a little PR on the health claims and put its money into promoting the decadence and sinful luxury of berries with ice cream and chocolate.

Much of the data in Professor Stanton's article speaks to issues such as how health-related news can lead to new product intro-

ductions. But not all, or even most, of these new products are likely to be fresh. In the produce industry, this is a key issue because very often, the product for processing is a totally different industry. So doubling apple juice consumption may mostly help the Chinese apple producers. A sudden surge in frozen broccoli sales won't help the companies that grow and market for the fresh industry.

We are not certain that the very kinds of promotion that might work for individual shippers of a specific commodity will also work for the overall produce industry.

There is probably a real dilemma in marketing produce in terms of health claims. The claims most likely to boost consumption are A) Highly specific and B) Apply to sweet fruit.

The problem is also two-fold: A) The strongest science applies to the general proposition that a diet rich in fruits and vegetables can help people fight obesity, etc., and B) The items most likely to provide great benefit are rather bitter vegetables, not sweet fruit.

Professor Stanton gives us a worthwhile analysis because he tells it straight. Regardless of the certainty of any health benefit, there is a marketing tide, and one should try to ride it while one can.



Fraudulent Farmer's Markets 'Detrimental To Legitimate Farms, Retailers And Consumers'

FROM JIM PREVOR'S PERISHABLE PUNDIT 02.09.2011

Our piece, *Fraud At Farmer's Markets*, focused on the issue of fraud committed by vendors at these markets who sell produce that the vendors claim is grown on their own farm, grown locally, grown without the use of any "sprays" etc., but in reality, is conventional produce bought at the local wholesale market. In fact, it is the exact same produce sold by supermarkets, except worse, because it sits out in a hot parking lot, on a street or in a public park all day.

We received a number of letters. We thought this one particularly thoughtful:

I personally enjoy visiting and shopping at the local farmers market. Lots of beautiful produce can be found there, as well as a few legitimate farmers.

However, as a farmer myself, I have an unfair advantage compared to the average consumer; I can easily see produce that has been purchased by the seller from outside the area, even from Mexico. I know what grows in my area, in what season, what quality is available here and what is being brought in from outside the area.

Farmer's market consumers are easily misled because they are being told exactly what they want to hear: local, organic, pesticide-free and even sustainable. This may be music to their ears, but for a farmer like me who can see what goes on, "local," "organic," "pesticide-free" and "sustainable" are words that should send up red flags among consumers. Unfortunately, much of the time these words are simply not true.

The market managers are focused on making their market a success, and that means a busy market, not necessarily an honest one. The local agricultural commissioner does not have the resources to police these operations, and there is much money to be made from eager consumers. Many of these farmer's markets are pulling in far more people than the local supermarkets



with which they compete.

There is another kind of fraud that takes place at the farmer's market as well. In most cases, the markets operate under an honor system when it comes to the space rent that is collected. The space rent is often based upon a percentage of sales. This is where the fraud comes in. The market operators simply take the vendors' word for how much they sold. There is nothing done to verify the actual sales, and many of the vendors I have seen are getting away with paying almost nothing for the space.

The public subsidy of these vendors goes further. The massive appeal of these markets is draining significant business from established supermarkets that make major contributions to the community. These supermarkets have to pay legitimate rent, utilities, worker and liability insurance, health insurance, payroll tax, property tax, income tax and food safety costs among myriad other costs. Many of these businesses donate generously to the local

community as well. They are losing business to unfair competitors who do not have to pay these legitimate costs and who, oftentimes, are selling the same exact produce.

At the farmer's market, people don't seem to notice that the produce is usually transported from the farm (or wherever) in a non-refrigerated vehicle, and that it is displayed all day with no refrigeration to keep it fresh. Most of these farms would fail any kind of food safety audit, and it could be a blessing that the produce they are sneaking in from other growers may have actually come from a third-party-audited farm.

These farmer's markets seem to be serving a segment of the population who are happy to subsidize a group of people that provide them with what fits into their ideology of local, organic and sustainable. This fantasy is the perfect setup to make them feel like they are doing their part to save the planet and their families from the evil industrial farmer. This is a serious matter that is detrimental to legitimate farms, retailers and to



2010 MARKETING EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNERS

- Avocados From Mexico
- California Giant Berry Farms
- Columbia Marketing International Corp.
- Dole Fresh Vegetables
- Earthbound Farm
- Idaho Potato Commission
- Litehouse Foods
- National Mango Board
- Ocean Mist Farms/Wegmans
- Pandol Brothers Inc.
- Tanimura & Antle
- University of Massachusetts
- Vidalia Onion Committee

TURN YOUR MARKETING INTO AN **AWARDING** EXPERIENCE

Right now, and on through June 3, 2011, we're taking entries for the **23rd 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 service providers. Print, broadcast and other media are eligible to win.

To participate, send us the following for each entry:

1. Your name, company, address and phone.

2. Type of business.

3. Name and dates of promotion (must have taken place between June 1, 2010 and June 1, 2011).

4. Promotion objectives.

5. Description of promotion.

6. Promotion results (sales or traffic increases, media attention, etc.). What made this program a success?

7. All support materials used in the promotion – such as POP, ads, posters, TV commercials.

High-resolution images to illustrate the promotion are 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 3, 2011

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

consumers.

— *David Sasuga, Owner, Fresh Origins, San Marcos, CA*

Part of David's point is that there is a public-policy concern here. In an age of tight municipal budgets — or, for that matter, in any age — it is obviously not acceptable to have people cheating on the fees due to the municipality.

This is especially true when these fees are in lieu of rent and taxes, which competitive vendors have to pay to sell fresh produce in stores.

Of course, we would make the point stronger by asking what business any municipality has in giving any particular group of vendors control of municipal property. If a city feels it doesn't need to keep its parks open on a Saturday or thinks it OK to block off a street, the right thing to do is auction off the use of the property for lawful purposes.

Maybe a farmer's market operator will win out, or maybe someone who wants to

what conceivable reason should the public provide a subsidy to one of these farmers but not the other?

As to the core issue of our first piece in this series — consumers being defrauded — David's letter follows logically on one of David's areas of concern: Deception. David kicked off our coverage of a most controversial area when he sent along an article that we included in a piece titled, *'Spiked' Organic Fertilizer Raises Consumer Doubts About Organic Definition*.

He also followed up with a letter during the same conversation that we included in our piece, *Pundit's Mailbag — As 'Spiked' Organic Fertilizer Investigation Widens, Potential Grows For Weaker Consumer Confidence In All Fresh Produce*. In that letter, David pointed out why the whole industry needed to be concerned about a possible deception being perpetrated against organic consumers:

This is more than just a quirky organic produce issue. While it remains a tiny

trade's case.

If we have a group of farmers, or even *faux* farmers, that start getting busted — as NBC-LA did by catching the miscreants in the Los Angeles area — it will gradually make farmers, fruit and vegetable farmers especially, look like cheats.

As this is a local issue with national implications, perhaps our national associations should consider establishing a position and task force on this matter. They could insist on one of two things: Either the farmer's markets be open to everyone — so retailers like Schnucks or Kroger could buy a booth and sell produce if desired. Further, that procedures be established to make sure everyone is paying rent and taxes. They could charge a flat fee for rent or they could sell tickets as they do at carnivals and make that the only legal tender at the Farmer's Market.

Alternatively, if the farmer's markets are to be reserved for farmers selling their own product, those rules need to be strictly enforced. Perhaps some arrangement could be made whereby the vendors pay a user fee to have everyone properly vetted, which would include random site inspections on the farms and review of any promotional claims — such as “organic” or “sustainable” or “no spray” that might be used. The key is that authorization to display should not be in the hands of the management of the farmer's market as they have a conflict of interest and might be tempted to bend the rules to fill up the market or keep a popular vendor. It also seems that these markets ought to do something on food safety — even if it is just requiring those growers who are exempt from the recent food safety law to declare that on a sign.

When we ran the article indicating the fraud going on at farmer's markets, several supermarket chains inquired about doing reprints. They know they are in competition with these farmer's markets and that the playing field isn't level. If the supermarket association, FMI, takes the lead here, it will come out as big business against the farmers. Maybe United and/or PMA could start a coalition, though, to make these points more forcefully. It certainly seems as if the status quo — more and more farmer's markets with many phony farmers defrauding consumers — is not an acceptable situation.

Many thanks to David Sasuga and Fresh Origins for helping to advance the thinking of the trade on this important issue.

We actually see no public-policy purpose being served by the rule that only farmers selling their own product can rent booths in these markets. Why shouldn't Wegmans be able to gather product from all its many local vendors and offer them for sale in this venue?

sell used books or an art fair or even a supermarket that wants to bid on the property to open a temporary store. Not to do so is just to leave money on the table or, more specifically, to provide a subsidy to a politically favored industry.

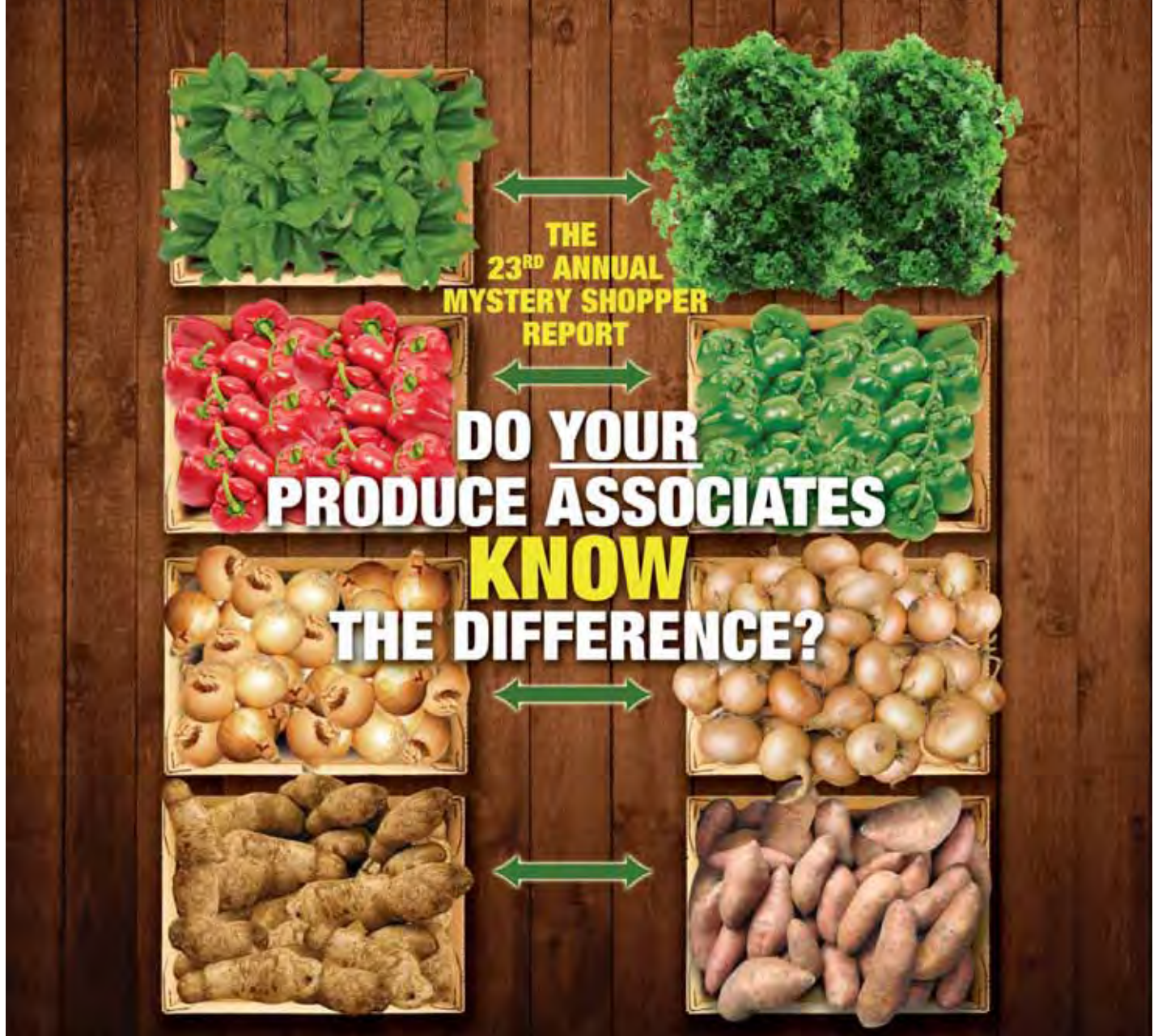
We actually see no public-policy purpose being served by the rule that only farmers selling their own product can rent booths in these markets. Why shouldn't Wegmans be able to gather product from all its many local vendors and offer them for sale in this venue?

The whole setup is arbitrary. A farmer with a willing spouse, healthy parents and lots of children to provide free labor will find the opportunity to sell at a farmer's market to be lucrative. A childless widow running the farm may well think it wiser to sell her product through a distributor or direct to some company like Wegmans. For

percentage of overall production and sales, organic produce gets top billing with the media these days.

Consumer trust in any kind of fresh produce concerns all of us, and when the organic leadership and organic certifiers are not willing to do the right thing, it hurts everyone in the produce business as we continue to face major challenges in maintaining consumer confidence in the integrity and safety of fresh produce.

The same logic, of course, applies to consumers being defrauded at farmer's markets. One of the most valuable assets the industry has is the public trust for farmers. That is why Ocean Spray and Blue Diamond have farmers in their ads, and it is why every time some television program wants to interview an industry rep, we find a farmer in jeans, not a Gucci-shoed, Brioni-suited lobbyist to make the



While the economy may be recuperating some from its drastic downturn, there are still many shoppers who are feeling the pinch, and while preparing meals at home is certainly less expensive than relying on restaurants, grocery bills can easily add up. Moreover, fresh produce is often mistakenly considered unaffordable. But that couldn't be further from the truth. In fact, certain items of fresh produce offer the most healthful bang for your buck in the entire store. Even so, many strapped-for-cash shoppers are relying on food stamps and programs such as WIC, the federally funded health and nutrition program for women, infants and children, to help get them through the tough times.

With this in mind, we asked our "undercover shoppers" to focus on stores that cater to low socio-economic classes where WIC shoppers might be purchasing groceries. In addition to investigating the level of knowledge held by produce associates across the country, we asked our writers to specifically ask about WIC programs. What items are included? How much produce could they buy on the program? Would the cashiers know how to ring the items up?

**BY MEREDITH AUERBACH, CAROL BAREUTHER,
JENNIFER LESLIE KRAMER, JULIE COOK RAMIREZ,
JODEAN ROBBINS, BARBARA ROBISON**

Here at PRODUCE BUSINESS we want to be sure that produce department associates across the country are knowledgeable, helpfully and happily engaging their customers. In an effort to better serve retailers and reveal the areas in which produce staff needs to improve, PRODUCE BUSINESS conducted our 23rd Annual Mystery Shopper Report. We gathered a handful of our contributing and staff editors and sent them to

various stores around the country in mid-January. They were all armed with the same two recipes from Foodnetwork.com: Tomato Vegetable Casserole and Collards, Golden Raisins and Almond Sauté. We instructed them to ask challenging questions about the items they would need, and try to engage the employees in an effort to see how well each produce department is represented by its staff.

As we headed out of the department, he bent over to say hello to a small girl shopping with her grandfather. It was obvious that here was a man who really enjoyed his work and the interaction with customers. Then, he explained that I'd get a better deal buying the larger size box of golden raisins in the dried fruit aisle than the smaller boxes merchandised in the produce department.

While our report is not meant to criticize any one store or chain, there are a few that could definitely use some pointers, while other set seriously high standards. Here's what we found:

NORTHEAST REPORT

STORE 1: Knowledgeable About WIC

My first stop was to a large multi-national-owned Northeast chain located in a lower- to middle-income neighborhood of mixed race. Its customers include a high percentage of African Americans, some ethnic minorities and a good number of working-class Caucasians. I entered the store on a quiet Tuesday morning and was greeted by a bright, open well-stocked produce department occupying about 4,000 square feet.

Three employees were calmly setting displays. I approached one of them and holding up the collard green recipe said, "Excuse me, I'm making this recipe but I need some help."

"Sure," he replied. "What do you need?"

"It says collard greens," I answered, "but I don't know what those are."

With gracious authority, he led me to the leafy greens section and pointed out the collards saying, "We have these. Let me see how much the recipe needs ... two bunches. You have two choices; you can get these bunches, but you'll need to cut and wash them. We also have bagged, washed and cut collards right here. They're more pricey, but will save you the work of cutting and washing."

He then took the initiative to weigh two bunches of the bulk collards and calculate what it would translate into in the number of bags of cut collards I would need.

"Are these covered under WIC?" I asked.

"The fresh ones probably are," he replied. "But the packaged ones probably aren't. As a general rule, WIC covers bulk produce, but doesn't cover the bagged or pre-cut stuff. There's

a chart up front by the CoinStar machine that shows all the produce covered under WIC. What else do you need?"

"Spanish onions," I replied. "What are those, onions from Spain?"

Motioning for me to follow him, he explained, "Basically, you have three types of onions: yellow, red and white. The yellow, which includes the Spanish, is sweetest. That's the onion you'll want to use. We don't have Spanish onions, but any yellow onion will work well. Here, this is a good one. What else?"

"It says chopped garlic," I said. "Do you know a good way to chop it without getting cut?"

Chuckling, he replied and demonstrated, "Take a cutting board and a large chef's knife. Smash the clove on the cutting board, then you can remove the peel. Take the knife and rock it back and forth over the garlic till it's chopped in small pieces. That keeps your fingers out of the way. So, what else?"

"I need golden raisins," I stated. "Are those different from regular raisins?"

"Yes," he said. "How much do you need? I'll walk you over to the dried fruits aisle."

As we headed out of the department, he bent over to say hello to a small girl shopping with her grandfather. It was obvious that here was a man who really enjoyed his work and the interaction with customers. Then, he explained that I'd get a better deal buying the larger size box of golden raisins in the dried fruit aisle than the smaller boxes merchandised in the produce department.

After getting the raisins, I thanked him and immediately headed to the front of the store to find the WIC chart. Although it was accessible, it did require a detour from a normal shopping pattern, and it's placement about 70 feet from the produce department didn't allow for easy consultation.

STORE 2: Poorly Placed Charts

My second stop was to a large regional chain owned by a national distributor and located in a mixed income neighborhood. The store serves a wide variety of customers ranging from lower income to successful professionals. The 2,500-plus square-foot department was open, bright and well stocked.

Upon entering on a busy Friday morning, I immediately spotted four employees re-stocking displays. As I browsed the department, they cordially chatted with each other and customers, calling some by name. With the tomato casserole recipe in hand, I approached one of them working near the potatoes. "Excuse me," I said. "I'm trying to make this recipe and I need a yam. What is that?"

"Those things right there," he smiled and pointed toward the display.

"Oh, it's a sweet potato?" I guessed.

"Not exactly," he replied. "They're used interchangeably, but yams are actually better. That's what we carry."

"Oh," I said, looking unconvinced. "What's the difference?"

A second clerk nearby chimed in laughing, "About a dollar-a-pound, that's what."

The first employee then proceeded to explain how yams were less stringy than sweet potatoes.

"OK," I said. "I also need a regular potato. Is there a difference in potatoes?"

"What are you making?" he inquired. "The kind of potato depends on the recipe. If it's a casserole... oh, it is... then I'd recommend a red potato because they're moister once they're cooked. What else do you need?"

"A red pepper," I stated, and he led me to the peppers.

"They're pretty expensive," I hesitated. "Could I substitute a green one instead?"

"You can," he advised, "but it won't taste the same. The reds are sweeter than the greens. I don't know if it will make a difference in your recipe. You could always try it and see."

"It says here a 'seeded' pepper," I pushed. "What does that mean?"

"You need to cut it open and take the seeds out," he replied and demonstrated. "Cut it in half like this, then scoop the seeds out. What else?"

"Carrots," I said.

"We have our whole carrots on sale," he suggested. "Or if you don't want to peel them, you could buy a bag of the baby carrots."

"Do they taste the same?" I asked. "Or are the babies sweeter?"

"No," he said. "They're the same flavor. It's just a matter of convenience. Need anything else?"

"Two large ripe tomatoes," I stated and he led me to the tomato display.

"These," he said pointing to the regular tomatoes, "don't have any flavor this time of year, so I would recommend the greenhouse or the Heirloom tomatoes. The Heirlooms are so big you might get away with just one instead of two, which would help you price-wise."

I thanked him for his help and let him return to his re-stocking. After a few minutes, I approached him again asking, "Do you know if these items are covered under WIC?"

"I have no idea," he answered. "But there's a chart on the wall by customer service showing everything that's covered. You can go there and look."

I thanked him and went to customer service to check out the chart, encountering some prob-

“Come to think of it, someone asked me about that the other day. We didn’t have it then either. We must not stock it,” he concluded. “How about some parsley instead?” I knew that wouldn’t suffice or come close to the taste of basil, but I put a bunch in my cart, and made my way to the checkout. Despite his helpful attitude, the employee had clearly not been trained in produce and didn’t have much knowledge about the products.

lems in doing so. First, the store is set up so you must check out before getting to customer service. Second, it took ten minutes to actually get through the crowd of people waiting for customer service and over to where the chart was — unfortunately, a very impractical solution for a busy mom shopping with an anxious toddler.

STORE 3: Little Knowledge Of Produce Or WIC

My last stop was on a weekday afternoon to a regional chain priding itself on low prices. The 1,500 square-foot department was clean, bright and organized, though it looked a bit dated. The store serves a primarily working class and immigrant community, and the department held a good variety of ethnic items. The merchandising and promotion definitely focused on a price theme. As I entered the department, I noticed a large display of yams right by the front door.

Armed with the tomato casserole recipe, I scanned the department for some help but no one was visible. Finally, I saw a young man hurrying through the department on his way to the backroom. “Excuse me,” I yelled as I ran to catch him. “Can you help me with this recipe?”

In a friendly, but hesitant tone he replied, “I don’t know much about recipes so I’m not sure. I can help you find things. That guy over there (he pointed to an older employee who appeared to be restocking) might know more, but I’ll try.”

Pointing to the recipe I replied, “It says here ‘yams,’ but I don’t know what that is.”

He asked, “Do you mean sweet potatoes?”

“I don’t know,” I said. “Are they the same as yams?”

“Well,” he declared. “There are all different

kinds of yams, so I don’t know what they’re talking about. They call these yams.”

He pointed to a display of *batata*. Then, changing his mind, he continued to wander down the aisle finally approaching the yam display I had seen. “Oh,” he guessed. “Maybe you want these. These are yams, too.”

My queries about the right tomato led to a recommendation of vine-ripes, and in response to needing two carrots, he suggested a small bag on sale for 69-cents.

Next, I brought up the pepper dilemma asking, “It needs red peppers, but the green are cheaper. Do they taste different or is it just the color?”

“I’m not sure,” he replied shyly. “I think there’s a difference.”

“Do you know if any of these items are covered under WIC?” I dared.

“No,” he said. “I have no idea. I think it’s just dairy and bread.”

I thanked him for his help and he quickly

May is
**Apricot Appreciation
 Month**

Don't get caught without cots!
The first and finest California apricots.

The right varieties -
 with flavor you really
 can appreciate.

Family Tree Farms
 The Most Flavorful Fruit in the World

www.familytreefarms.com
 1-866-FLAVOR1

When it came to collard greens, he looked confused, so I described them as best I could. He led me back to the produce section and pointed to something that didn't quite look like collard greens. It was far too light, the leaves were too small, and it appeared to be on the verge of rotting. But it was the closest thing they had. I thanked the man, paid for my items, and left.

made his escape. Curious to know if the older clerk was indeed more helpful, I approached him asking, "I need some zucchini. Is the sign that says 'Green Squash' the same one for zucchini?"

"Yes," he replied smiling. "It's the same thing."

Thinking I had found the department expert, I said, "Can you tell me which items might be covered under WIC?"

Looking a bit startled he replied, "No, I have

no idea. Sorry. I live in another state and I'm not familiar with this state's laws." To his credit, he added, "I'd rather be honest and tell you I don't know than to mislead you."

I thanked him and continued on my way.

SOUTHEAST REPORT

STORE 1: Helpful, Yet Unknowledgeable Employee

I ventured into a large regional chain on a Monday evening, expecting a bustling store with many harried after-work shoppers. However, to my surprise, the store was not all that busy. In fact, it was nearly empty. I was greeted by a large produce department near the front of the store. While the shelves and bins were full, the produce on display was limp and sad-looking. A few groups of fruit flies buzzed around the tomatoes, perhaps in search of their buddies, who were checking out the stonefruit. I put all that aside, ignoring my urge to turn around and head back to the car and flagged down the lone produce employee in the department.

Pulling the recipe for Tomato Vegetable Casserole out of my purse, I smiled up at him, saying, "I am having my neighbors over for dinner and I want to make this, but I'm not very

good in the kitchen. Do you think you could help me find some of these items?"

The associate, a middle-aged Hispanic man, glanced at the recipe, and responded, "Sure. I see you need potatoes and yams. They are over there," he said, pointing across the floor.

I walked over to large display of Idaho baking potatoes, small creamer potatoes and sweet potatoes. Fumbling around as if I didn't know which to choose, I called over to him, "Sir? I don't really know which to choose, and I don't see any yams, either. Would you mind..." Before I could finish, he crossed the floor, and asked to see the recipe again.

"The recipe doesn't say which kind of potato you need, so I would go with the Idahos. They are cheaper, anyway. I am sure they will work just fine," he says.

"Do you know if these are on WIC?" I asked.

"They should be," he said, "but I'm not really sure. I think most produce is, though. I'm sure the manager would know. Let me go find..."

"That's OK, I'll ask later," I said, not wanting to lose the only employee I had yet to see on the whole floor. "How about yams? I don't see them here."

"Nope, all we have is sweet potatoes," he said.

Sweet Onion Trading Company
Specializing in Quality Sweet Onions from Around the World™

We're big on taste.

Independently tested. Flavor assured!

Call us for dependable quality, service & supply
800-699-3727
321-674-0120

www.SweetOnionTrading.com SPC Booth #817

TRUST

What's it worth?

The CDC conservatively estimates that food borne illnesses sicken 48 million people every year.

Customers look to you to provide safe, clean, ethically-grown produce that's fully traceable. They trust you. That's why you can trust us.

We monitor and protect the integrity of our onions from seed to delivery. It's worth every penny if it means we earn your trust.

Food Safety. It's just good business.

PERI & SONS FARMS
Where good things grow.™

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

Finally, I asked about the WIC program and the clerk conferred with the manager. Neither knew exactly what produce was included in the WIC program. He said, “The check-out clerks know what a coupon includes. They make sure the items selected are covered in the program.”

“They will do the job.”

“But aren’t they different?” I pressed.

“Yeah, they are, but I couldn’t tell you how. I’m sure no one will notice,” he said. “What’s next?”

“Well,” I said hesitantly, “the recipe says red bell peppers, but they are so expensive. Can’t I just use the green ones, instead? Will it affect the final dish?”

“Sure, you can,” he replied. “I think the reds are a little sweeter, but it should be fine.”

“If you say so.” Then I asked about fresh basil, having already spied the herbs on the wet rack and noticing they didn’t have any. Even so, the associate went in that direction, looking for basil for two or three minutes. I finally said, “It does not look like you have any.”

“Guess not. Come to think of it, someone asked me about that the other day. We didn’t have it then either. We must not stock it,” he concluded. “Sorry. How about some parsley instead?” I knew that wouldn’t suffice or come close to the taste of basil, but I put a bunch in my cart, and made my way to the checkout. Despite his helpful attitude, the employee had clearly not been trained in produce and didn’t have much knowledge about the products.

MIDWEST REPORT

STORE 1: Sweet Potatoes Vs. Yams

Charged with visiting stores that cater to a lower socio-economic demographic, my first stop was an older store belonging to a national alliance of independent grocers. Located along a busy street in a decidedly lower income, crime-ridden part of town, this store was definitely off my beaten path.

The small produce section was nestled into a corner of the store. The selection was limited, to say the least. Take potatoes, for instance. There were no fingerlings or pre-wrapped microwave-ready varieties — just bags of russets and reds. Or so I thought anyway. The department was so disjointed that I didn’t even notice the tiny display of bulk russets until a manager pointed them out — not that it was easy to find some-

one to help me.

I spent several minutes perusing the produce. Finally, an older man came along who didn’t appear to be a customer. “Do you work here, sir?” I inquired.

“Yeah,” he replied.

“I’m not very familiar with fresh produce. Can I ask you a few questions?” He nodded. “A friend sent me this recipe,” I replied, holding out the crumpled recipe for Tomato Vegetable Casserole I had printed off the Food Network Web site and deliberately folded several times before cramming it into my pocket. “It calls for a red Bell pepper, but I only saw green. Do you have red?”

He shook his head. “Red Bells are so expensive right now. We’d never sell them. They’d just go in the garbage. So all we carry are the green.”

“Do they taste much different?” I continued.

“Greens might have a little more pepper taste than a red would. Red doesn’t have a real pepper taste to it,” he replied.

“Are they sweeter?” I asked.

“Yeah, a little bit like that,” he agreed.

The recipe called for yams, but I didn’t see any, so I asked. The man pointed me in the direction of a small end-cap display with just a few

sweet potatoes on it. “Are sweet potatoes and yams about the same thing?” I asked.

“Yeah, they’re about the same thing,” the man replied. “There is a difference, but I don’t know what it is.”

“Can I pay for these with WIC?” I asked.

“The yams, you can, but not the other potatoes,” he responded.

“Why not?” I asked, screwing up my face.

“I don’t really know,” he said. “That’s just the rule.”

I thanked the man, wandered the store a bit more, then paid for my ingredients and left.

STORE 2: Shopping In “Little Tijuana”

Next, I made my way to a slightly larger Mexican-American store nestled in a part of town known as “Little Tijuana.” The windows were plastered with handwritten signs, entirely in Spanish, touting a wide array of products, along with the fact that the store accepts WIC or LINK cards. As was the case at my first stop, this store had obviously seen better days. The floor was dirty and all the fixtures were old. Much like the more upscale supermarkets, it did boast a restaurant within the store. However, this one dealt exclusively in Mexican specialties.



**See Us At The
South East Produce Council Expo!
Booth # 523**

Global Organic
Specialty Source, Inc.
Distributing a Full Line of Organic Produce
throughout the Southeast
877-952-1198
Nook's Garden

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

We also had a good discussion about Spanish onions, a term you don't see used in the Northwest. My produce guide said, "If you have a minute, I'll look it up." He whipped out his Smart phone and Googled the term. He said, "This is new information for me. It says they are a sweet onion and you can use them interchangeably with other onions."...He immediately called over the associates to share the information with them.

The atmosphere was festive, with Latin-American music blaring and lots of Spanish-speaking people chatting excitedly in their native tongue while pushing carts containing a full array of groceries. Few brands were recognizable to me, as this store clearly catered to a Mexican-American clientele.

I proceeded to seek out the ingredients for

Collards, Golden Raisin and Almond Sauté, another recipe from the Food Network Web site. There didn't seem to be anyone working in produce. The selection was unusual. There, I would have found a red bell pepper, but there was no sign of such basic items as broccoli or spinach. I managed to find a young Hispanic man stocking shelves nearby, so I asked him where I might find several items — almonds, golden raisins and collard greens. He quickly showed me where almonds and raisins were located, but in each case, only one SKU was stocked — a big box of Sunmaid raisins and a small snack-size pouch of almonds.

When it came to collard greens, he looked confused, so I described them as best I could. He led me back to the produce section and pointed to something that didn't quite look like collard greens. It was far too light, the leaves were too small, and it appeared to be on the verge of rotting. But it was the closest thing they had. I thanked the man, paid for my items, and left.

STORE 3: Canned Collards?

On day two of my assignment, I visited a large discount grocery chain located in a lower-

middle class neighborhood. I wasn't expecting much, but upon entering the store, I quickly found I was in for a pleasant surprise, as it was by far the cleanest and most well-organized of the three stores I visited. It was organized much like a warehouse or club store, with merchandise displayed primarily in cardboard shippers. Had I been looking for national brands, I would have been sorely disappointed, however, as nearly everything on the shelves (95 percent, according to the chain's Web site) consisted of "exclusive select brands."

A young woman was stocking the centrally located produce section as I approached, so I got right to business. Once again, I pulled out the tattered piece of paper containing the recipe for Collards, Golden Raisin and Almond Sauté. "Can I ask you a question? Do you know what a Spanish onion is?" I asked.

"I have no idea," she replied politely.

"Collard greens?" I continued, adding "I did not see any."

"We don't carry those. We used to have them in the can, but we don't carry them anymore," she explained.

"Is there anything else that would substitute for that?" I asked.



Bring Your **BIG** appetite to the **BIG** Easy!

Experience the kind of exceptional dining that's exclusively New Orleans!

Register today for United Fresh 2011 and you'll be automatically entered for United's Restaurant a Week Giveaway! You could win a FREE gift certificate to one of the best restaurants in the BIG Easy.

United Fresh 2011
Restaurant a Week
New Orleans

See details and Register Today!
www.unitedfresh.org

"Maybe spinach, but I don't know if you are going to get the flavor out of it," she suggested. "That's about the only thing I could think of."

I wrapped up our conversation asking where I could find raisins. She pointed me in the direction of the first grocery aisle where she assured me I would find golden raisins. And I did.

All three stores had friendly personnel who tried to help me. Their knowledge of produce was hit-and-miss and in each case, their selection was so limited, I was unable to acquire all the ingredients needed to make either of the recipes.

WESTERN REPORT

STORE 1: Vegetable Greens Popular

The store I visited, belonging to a large regional chain, is located in a primarily African American and Hispanic area of a local suburb. A large sign on the main door announced that the market accepted United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) food stamps. There was no mention of the Women Infants and Children (WIC) program. The store was rather dark for a nice day in the afternoon.

The produce department was neat and clean, but not especially inviting. A small organic section, poorly stocked, indicated that organics were not big movers. The vegetables/greens area, one of the largest sections in the department, had a wide selection of both bunched and bagged greens. No one was working the floor, but a young woman, who roamed the store assisting customers, approached me. "Can I help you find something?" she asked.

"I'm making a recipe that calls for Spanish onions," I said, "but how are they different from regular onions?"

She quickly replied, "I don't know, but let me ask the department manager."

She and the manager returned shortly. "Spanish onions are really the brown ones," the manager said, smiling warmly. "Is there anything else I can help you with?"

"What about collards? I don't know how to cook them," I replied.

The manager warmed to the subject. "My mama cooked them all the time. After she washed the greens, she rolled them up like so. Then you slice them across, and just steam them." He demonstrated the entire procedure. Meanwhile, the young woman picked out a big bunch of collard greens, placed them in a plastic bag, and brought them to me.

"Can I help you with anything else?" the manager asked. I showed him the two recipes. He immediately picked out two zucchini and brought them back to me. "Here are two nice zucchini," he said. "Can I help

you with other items?"

"I wondered about golden raisins," I answered. "I just use the regular ones." The young woman took me to the dried fruit section and showed me the golden raisins.

Then I said to the manager, "I have a friend eligible for WIC. What produce can she get for that? Are potatoes on the list?"

He said, "I'm quite new in this store. Let me ask someone." He hurried away, returning

quickly, stating, "They have the list of items on the WIC coupon, but we're not exactly sure what's included."

I thanked the two for their help. Both left the produce floor immediately.

STORE 2: Knowledgeable Produce Clerks

The market, part of a major area chain, is located in a Southern California suburban shop-

MYSTERY SHOPPER RECIPES

TOMATO VEGETABLE CASSEROLE

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 medium potato, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1 medium yam, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded and cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 2 carrots, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 5 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 red onion, thinly sliced into rings
- 2 small or 1 large zucchini, cut crosswise into 1/4-inch-thick pieces
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 large ripe tomatoes, cut crosswise into 1/4-inch thick slices
- 1/2-cup grated Parmesan
- 2 tablespoons dried Italian-style bread crumbs
- Fresh basil sprigs, for garnish

PREPARATION:

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.

Toss the potato, yam, bell pepper, carrots, and 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking dish to coat. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and toss until coated. Spread vegetables evenly over the bottom of the pan.

Arrange the onion slices evenly over the vegetable mixture. Arrange the zucchini over the onion. Drizzle with 2 tablespoons of oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Arrange the tomato slices over the zucchini.

Stir the Parmesan and breadcrumbs in a small bowl to blend. Sprinkle the Parmesan breadcrumbs over the vegetables in the baking dish. Drizzle with the last tablespoon of olive oil.

Bake uncovered until the vegetables are tender, and the topping is golden brown, about 40 minutes. Garnish with fresh basil sprigs, if desired.



COLLARDS, GOLDEN RAISINS AND ALMOND SAUTÉ

INGREDIENTS:

- 1/2-cup olive oil
- 1 Spanish onion, small diced
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 bunches collard greens, washed and cut in 1/2-inch strips
- 1 cup golden raisins
- 1/2-cup slivered almonds, toasted
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper

PREPARATION:

Heat an 8-qt. saucepan over high heat. When very hot, add the oil, onions and garlic, sautéing quickly for 1 minute. When the onions just start to turn golden, add the collard greens, raisins and almonds. Season with salt and pepper, and add a little water if necessary, for a little steam. Sauté for about 5 to 6 minutes more, and adjust seasoning, to taste.



ping mall, and has a good-sized Asian and Hispanic customer base. A USDA food stamp sign was on the front door, but there was no reference to WIC. It is well lit and clean, with an expansive, inviting produce department. There were two people working in the department.

I asked one produce clerk about cooking collard greens. "They take a long time to cook to be really good. I'd advise you to buy this package rather than the bulk because the greens are washed, trimmed and ready to cook," he said, handing me a package.

I then asked about onions. "If I don't want a flavor as strong as red onions, what can I use?"

"You want a sweeter onion, so I'd suggest the yellow onion, which isn't as strong flavored, but has some sweetness," he replied.

"Another recipe I'm making calls for a Spanish onion. What is that?"

"Oh, it's just a plain brown onion," he said.

I asked the difference between a yam and a sweet potato. "The yam is darker in color and moister...I'd use it rather than a sweet potato for the recipe you're using," he explained.

Finally, I asked about the WIC program and the clerk conferred with the manager. Neither knew exactly what produce was included in the WIC program. He said, "The check-out clerks know what a coupon includes. They make sure the items selected are covered in the program."

STORE 3: Produce Department Caters To Diverse Customer Base

The market, part of a major chain in the area, is located in a mall on the fringe of Los Angeles proper, adjacent to a suburban area. It is a large market with primarily a Hispanic customer base, but I also saw a good number of Asian and Eastern European shoppers. A small USDA food stamp sign was on the front door, with no reference to the WIC program.

The produce department was attractive, neat and clean, with three people working the displays, which offered a wide range of items. I asked one of the clerks what I could use instead of a red onion. "The white onion is a good one to use. It isn't as strong," she suggested.

Then I asked, "What's a Spanish onion?"

"That's just a fancy name for a brown one," she replied. This was the consensus among all three produce executives at each store I visited.

"What about collard greens? How do I cook them?" I asked.

"I'm not sure, but I think it's like kale. You just steam them," she said. The market had a nice supply of both bunched and packaged greens.

I then inquired about sweet potatoes versus yams. "Yams are the most popular with our customers, but sweet potatoes are sweeter. I'd use yams for the recipe you're doing," was her reply.

"I have a friend using the WIC program and wondered what items were available to her. Can she get potatoes?"

"With a coupon, they are allowed six dollars worth of produce. They can use it toward anything, including potatoes," she answered.

It was a busy market and as I left, a woman ahead of me in the check-out line was using food stamps. The clerk checked each item carefully to see whether it complied with those allowed.

NORTHWEST REPORT

STORE 1: High Tech, High Touch

On a cold and rainy weekday morning, I pushed my cart into the produce department of a large, older store located in an ethnically diverse neighborhood where English is typically a second language and there are many immigrant families. I asked a young man in an apron busily stocking oranges about collard greens. He pointed to a back corner and said, "They're over there."

I walked over, looked around, and walked

**Don't Miss
Canada's Leading
Produce Convention
& Trade Show**

**CPMA
ACDFL
MONTRÉAL 2011**

**FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
A HEALTHY
CHOICE**

- ▶ Enhance your business in Canada
- ▶ Take advantage of great education and networking opportunities
- ▶ Connect with representatives from throughout the produce industry: major Canadian retailers, wholesalers, foodservice operators/distributors, growers/shippers and more

**86th Annual Canadian Produce Marketing Association
Convention & Trade Show
April 13-15, 2011
Palais des congrès de Montréal
Montréal, QC, Canada**

Visit our website for more details!
www.cpma.ca

**CPMA
ACDFL**

“This is not a great time of the year for large tomatoes. They won’t hold their shape very well. We have some fairly large Roma tomatoes. I would use them. These are fully red and much less expensive.”

back confessing, “I don’t know anything about them, even what they look like.”

He immediately stopped what he was doing, smiled and said, “I’ll show you.” At the display, he pulled out the bunches of collards from kale and mustard greens. He said, “Here’s how to check and see if you like them.” He rinsed a bunch then continued, “Taste a stem up near the leaf. They can be bitter. Personally, even though

they cost a bit more, I prefer kale. It also cooks faster. Try this.” The kale went in my basket.

We also had a good discussion about Spanish onions, a term you don’t see used in the Northwest. My produce guide said, “If you have a minute, I’ll look it up.” He whipped out his Smart phone and Googled the term. He said, “This is new information for me. It says they are a sweet onion and you can use them interchangeably with other onions. We have Mayan Sweets on special this week that would probably be great in your recipe.” It turned out that although he looked about 18, he was the produce manager. He immediately called over the associates to share the information with them.

I looked around and saw a number of shoppers getting help: older people, a group of developmentally disabled teens on a tour of the department, students and WIC shoppers. This store knows its audience and clearly gauges its advice and recommendations to them. As I left the store, the warehouse concept of a large national chain, I saw a large sign welcoming WIC shoppers on the glass of the front doors.

STORE 2: Friendly And On Her Own

This large conventional store is located in a strip mall in a low-income area along a busy urban highway. As I walked in on a cold but dry Sunday afternoon, it was eerily quiet, almost empty of customers, spotlessly clean but smelling strongly of bleach. The produce department was well lit, but the displays were quite sparse.

I showed my recipe to a 20-something woman produce associate who was working in cooking greens. She immediately became involved in helping me with a warm smile, but with a warning that she didn’t know much about cooking. “What I can tell you,” she said, “is what my customers generally buy. Most of them are on tight budgets and are very careful with what they purchase, but they seem to prefer the pre-washed, pre-cut collard greens. The package is more expensive than a single bunch, but you get a lot more and it is ready to go.”

Her response to my question about sweet potatoes and yams was, “I don’t think they can be used interchangeably. They seem so different to me.” I went on to explain that I was asking for a neighbor who wanted to know if both qualified for WIC coupons. She looked puzzled and commented, “No one has ever asked that question before. I really don’t know anything about WIC and produce. I thought it was just for baby formula. My produce manager isn’t here today;

I’m on my own, but I could try and find a store manager to ask for you.” I thanked her and said that she was busy and it wasn’t really necessary.

I felt sorry for this young woman who was trying so hard, but seemed to lack the store support she needed to answer questions beyond location and pricing.

STORE 3: Helpful And Opinionated

Late morning on a Wednesday, I wandered the produce department of a relatively new local chain store popular with older couples shopping very slowly and carefully. It was clear grocery expeditions served as entertainment as well as food shopping. The department was very clean, well-signed and busy on a senior discount day.

No one caught my lost look, so I went to an older man in an apron and asked if he could help me. I said that I needed information about yams and fresh tomatoes for a recipe I was going to try. He spoke with a heavy Hispanic accent and I had heard him speaking Spanish with another customer. He looked up, smiled and said, “Of course, I’d love to help you. Are you sure you want yams, though? Sweet potatoes are better in almost every recipe!”

We walked to the display. He picked up both a sweet potato and a yam, handed them to me and said, “See how much heavier the sweet potato is? Yams are almost all water and they can burn easily. In my country, when I was growing up, my mother always used sweet potatoes.” I showed him the recipe and asked if he was sure it would work. He replied, “Sure it will, and it will taste better. Just make sure you cut them small like the recipe says.”

We moved on to tomatoes and discussed what was there. My helpful but opinionated friend looked skeptical and said, “This is not a great time of year for large tomatoes. They won’t hold their shape very well. We have some fairly large Roma tomatoes. I would use them. These are fully red and much less expensive.” He also urged me to use bunch carrots with tops because they have better flavor. I asked him if he wanted to come home with me to cook this dish. He laughed and said, “You’ll do great. It sounds like a good recipe. Are you trying to get more vegetables in your diet? Is that a New Year’s resolution?”

This produce associate was entertaining as well as helpful. He clearly cooks, which is always helpful. This store had only one WIC sign I could find on one size of a baby food jar on the bottom shelf. One can only hope the checkers know more about the program to help low-income mothers than the grocery or produce department staffs.

pb



According to USDA FNS, potatoes other than sweet potatoes or yams, nuts and dried fruit are among the items that do not qualify for WIC coupons.



PHOTO ABOVE COURTESY OF SHOPPER'S WAREHOUSE



Easter is the third largest holiday of the year for sweet potato sales, while asparagus is always a big seller during the holiday.

Turn Up The Sales Heat With Savvy Spring Merchandising

Working with produce-heavy holidays and smart sales techniques, spring is the perfect time to put your produce department to work. **BY CAROL M. BAREUTHER, RD**

Spring is a time of transition. Winter gives way to warm weather and inside the produce department, imported fruits and vegetables start to take a back seat to their domestically grown counterparts. Here lies the opportunity that spring brings for sales and profits. Lee Anne Oxford, marketing director for L & M Companies Inc., in Raleigh, NC, says, "The excitement of what's new, what's freshest and what's grown locally — this has taken the place of seasonality. Consumers are still seeking out value, and promotions that center on value are important, but it's also vital to promote through signage in ad circulars or POS cards with photos of farms or farmers that point out what is 'fresh' and 'local.'"

NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH: March 1-31

Retailers across the nation promote fresh fruits and vegetables for March's National Nutrition Month, a nutrition education and information campaign sponsored annually by the Chicago, IL-based American Dietetic Association. The Produce for Better Health

Foundation (PBH), in Hockessin, DE, offers member retailers a variety of promotional tools. Elizabeth Pivonka, Ph.D., R.D., PBH president and CEO, says, "We work with produce, marketing and consumer affairs departments to provide information as all three of these interface with the consumer."

PBH retail resources include fact sheets, 'shell' press releases that can be customized, ad slicks and drop-in ad messages, school tour materials, materials in Spanish, and seasonal marketing tools including fruit- and veggie-of-the-month recipes and columns. Retailers have creatively used these materials, including the Fruits & Veggies — More Matters logo, in a variety of ways. For example, Meijer incorporates the logo in ads describing its vegetable and fruit trays; Coburn's features the logo along with nutrition information about promoted produce commodities; and ShopRite employs the logo in its ad circular drawing consumer attention to the fresh fruits and vegetables in its produce department.

Boosting fruit and vegetable consumption can be enormously profitable. Consider that the average consumer eats only 1.81 cups of the

recommended 5 cups of produce recommended daily. According to PBH calculations, if each consumer upped his or her consumption of fruits and vegetables by 3.19 cups daily, this translates to an annual opportunity gap per store of \$5,921,429.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY: March 17

Cabbage is a hot seller for St. Patrick's Day. Maureen Torrey Marshall, vice president of Torrey Farms Inc., in Elba, NY, says, "Cabbage is a natural tie-in with potatoes, onions, carrots and corned beef in ads and in-store displays, especially on the East Coast."

Robert Schueller, director of public relations for Melissa's/World Variety Produce, in Vernon, CA, recommends promoting anything green. "This includes fresh herbs, sugar snap peas, leeks, green kohlrabi, chirimoyas, cabbage, squash, artichokes, asparagus and more."

"Green-skinned Bartlett pears peak in supply out of Argentina during March," says Addie Pobst, import coordinator and food safety officer for CF Fresh, in Sedro Woolley, WA. "Domestic D'Anjous are still available, but

TANIMURA
& ANTLE

SHAPE UP PRODUCE

5

6

7

8

DEPARTMENT SALES

Visit us
at SEPC
Booth
#311



Support your shoppers' health with Tanimura & Antle Artisan® Lettuce

January marks New Year's Resolutions, and for many, the start of Diet Season. Give your shelf a lift and support consumers looking for healthy options with Tanimura & Antle Artisan Lettuce. Offered January-April, our promotional label gives shoppers valuable recipes and tips by scanning a QR code in store and by visiting ArtisanLettuce.com.

The first in a year-long program, look for more Artisan Lettuce promotions during peak seasons that add muscle to your produce department.

Call our sales team today!
800.772.4542
www.taproduce.com



“There is a lot of opportunity for new crop blueberries out of Florida in April. In addition, there is greater production of strawberries out of California, and blackberries and raspberries coming out of Mexico and the United States. This allows retailers to build a berry patch display.”

— Keith Mixon, Sunnyridge Farm Inc.

consumers are getting bored with these. Bartletts are so aromatic, especially if they're pre-conditioned, and the aroma pulls customers over to the display.”

BRISTOL FARM'S SPRING ARTICHOKE PROMOTION

Freshly harvested artichokes are creatively promoted and cross-promoted during the months of March and April at Bristol Farms, a 13-store chain based in Carson, CA. Raul Gallegos, produce director, says, “We build a big display of artichokes right inside the entrance to the stores. Depending on the size of the store, these displays can be anywhere from 3x5 feet to 6x10 feet.” Displays are stocked with large 12-count size and long-stem artichokes to maximize visual appeal. Simultaneous price promotion also encourages impulse sales.

In the produce department, artichokes are cross-promoted with tie-ins such as a special store-brand artichoke dip, mayon-

naise and other condiments. Artichokes are also cross-displayed throughout the store and can be found next to baguettes in the bakery, in the floral department with instructions on how to use them in centerpieces, and in the kitchenwares department where demos showing customers how to cut these vegetables takes place. Customers are offered tear-pad recipes with cooking instructions during the demos.

“While artichokes have become better known by consumers,” says Gallegos, “there's still a learning curve when it comes to how to prepare them, and that's where we help out.” **pb**

PASSOVER: April 18

Create a special section of Passover items with signage to identify this Jewish holiday that begins an eight-day celebration, advises Schueller. “Recommended produce items include hearty vegetables such as beets, parsnips, potatoes and horseradish,” he details.

“Passover is the biggest holiday of the year for

fresh horseradish root sales,” says Dennis Diekemper, general manager of the J.R. Kelly Co., in Collinsville, IL. “For best quality, store fresh horseradish at 30°F in the back room. When it's on display, be careful because horseradish will dehydrate and lose its crispness. That's why we sell a fair amount of cleaned, individually wrapped and labeled horseradish root.”

EASTER: April 24

Families gather together for Easter to feast upon traditional ham or turkey with all the side dishes. For Schueller, “This means opportunities to merchandise a wide variety of produce.”

L & M's Oxford adds, “Asparagus is always a big seller for Easter.”

After Thanksgiving and Christmas, Easter is the third largest holiday of the year for sweet potato sales, according to Sue Johnson-Langdon, executive director of the Smithfield, NC-based North Carolina Sweet Potato Commission. “We offer POS posters and price cards with three themes. One is ‘Healthy’ and features a Sweet Potato and Corn Salad; the second is ‘Locally Grown’ with a Mashed Sweet Potato recipe; and the third is ‘Grilling’ with instructions how to cook sweet potatoes on the grill.”

Many retailers use Easter to showcase fresh berries. Keith Mixon, president and CEO at Sunnyridge Farm Inc., in Winter Haven, FL, says, “There is a lot of opportunity for new crop blueberries out of Florida in April. In addition, there is greater production of strawberries out of California, and blackberries and raspberries coming out of Mexico and the United States. This allows retailers to build a berry patch display.”

Strawberries, especially, will be ripe for promotion. Chris Christian, vice president of

— Green Tops —

For Your PASSOVER Needs
Custom Packaging in 5 & 10lb. Bags

plus

J.R. Kelly Company is now offering individually wrapped and labeled clean horseradish roots. Please contact your current horseradish supplier or J.R. Kelly for details.

- reduces shrinkage & extends shelf-life
- label includes PLU, nutrition facts and preparation instructions

J.R. KELLY CO.

The Horseradish House

703 S. Bluff Road, Collinsville, IL 62234 • (888) 344-4392 • www.jrkelly.com

RETAILERS GET CREATIVE AT PRODUCE FOR KIDS' SPRING PROMOTIONS



Six retailers and over 35 produce suppliers participated in the annual Orlando, FL-based Produce for Kid's (PFK) Get Healthy, Give Hope spring campaign to raise money for Children's Miracle Network-affiliated hospitals. Many of the retailers, which participated in the May to July promotion, featured PFK's new Ideal Meals program.

For example, at Price Chopper Supermarkets, based in Schenectady, NY, two Ideal Meals' recipes featuring produce sponsor products were sampled in 25 stores. The demo included campaign information, themed decorations in the produce department and Ideal Meal cards as shopper giveaways.

Meijer Inc., a Grand Rapids, MI-based chain, supported the spring PFK campaign by running in-store radio announcements to call attention to activities in the produce department, supporting a storewide demo of two Ideal Meals recipes and including information in the chain's digital messages on Twitter and Facebook. In addition, Meijer's Healthy Living team of Registered Dietitians included PFK as part of their regularly scheduled local market media appearances.

The southwest division of Kroger Co., a Cincinnati, OH-based chain, launched its annual PFK spring campaign with scavenger hunts in stores in Dallas and Houston. The participating kids, who were former children's hospital patients from the area, raced around the produce department to find sponsors' fresh fruits and vegetables with prizes given at the finish line to all. Local media in both cities covered the scavenger hunts.

Kari Volyn, PFK spokesperson, says, "It is an uplifting story to see kids who were once sick, but are now healthy, racing through a grocery store filling their bags with fresh fruits and vegetables." **pb**

"Green-skinned Bartlett pears peak in supply out of Argentina during March. Domestic D'Anjous are still available, but consumers are getting bored with these. Bartletts are so aromatic, especially if they're pre-conditioned, and the aroma pulls customers over to the display."

— Addie Pobst, CF Fresh

marketing for the Watsonville, CA-based California Strawberry Commission (CSC), says, "Expect another record crop — this year, fresh shipments increased 3 percent to 180 million trays on 4 percent fewer acres than 2009. Average weekly shipments are projected at 6 million-plus per week in April and 6.5 million in May."

Christian advises, "Display all package sizes, segments and specialty items together to increase sales on the entire berry category. "Strawberry average weekly dollar sales increase in proportion to expanded display space, while other commodities may experience declining sales.

"Cross-merchandise complementary items

such as crepes, dessert shells, whipped cream and yogurt in the berry display to drive additional impulse purchases. In addition, promote during pre-holiday, holiday and post-holiday weeks to maximize sales. Retailers following a holiday three week promotional strategy can expect superior results, including sales increases up to 8 percent in pounds and 18 percent in dollars."

CINCO DE MAYO: May 5

Cinco de Mayo is an Americanized holiday that is celebrated with fiestas, parades, piñatas and food. Melissa's Schueller suggests, "Promote items such as fresh chiles, Latin vegetables such as tomatillos and jicama and

HERB & SPECIALTY SHOWCASE

Boncheff Greenhouses



Specializing in:
 Fresh Cut Herbs,
 Edible Flowers,
 Baby Lettuces,
 Salad Mixes
 and Baby Vegetables

Call Tom or George Boncheff

416.233.6922
 Fax: 416.236.3903
 boncheffherbs@on.aibn.com

382 Olivewood Rd.
 Toronto, ON M8Z 2Z9



*Delivered fresh
 from our family farm to you.*

Babé Farms, the Pioneer
 in Specialty Vegetables,
 growing year-round
 in Santa Maria, California

View our farm video:
www.babefarms.com

(805) 925-4144
 (800) 648-6772
sales@babefarms.com

"Only Tomorrow's Harvest is Fresher"



MicroGreens,
 PetiteGreens, Edible Flowers,
 Tiny Veggies, Popcorn Shoots

NEW AND UNIQUE VARIETIES
 OVERNIGHT SHIPPING

760.822.6171
www.freshorigins.com

infinite
 HERBS &
 SPECIALTIES
as fresh as it gets...!

Handle Organic and Conventional
 Herbs, Specialty Vegetables
 and Edible Flowers

305.599.9255 - Miami
 617-387-5999 - Boston
cpenalosa@infiniteherbs.com
www.infiniteherbs.com

See Us at the:
 South East Produce Council Expo
 Booth # 518

Miami, FL

Coosemans Retail Group

Dependable Supply and Consistent Quality of
 Fresh Herbs and Specialty Produce.



- New extended shelf life bags
- New 1/4 oz. in both bags and clam shells
- New extended item Flavor Station sections

Now Shipping Nationally from: Florida,
 Maryland, California, Colorado, Arizona, Texas.
 Coming soon Mid-West!



Rock Garden is one of the largest and
 oldest companies in the herb industry.
www.rockgardenherbs.com

Please Contact: Chick Goodman • 831.476.9733 • chick.goodman@comcast.com

The Horseradish House Company

J.R. KELLY

Year-Round Shipper of
 Horseradish Roots

Shrink Wrap
 Individual Horseradish

Repacking
 5 & 10 lb. bags
 Washing Available

Dennis Diekemper - Sales

618.344.2910
 888.344.4392

703 S. Bluff Rd.
 Collinsville, IL 62234



HERB & SPECIALTY SHOWCASE



MURANAKA FARM, INC.

Muranaka Farm has been growing fresh, specialty produce for the past 50 years. Our care and attention to detail produces quality vegetables that meet our own meticulous standards of excellence. This means clean, healthy produce in robust condition.

Our hand-bunched products are more demanding to nurture, harvest and ship but we've risen to the challenge. As a result, we excel at what we do.

Shipping: 805-529-1372
Sales: 805-529-0201
Sales Fax: 805-529-4527

Moorpark, CA

North Shore
Living Herbs

Live. Fresh. Flavor.

Grow your profits year round with our full line of unique greenhouse-grown Live Herbs.

www.livingherbs.com

Find out how, contact us today at
 sales@livingherbs.com
 Phone: 760.397.0400 Fax: 760.397.5807

82-900 Johnson Street, Thermal, CA 92274

**GOURMET
 SPECIALTY
 IMPORTS
 L.L.C.**

"Your Shallot Source"

FRESH AND PEELED
 SHALLOTS
 PEELED GARLIC
 PEARL ONIONS
 CIPPOLINI ONIONS
 FINGERLING POTATOES

Year-Round Availability

**CONSUMER PACKS
 AVAILABLE FOR RETAIL**

Call Cary or Kenny
610.345.1113

West Grove, PA



**THE NEXT LEVEL
 OF SPECIALTY PRODUCE**



Southern Specialties can escalate your produce program to the next level. Starting from the ground up we ensure you receive the highest quality specialty produce, service and support. Partner with us and our special category insights will put you at the top in profit and customer satisfaction.

**SOUTHERN
 SPECIALTIES**

Phone: 954.784.6500 | www.southern-specialties.com
 Pompano Beach, FL | McAllen, TX | Los Angeles, CA

ATTENTION ALL BUYERS

use

producebusiness
ESTABLISHED • INTERNATIONAL • GROWING • EXPANDING • PROGRESSIVE

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

Harvest Sensations™

**Providing the finest of
 fresh Herbs**

www.harvestsensations.com

Los Angeles Office
 1205 Wholesale Street
 Los Angeles, CA 90021
 213-895-6968

Miami Office
 7995 NW 21st Street
 Miami, FL 33122
 305-591-8173

ingredients for making guacamole and salsa such as avocados, tomatoes and onions.

Field tomato production in Florida was affected by an early freeze this year. Joe Comito, chairman of the board at Capital City Fruit Co. Inc., in Norwalk, IA, comments, "Traditionally, there's cold weather in Florida between Christmas and New Year's and in January, but this season, we had below-freezing weather as early as December. Freezes push prices up because of limited supplies in the face of demand."

Florida peak production months for field tomatoes are April and May. Samantha Winters, director of education and promotions for the Maitland-based Florida Tomato Committee (FTC), says, "About half of consumers surveyed in the produce department of select retailers in May, 2010, reported their primary reason for purchasing fresh tomatoes is the flavor. In addition, Perishables Group research showed that 40 percent of consumers want to see recipes in the tomato displays, 25 percent want storage and handling tips and about the same number would like ideas for usage."

The FTC worked with Chef Justin Timineri, executive chef and culinary ambassador for the Tallahassee-based Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, to create a variety of tomato-based salsa recipes. The produce-rich recipes will be printed on POS cards.

Sweet onions are another important promotional item for Cinco de Mayo. John Shuman, president and director of sales for Shuman Produce Inc., in Reidsville, GA, says, "A ripe time to promote Vidalia onions begins in May when we have reached full production. Displays drive sales, so we encourage the use of both bulk and bagged product in displays to offer consumers a variety of options. Our high-graphic bags offer an eye-catching experience and the added value of printed recipes. Secondary displays are key in the spring and summer as so many opportunities are available for cross-merchandising through various holidays and the availability of great outdoor weather for grilling with family and friends."

May is also when the Vidalia, GA-based Vidalia Onion Committee (VOC) will launch its new consumer campaign. Wendy Brannen, VOC executive director, says, "We are planning for a good solid campaign that will generate enthusiasm, excitement and sales success similar to the Shrek campaign last season."

MOTHER'S DAY: May 8

Flowers and gift sales increase dramatically for Mother's Day, reports Melissa's Schueller. "It's a great time to promote omelet and breakfast ingredients such as herbs, mushrooms and

fresh fruit."

Sunnyridge's Mixon adds, "Mother's Day is definitely a berry holiday. For this and all holidays, we try to offer retailers innovative ideas. This might be display contests, ads, customized POS materials or a tie-in promotion."

MEMORIAL DAY: May 30

"This late spring holiday is the first official barbecue day of the summer," asserts Schueller. "It's a good time to promote produce for the grill."

Feature fruits and vegetables that make an entire Memorial Day menu. "For example," says Shuman, "what's a grilled hamburger without Vidalia onions?"

Torrey Farm's Marshall suggests, "Promote cabbage for use in coleslaw. Many retailers are cross-promoting with interesting dressings like oils, vinegars and seasonings rather than just mayonnaise."

"Salad items such as bell peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes, onions and lettuces, are all abundant and promotable," says L & M's Oxford.

"Supersweet corn is another favorite," adds Jason Stemm, spokesperson for the Maitland-based Fresh Supersweet Corn Council. "Offer corn as part of a meal solution and have all items for the meal in one place."

Mixon recommends cross-promoting berries with whipped cream, "creating the perfect patriotic dessert."

Several retailers use Memorial Day to kick-off their Produce for Kid's (PFK) promotions. According to Orlando, FL-based PFK spokesperson Kari Volyn, "This spring, we have a relationship with Chef Marshall O'Brien who is providing insight and counsel to our program from a culinary perspective. We are offering to send Chef Marshall to our participating retailers' markets to do in-store appearances and seminars about nutritious cooking with kids."

"We are also expanding the Ideal Meals program which we launched for the first time last year," Volyn continues. "Ideal Meals are 4x6-inch cards, merchandised in-store in a self-contained, colorful display unit, that contain fast, easy tips for shopping and assembling healthful meals using sponsored products. Each meal is developed by a registered dietitian and meets the recommended dietary guidelines set by the USDA. Research shows that any time you call attention to a category with promotional activity, whether in-store, or in ads, there is a lift in sales. We've been consistent in our consumer message that shoppers can eat well and help children's causes when they buy produce items that are good for their families."

pb

Side Note

SWEET CORN STARS AT SEVERAL RETAILERS IN THE SPRING

Retailers in the eastern U.S. featured chef-led demos of supersweet corn last spring. These demos, which were conducted by chefs from Chefs USA LLC, an Lawrenceville, GA-based in-store demo and cooking video production company, in conjunction with the Maitland, FL-based Fresh Supersweet Corn Council, took place in 50 Harris-Teeter stores in April, 30 Bloom stores in May and 15 Kroger stores in Virginia in June.

Mike Monahan, executive chef and founder of Chefs USA, says, "Each three-hour demo is jam-packed with information with chefs creating excitement through sampling and answering customer's questions. It's like the Food Network on wheels."

Demos took place on the busiest days of the week — Fridays, Saturdays or Sundays — and were set up on a draped 2x4-foot table in a high-traffic area of the produce department next to the fresh corn display. One recipe, which takes 8 to 10 minutes to prepare, is cooked per demo. However, chefs demonstrate different



recipes at various stores. For example, two of the recipes featured at Harris-Teeter were Grilled Flat Iron Steak with Corn and Tomato Salad and Florida Supersweet Corn and Florida Tomato Salad. Shoppers were given a copy of the recipes. The handout included a QR code link to a cooking video they could watch at home.

Monahan jokes, "The only negative comments we've received is from produce managers who complained that we run them out of product. We warn them ahead of time to order more because our chefs are trained to sell. pb



PHOTO ABOVE COURTESY OF HARVEY'S. PHOTO AT RIGHT COURTESY OF FLORIDA TOMATO COMMITTEE



Harvey's relies heavily on Florida produce, including red potatoes. Chef Justin Timineri of FDACS created a Florida Tomato and Avocado Salsa recipe (above), available for retailers to use as POS.

Florida Spring Produce Keeps Shelves Stocked

Months ahead of the rest of the country, Florida's spring produce brings retailers rings and consumers a bounty of fresh produce after a long winter. **BY CAROL M. BAREUTHER, RD**

Florida's reputation as the nation's 'winter salad bowl' extends into spring. This Southeastern state produces a bounty of fresh fruits and vegetables when many acres of U.S. farmland remain buried under a blanket of snow. Lisa Lochridge, director of public affairs for the Orlando-based Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association (FFVA), sums up the importance of Florida's springtime production: "Without Florida, many fruits and vegetables wouldn't be available year-round on retail shelves."

Seasonal Outlook

An unusually early freeze in December that stretched far south resulted in the loss of \$273 million worth of Florida produce, according to the Tallahassee-based Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS). More specifically, the eggplant crop was down 80 percent, bell peppers by 50 percent and lettuces down 40 percent. This doesn't count additional losses from a briefer cold snap this January. Combine this with a record 10-day cold snap in January, 2010, that resulted in

hundreds of millions of dollars in crop losses and it's easy to see why Florida farmers have started to put mitigation measures in place.

Brian Rayfield, vice president of sales and marketing for J & J Produce Inc., in Loxahatchee, FL, says, "More growers are relying on cover cloth, in addition to traditional methods like increased irrigation when there's a freeze. A four-degree higher temperature under the cloth is tremendous. You always risk some secondary crop loss if it's windy, but it's better than full damage."

High tunnels, or mini-greenhouses, are a freeze-prevention method employed by some strawberry farmers, reveals Ted Campbell, executive director of the Plant City-based Florida Strawberry Growers Association (FSGA). "The problem is that these can run \$30,000 to \$60,000 per acre."

Some farmers have moved parts of their production to a warmer location. This season, Gary Wishnatzki, president and CEO of Wishnatzki Farms, in Plant City, FL, planted 80 acres of bell peppers and grape and Roma tomatoes on Pine Island, north of Ft. Myers on Florida's Gulf

Coast. These crops will begin harvest in February. "The island's microclimate makes it rare for freezes," explains Wishnatzki. "We plan to rapidly expand production on the 600 acres we purchased last year, and then like this year, switch production up to Plant City in the spring."

The big question for many Florida farmers this winter was whether or not to replant. The issue was definitely an economic one. According to Lochridge, "It can depend on the crop. For example, snap beans are easier to replant and are a low investment because they don't require a lot of labor. Tomatoes, on the other hand, are labor intensive and cost \$8,000 to \$10,000 per acre to replant."

"Those farmers who do decide to replant are getting a jump start on production by starting seedlings indoors," says Chuck Weisinger, president of Weis-Buy Farms Inc., in Ft. Myers, FL.

"The good news is that we anticipate a solid spring," says Dan Sleep, development representative supervisor for the division of marketing and development at the FDACS.

Charles 'Chuck' Obern, owner and president of C & B Farms Inc., headquartered in

Clewiston, FL, agrees. "By the end of March, and right through April and May, we should see fairly normal production," he reasons.

Top Crops

Over 20 different major commodities, and many more niche crops, are harvested during the spring in Florida. Sleep details, "Tomatoes, bell peppers and sweet corn are especially huge for us."

"What is really attractive about Florida, is the timing and the total mix," according to Adam Lytch, grower development specialist for Raleigh, NC-based L & M Companies Inc. "April and May are big months before the states to the north get started. The sheer number of items out of Florida — for us, that's tomatoes, bell peppers, cucumbers, yellow squash, zucchini, eggplant, cabbage, broccoli, potatoes and cooking greens — is also an advantage, especially as we look to compete with Mexico and California."

Tomatoes: Round field tomatoes were cultivated on 32,200 of the state's acres during the

2009-2010 growing season, resulting in the production of 27.9 million 25-lb. carton equivalents, according to the Maitland-based Florida Tomato Committee (FTC). Approximately half of this acreage, or 16,800, is harvested from April to June.

"In addition to round field tomatoes," says Rob Meade, director of grape tomato sales for East Coast Brokers & Packers Inc., in Plant City, FL, "demand is good and retailers especially like it when we can provide the whole line — round, Roma, vine-ripened, cherry and grape."

Some Florida tomato farmers have begun cultivation of a new tomato variety, the Tasti-Lee, a premium, fresh-market hybrid developed at the University of Florida. Michael Ryshouwer, the FDACS' international marketing specialist, says, "We'll begin some small pilot marketing programs with Florida retailers, such as Whole Foods, this spring."

Sweet Corn: "Super sweet corn production peaks in April and May out of Belle Glade, in Palm Beach County," reports Jason Stemm, spokesperson for the Maitland-based Florida

Super Sweet Corn Council (FSSCC). "We'll see a peak of 1 million crates per week at this time."

Many Florida corn farmers have invested in premium super sweet corn varieties with names like Obsession and Passion. "In addition," says the FFVA's Lochridge, "growers are responding to consumer's desire for convenience with value-added packaging such as a four-pack of full ears or larger bags of cobettes for club stores. Some are also marketing environmentally friendly, trayless tray-packs"

Berries: "In addition to strawberries, which are available into the beginning of April, Florida produces some 18 to 19 million flats of blueberries in April and May," states FDACS' Sleep. "These are an excellent ad item."

Wishnatzki Farm's Wishnatzki acknowledges, "This is a good window. Chile is wrapping up and retailers are looking for domestic berries to feature."

Greater blueberry plantings and plenty of winter chill hours should result in increased production and a high quality crop. "In addition," says Wishnatzki, "we will implement our FreshQC traceback system for blueberries this year like we have for strawberries for the past two seasons."

Vegetables: Florida farmers harvested fresh-market vegetables from 183,100 acres in 2009 with sales exceeding \$1.3 billion, according to the *Florida Agricultural Statistical Directory 2010*, published by the FDACS. Also in 2009, and from this same source, Florida ranked first in the nation in production value of fresh-market snap beans, tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, watermelon and sweet corn, and second in production value of bell peppers and pickling cucumbers.

Riding on last year's success, J&J Produce will offer its new six- to eight-count volume fill bagged bell peppers. "We sell it as a value proposition," says Rayfield. "Value is important to today's consumer, and I think we'll see the pack's popularity continue."

This season, Wishnatzki Farms will increase production of pickling cucumbers for fresh-market sales. "It's a cream-of-the-crop product that we pick and pack according to desired size," says Wishnatzki. "Pickling cucumbers are very popular in chain stores in the south."

J&J Produce also continues to dabble in organic vegetable production, notes Rayfield. "We're not selling any organic produce yet, but it's a fast-growing section at retail and food-service and we're exploring our options."

Other Crops: Some farmers are planting crops that cater to ethnic customers. Jason Bedsole, Eastern vegetables sales manager for Duda Farm Fresh Foods Inc., in Oviedo, FL, reveals, "We've added Asian vegetables such as

GETTING TO THE HEART OF FLORIDA CELERY

Florida ranks second to California in celery production. Nearly the entire Florida crop is grown on some 8,000 acres, mostly on land along the southern tip of Lake Okeechobee in Palm Beach County. Celery is available out of Florida from December to May, with peak production January through March.

Jason Bedsole, Eastern vegetables sales manager for Duda Farm Fresh Foods Inc., in Oviedo, FL, says, "This season, quality is very good, with uniform sizing and better-than-average stands. Volumes are good for conventional celery, although demand exceeds supply for organic."

Charles 'Chuck' Obern, owner and president of C&B Farms in Clewiston, FL, notes, "Organic celery is our niche. There's a lot of interest on the part of retailers, especially for an East Coast source. We sleeve and label the majority of it so there's no question about where it comes from, or the fact that it's organic. Prices run 30 percent higher for the organic over conventional."

"The best varieties of celery," according to Brett Bergmann, president and general manager at Hugh H. Branch Inc., in Pahokee, FL, "are bred to produce less of a bitter taste with less fibers."

Duda invigorated the celery category last fall with its introduction of red celery, under the brand name Celery Sensations.

Natural plant breeding techniques were used to create this appetizingly red-hued celery designed to add incremental sales to the category. Celery Sensations is packaged and marketed with a high-capacity color barcode that consumers can scan with their cell phones to get more information about the product, such as storage and usage tips as well as recipes and meal suggestions.

Florida's celery crop is almost exclusively produced for the fresh market as full stalks, celery hearts and fresh-cut sticks. Data indicates that the celery category mix is changing, with celery heart sales steadily increasing to replace celery stalk sales, reports Bedsole. "Fresh-cut celery sales are gaining as consumers shop for snacking items and convenient alternatives for recipe ingredients," he explains.

At retail, create a category segment in the store that includes celery stalks, celery hearts and fresh-cut celery products. Post health benefits on POS materials and provide recipes and usage ideas in store near the celery display. Bedsole adds, "Adding fresh-cut celery sticks to the category mix will increase item ring and incremental sales. Price is a motivating factor in the purchase decision of celery, closely followed by in-store display, improved product taste and new product offerings." **pb**

It's the Ripe Time for Fresh from Florida



Buy Fresh



FreshFromFlorida.com

bok choy, baby bok choy and Napa cabbage due to strong customer demand. Quality and volumes are good, and the addition of these items provides efficiency with logistics.”

The rapidly expanding Hispanic population is creating a market for many products as well. Weis-Buy’s Weisinger says, “We’re growing a lot more chiles, such as jalapenos and poblanos. Root vegetables such as yucca, malanga and boniato are crops I couldn’t sell five years ago, but today I can.”

Boniato, mamey and carambola — or starfruit — are grown by the Princeton, FL-based New Limeco LLC, in the Homestead area. Doria Potts-Blonder, sales and marketing director, says, “We have plenty of volume of all three of these in the spring. For example, on an average week there are 25,000 40-lb. bags of boniato, 10,000 pounds of mamey and 3,000 pounds of carambola.”

Marketing Initiatives

Retailers will find help to market and promote Florida produce from three fronts: grower/shippers, commodity organizations and from the FDACS. Weisinger notes, “I send out a price list and merchandising ideas two to three times per week to our wholesale and

retail partners.”

Likewise, J&J’s Rayfield adds, “We communicate upcoming volumes two to four weeks in advance so retailers have ample time to react and can plan for promotions.”

“Ad support and bilingual marketing materials is something that we offer our retail customers,” says Potts-Blonder.

Locally grown is an important promotional theme, recognizes L & M’s Lytch. “The Florida season is unique compared to other states because product is available for so long. It makes sense to spend money on this kind of promotion,” he asserts. “We put the *Fresh from Florida* logo on our packaging and will work with retail chains on in-store promotions with pictures of farms, farmers and their products.”

The FSSCC and FTC both offer promotional opportunities in the spring. Stemm of the FSSCC says, “In-store cooking demos for super sweet corn are something we’ll do again with Chef’s USA. These demos, with professional chefs, include everything from showing shoppers how to cut kernels off the cob to preparing a simple recipe like grilled corn and tomato salad.”

April is designated Florida Tomato Month and recipes will be a big part of the promotions. According to West Dundee, IL-based

Perishables Group consumer research conducted on behalf of the FTC, 40 percent of consumers want to see recipes included in the tomato displays, 25 percent want storage and handling tips, and about the same number would like ideas for use. Samantha Winters, the FTC’s director of education and promotions, says, “In response, we commissioned the FDACS’ executive chef, Justin Timineri, to create three fresh salsa recipes, which will be available to retailers on tear-off pads with a full color photo of the recipe on one side and ingredients and directions on the other.”

The FDACS runs its Global Grid ad-incentive marketing initiative each year with both in-state as well as out-of-state and international supermarket chains. Phase one takes place from November to January while the second phase happens from February to May. The FDACS’ Sleep reports, “Approximately 55 to 60 percent of ads run in the second half or spring promotion.”

The success of the program over the years has been astounding. Last year, 37 chains participated and collectively ran a record high number of 11,818 ads for 19 categories of produce. These ads generated \$132 million in cash receipts and created 4,500 new jobs, which pumped another \$125 million into the local

SPLASHED WITH SUNSHINE - Not a fluorescent Blub!™

West Coast Tomato, LLC



Call Bob or Terry





OVER 75 YEARS OF QUALITY & SERVICE

Shipping Rounds and Roma Tomatoes from Florida Oct. - June “Manatee River” & “Primo Italiano” brands



941-722-4537

Palmetto, FL



#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

economy. "This year," adds Sleep, "we expect 40 chains and between 11,000 to 12,000 ads."

Retailers Promote Florida Produce

An abundance of Florida produce is a valuable part of spring retail promotions all along the Eastern seaboard. Michael Purvis, director of produce and floral for Harvey's Supermarkets, a 71-store chain based in Nashville, GA, says, "We buy anything that's available from Florida, which includes cucumbers, all peppers, squash, green beans, pole beans, strawberries, red potatoes and tomatoes. There's a real value to locally grown in terms of freight, freshness and quality. Consumers look for this in these tough economic times and we're able to pass on this value to them and support the local economy, too."

Similarly, Florida's fresh produce is a prominent part of the *At Season's Peak* program at Publix Super Markets LLC, headquartered in Lakeland, FL. In fact, more than 70 individual fruits and vegetables are sold in-store during springtime alone. Maria Brous, director of media and community relations, says, "*At Season's Peak* began four years ago as a way of reminding our customers the true seasonality of fruit — the ideal time for ripeness, taste and

freshness. In addition, in the spring, we promote Florida strawberries from late February to mid-March; Florida tomatoes from mid to late May; and Florida watermelons from late May to early June."

The benefit of Florida for Brampton, Ontario-based Loblaws Inc., the largest retailer in Canada is that, "Its climate offers us an early opportunity in the spring to launch summer mainstays like sweet corn and watermelons before the other U.S. growing areas get started," says Art Fringer, senior director for So Fresh Produce, the Fresno, CA-based field office for Loblaws. "We believe relationships are key to our business success. Frequent contact and communication keeps us in touch with who has the best quality. In addition, Florida's location is a huge freight advantage to our markets in Eastern Canada."

Canada is an important, if unexpected, market for Florida farmers. According to data supplied by the FDACS, fresh produce exports to Canada grew from 290 million in 2001 to over 500 million in 2008. In addition, the FDACS has led outbound trade missions where Florida producers have toured the Toronto Terminal Market as well as stores of some of Canada's top retailers. A "reverse" trade trip,

where retailers from Canada, as well as countries such as France and Taiwan, will tour Florida farms in 2012.

These retailers don't just stock Florida fruits and vegetables, they merchandise and promote it. "For example," says Brous, "we have organized demos, displays, selling events and recipes, and we also have knowledgeable associates ready to answer customer questions at any time."

At Harvey's, the effort is multi-faceted and encompasses the entire produce department, says Purvis. "Our print shops will make display and case signs for Florida product that has the item name, price and *Fresh from Florida* logo," he details. "We'll display the Florida produce in its allotted spot, but sign it in this way. In addition, we have a secondary display on the promotional table in the front of the department that is also signed. There's also a 4- by 8-ft. ceiling dangler calling attention to locally grown product. We tie this all in with our ads that also have the *Fresh from Florida* logo next to each Florida product. We also started highlighting individual growers and farmers via signage that pictured the farm and what it produced next to the item in store last year. We're going to do more of this in this coming season." **pb**

"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 vegetables, 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



ADVERTISEMENT

México

TOOLS TO INCREASE YOUR BUSINESS WITH MEXICO

Mexico's fruit and vegetable exports are valued at about \$5 billion with over 85 percent of this heading to the U.S. market. Produce departments around the country rely on Mexico as a top

partner in providing high quality produce to consumers year round. Buyers can increase sales and profitability of products from Mexico with a few simple tips:

STRENGTHEN YOUR LINK TO THE SUPPLY

Product quality and integrity begins with how it is produced. Mexico's growers take great pride in their products and in exporting the highest quality produce to their customers. Strict quality and food safety standards demonstrate the grower commitment to providing only the best for the marketplace.

A variety of regional trade shows and trade missions allow buyers the chance to meet growers, tour farms and packing facilities

and exchange information. The Agricultural Office at the Embassy of Mexico can help you arrange a such a visit. An example of such an opportunity is the Sonora Spring Summit 2011 for the grape industry. This two-day event, starting on April 28th, provides vineyard and packing tours, networking events and informational seminars related to Mexico's spring grapes.

PROMOTE FLAVOR AND FRESHNESS

The variety of products and their wide availability from Mexico means you can always promote the freshest quality product to your customers. Sampling fruits like mangos and papayas and vegetables such as asparagus

and vineripe tomatoes will encourage customers to buy. Retailers can also take advantage of special commodity-specific promotion offered by commodity or production organizations. Some of these include:

- Avocados from Mexico, www.avocadosfrommexico.com
- ALPUM (Association of Grape Producers), www.aalpum.com.mx
- AMHPAC (Greenhouse Producers Association), www.amhpac.org
- National Mango Promotion Board, www.mango.org
- Proberries (Berry association): www.congresodeberries.com.mx

HAVE CONFIDENCE IN QUALITY

One of Mexico's most comprehensive attempts at a quality and food safety certification program is the Mexico Calidad Suprema (Mexico Supreme Quality or MCS). MCS is a private, non-profit organization operating under a Mexican Federal government program. It was formed by the principal associations in the country for the purpose of collaborating with the federal government on actions promoting certification and branding of Mexican food products. Products carrying this seal

have fulfilled specific quality requirements and been certified by a third-party. Currently there are 72 requirements in place for this program.

Globally Trusted Food Safety and Quality Certifications (SQF)- Mexico complies with international and domestic food safety regulations enabling suppliers to assure customers and consumers that food has been produced, processed, prepared and handled according to the highest possible standards, at all levels of



the supply chain. Moreover, Mexico has been benchmarked with GLOBALGAP standards ensuring the highest standards of farming operations and ensuring a responsible approach to worker health and safety as well as animal welfare.

Mexico Supreme Quality has launched a Web site

dedicated to their information and news. It includes general information about the program, products and producers, seasonal recipes and nutrition, and a blog archive. For more information: msqinfo.wordpress.com

GET SUPPORT FROM MEXICO'S TRADE OFFICE

The Agricultural Office at the Embassy of Mexico offers a multitude of valuable resources for building business with Mexico's supply.

- The Direct Buying Program & Trade Missions helps retailers enhance the value chain of produce from Mexico by organizing business agendas and trade missions. More than 20 of the largest U.S. retail firms have visited Mexico under this program.

- The Mexican Fresh Produce Exporters Directory promotes the exportable supply of the Mexican produce sector. It includes a master catalogue with information on growers, firms, production, availability, volume, seasons and varieties, among other information. It also offers integrated public and private databases and regular updates of registered growers and is available in an annual printed edition, a CD-ROM, and via website.

LOOK FOR MEXICO AT U.S. SHOWS

The Agricultural Office at the Embassy of Mexico offers a multitude of valuable resources for building business with Mexico's supply.

- Natural Products Expo West
- United Fruit And Vegetable Association
- FMI
- Summer Fancy Food Show
- Southwest Expo Show
- Expo Comida Latina
- Natural Products Expo East
- PMA Fresh Summit

Be sure to put the MexBest pavilion on your agenda for any of the shows that you visit!

For more information

Please contact the 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





Wholesalers are finding creative ways to keep their loyal customers happy.

Wholesalers Pass The Test Of Tough Times

By focusing on long-time customers and offering services that go above and beyond the call of duty, wholesalers find a way to work through a tightened economy. **BY BOB JOHNSON**

Produce wholesalers and distributors have gone back to the basics of anticipating their customers' needs in order to survive the turbulent economic times of the past three years. Most of them have scrutinized their own operations in order to reach the highest possible level of efficiency. Many of them have diversified, which reduces their exposure to unpredictable market shifts. But the key to survival cited by most wholesalers has been going to even higher levels of service for their core customers.

"Our goal is to meet or exceed the customers' expectations," asserts Julian Sarraino, buyer and sales manager at Fresh Taste Produce Limited Canada, based in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. "Our customer base is also very experienced and has a strong tolerance for turbulent market conditions. Although some customers have indicated that the economy has had an effect on them, they've also mentioned that they've been able to adapt to the conditions so far." Sarraino is also the vice president of the Ontario Produce Marketing Association Board of Directors.

Keeping Old Friends

The first step most produce wholesalers took as the economy experienced a downturn was to make sure they were offering the highest possible level of service to their long-term core customers. "The economy is encouraging people to focus on their core business," says Emily Fragoso, marketing manager at Coast Produce Co., based in Los Angeles, CA. "We have to remember to be the first one at the door, and the last one there. Customer service is key to getting and keeping customers. It's what has let people survive."

An essential part of service is anticipating the customers' needs and offering solutions, rather than asking questions. According to Mike Maxwell, president of Procacci Bros. Sales Corp., headquartered in Philadelphia, PA, "You've got to stay ahead of your customers' needs. Instead of calling customers and asking them what they need, you have to call offering solutions. Show them the pathway to success and they're grateful. We try to be solution-based."

Procacci Bros. assisted its retailer partners

by creating a new line of value-added produce consumers can purchase by the unit at predictable and easily understood prices. "When we began to feel the pressure a year-and-a-half ago, we created a value-added line with a smaller pack and put a retail price on it," adds Maxwell. "You're giving people value and true pricing, with no surprises at the cash register."

These affordable produce packs parallel moves made by many retailers to offer smaller-sized produce items in response to consumers' need for more economical produce options. "Some of the supermarkets have been downsizing the size of their produce," reports Maxwell. "The chain stores have downsized their produce and kept on going."

Wholesalers have also worked to find the produce bargains their retailer customers need now more than ever. "We've focused on continuing to bring in the best values in produce we can find," contends Steven Piazza, president and sales director of Everett, MA-based Community-Suffolk Inc. "We've been increasing our volume in the products we carry so that we



800-223-8080 • 718-991-5900
www.darrigony.com

Fresh...
...Like It's From
Our Own Backyard

“We did a strong analysis of our internal costs and reduced our overall expenses as a percent of sales by 2.3 percent, which, for a wholesaler, is a lot. We looked at our routing and saw that our weakest day was Wednesday. We reduced 15,000 to 18,000 miles a week by consolidating deliveries.”

— Ron Carkoski, Four Seasons Produce Inc.

can be more of a factor in the market.”

Some wholesalers have reached new levels in joining with their retailer customers to identify challenges and find answers. “We started being part of our customers’ business planning to see what their needs and goals were,” reports Ron Carkoski, president and CEO of Four Seasons Produce Inc., located in Ephrata, PA. Four Seasons has representatives sit in on business planning sessions with their retailer customers, in order to guarantee they are intimately familiar with what the retailers need.

Wholesalers have been forced to adapt to

economic moves put in place by many of their retailer customers. “We have noticed a greater share of the produce is drop-shipped to the customer, although they don’t get sorted or graded,” reveals Brendan Comito, chief operations officer at Capital City Fruit Co. Inc., in Norwalk, IA. But Comito believes many retailers will shift back to greater reliance on wholesalers when interest rates go back up, causing the cost of carrying inventories to rise. “When interest rates increase, that’s when people shift back to the warehouse because they don’t want the inventory,” he explains.

But one unavoidable fact in tough times is that the wholesaler stands between the retailer and harsh economic realities. “I don’t think our industry is all that different from every other industry,” declares John Vena Jr., president of John Vena Inc., in Philadelphia, PA. “Customers are struggling to make ends meet; payment is slower; and bankruptcies are more common.”

In many cases, retailers are unable to make timely payments because they are less able to get credit from the banks. “The customers’ credit terms from the bank are tighter, so they are not able to be as free as they were in the past,” says Vena. “They are not able to get by on the float and there have been more failures as a result. Some customers that were expanding failed due to higher debt levels.”

Because the industry is built upon long-term relationships, wholesalers generally have been reluctant to cut off their loyal core customers. “We have a loyal, long-term customer base and we’re reluctant to stop doing business with them, but when people are way out of term you have to do something,” says Vena. “There’s little you can do when you see customers head into Chapter 11. We can tighten up our credit terms to reduce our exposure, but that’s it.”

Some wholesalers have been creative in protecting themselves against late payment, or against losing customers because they go under. “One of the things we have done is tie rebates to timely payments,” reveals Carkoski. “To the credit of most of our customers, they stayed up to date.”

Wholesalers in the Midwest believe they have been spared some of the turbulence, both because the recession has been less severe in most of the heartland and because their retailer customers are more conservative about relying on bank credit. “The Midwest was probably not hit as hard as the coasts, but it has slowed,” reports Comito. “With Midwest values you have fewer fly-by-night operations. People pay their bills.”

The more conservative approach to finance in the Midwest cuts many ways, however, as wholesalers struggle to remain timely with their own payments, despite the economic challenges. “We have a strong principle to pay our vendors on time,” says Shane Towne, marketing and new business development manager for Indianapolis Fruit Co. Inc., headquartered in Indianapolis, IN. “However, that becomes difficult if we’re not getting paid on time. It’s always a challenge, but we try to work with our customers.”

Most wholesalers report trying to find the



*Serving the Southeast with a full line
of the freshest fruits, vegetables & Hispanic produce available*

**Wholesale Division 800-782-5833
Retail Support Division 800-391-8222**

Hiram Folds - C.E.O. • Calvin Folds - President
Jeannie Springfield - Vice President • Randy Lineberger - Executive Vice President
Andrew Scott - Sales Manager Wholesale Division
Derek Powell - Director of Retail Support Division

**Next Day Delivery to 11 States on our own fleet
of satellite equipped trucks**
www.generalproduceinc.com
andrewscott@generalproduceinc.com
Atlanta State Farmer’s Market



line between helping long-term customers who are the heart of their business and limiting their own financial exposure. "Getting paid has been an extremely difficult proposition," admits Piazza of Community-Suffolk. "Our average payments come in after 35 to 40 days, while 10 years ago, it was 17 to 20 days,"

In order to absorb higher receivables, Community-Suffolk has had to rely on its own good credit built up over decades of operation. "Because we've been a rock solid company for 70 years, we've been able to maintain," Piazza says.

But the recession has not been entirely bad news for wholesalers, because as one door closes, another one opens. "Some of the white tablecloth restaurants and casino vendors have been a little slow in paying," details Procacci's Maxwell. "But people are not going out to restaurants, and they're buying more produce for home use, especially in the Northeast."

This slump has lasted so long that the recession and adjustments to it have become the new reality. "I can't really say we've lost or gained customers, except that there have been a couple of customers who have had to close," says Matthew D'Arrigo, vice president of D'Arrigo Brothers Co. of New York Inc., headquartered in the Bronx, NY. "They usually close when their suppliers let them know they have to. It feels like normal now. If there was an affect, it started two or two-and-a-half years ago. Little, if anything, changes in the way of outreach to customers, but their responses may have changed."

Taking Care Of (Their Own) Business

Most wholesalers have responded to the recession by taking an even closer look at their own operations, to find new efficiencies and opportunities. Four Seasons had fortuitously started two new independent operations just before the recession, and both of these operations are doing well. "We have two other companies that have had very good years," reports Carkoski. "We saw the need to diversify in 2005, and turned those two companies into stand-alone operations in 2006."

One of the two independent businesses is Earth Source Trading, a sales management company for produce importers, largely from Chile and New Zealand. This business did well in both 2009 and 2010. The other new venture is Sunrise Logistics, which does inventory management, delivery and storage for companies on the West Coast. This business, too, has done well the last couple of years.

Capital City Fruit has moved to take fuller advantage of the growing demand for local

produce. "We have an individual in place who serves as our Home Grown liaison," reports Comito. "We've been dealing with local growers for 30 years, but we moved someone into this new position two years ago." The company has also dedicated resources specifically to the job of finding ways to hold on to long-term customers, going so far as to recently hire a customer retention manager.

One key to survival for wholesalers has been a diversified customer base. "Produce sales to companies that cater to fine dining

restaurants are off, but we also do a lot of business with companies that serve schools and colleges, and there are just as many school children, and they're eating as much produce," says Randy Lineberger, executive vice president at Forest Park, GA-based General Produce Inc. "Some of our customers sell to supermarkets and their business has been better or as good. When people don't go to restaurants, they're getting their produce somewhere. Where we lost on one side, we gained on another."

As a result of a diversified base, General

COAST TO COAST PRODUCE

CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS
P. O. Box 250 • 125 Commerce Ct. • Cheshire, CT 06410
Ted Kulpik, East Coast Sales Manager
Eileen Oliver, Sales • Carmen Rosa, Sales
Phone: 203-271-2006 • Toll Free: 800-433-1403 • Fax: 203-271-2796

Offices located throughout the U.S. to serve all your needs.

MONTEREY, CA Linda Spry, West Coast Sales Manager Larry Burkett, Sales 831-655-7720 phone 800-562-9844 toll free 831-655-7725 fax	EVERETT, MA Dave Patnaude, Sales Manager Sean Murdock, Sales John Finn, Sales 617-381-0065 phone 877-836-6295 toll free 617-381-0067 fax	BAKERSFIELD, CA Ralph Baker, Sales Manager 661-377-1575 phone 661-377-1580 fax
---	---	--

CONTINUING OUR COMMITMENT TO SERVICE AND QUALITY
www.ctcproduce.com

“Produce sales to companies that cater to fine dining restaurants are off, but we also do a lot of business with companies that serve schools and colleges...Some of our customers sell to supermarkets and their business has been better or as good. When people don’t go to restaurants, they’re getting their produce somewhere. Where we lost on one side, we gained on another.”

— Randy Lineberger, General Produce Inc

Produce has been able to hold the line on declining volume. “We’ve been able to hang onto pretty much everyone we had before the downturn,” states Lineberger. “Our sales are off a little, but we had our biggest year ever in 2007. We had been in a growth mode. We were able to adjust.”

Wholesalers have also found new opportunities with retailers who are trying to keep their inventory to a minimum. “We see some opportunity with customers who want to buy short,” notes Vena of John Vena. “It’s an opportunity

to sell them something we wouldn’t have. It’s interesting, but not really significant. In tough times, some customers keep inventory small and buy from the terminal market as needed.”

Part of the challenge for wholesalers has been finding ways to make their own operations lean and efficient. “The economy is ever-changing, but it always presents us with new challenges and opportunities to find quicker, smarter and stronger methods for completing the task at hand effectively,” says Fresh Taste’s Sarraino.

Four Seasons tightened the belt in its wholesale operation with no pay increases, and with higher employee health care contributions. “We did a strong analysis of our internal costs and reduced our overall expenses as a percent of sales by 2.3 percent, which, for a wholesaler, is a lot,” reports Carkoski. “We looked at our routing and saw that our weakest day was Wednesday. We reduced 15,000 to 18,000 miles a week by consolidating deliveries. Tuesday became a day for planning with our customers, rather than for making sales for the next day.”

Four Seasons also found ways to make their repacking and warehouse operations more efficient.

General Produce did, too. “We reduced our warehouse worker staff somewhat. When you’re in a growth stage you tend to keep on more people than you need. We adjusted as we went along with attrition,” Lineberger says.

For many wholesalers, the recession has been the occasion to take an even closer look at their entire operation. “If you’re a good company, you had to become great,” says Indianapolis Fruit’s Towne. “It all came down to fine-tuning; it comes down to details. It

For Over 72 Years...

“Rosebud on the label means quality on the table!”

COMMUNITY SUFFOLK INC.

Offering Full Service...

Repacked Fruits & Vegetables, Foodservice Products
and a Full Line of
Fruits & Vegetables from
all Producing Areas.

*Tommy, Steven, Jack, or David Piazza
Ron Dugas, Chris Rodes, John Michaels,
Mike Patalano or Joe Gelardi*

617.389.5200 • fax 617.389.6680

Boston Market Terminal • 304 Second Street • Everett, MA 02149
New England Produce Center • Bays 126/127 • Chelsea, MA 02150

**CAPITAL CITY
FRUIT CO. INC.**



Norwalk, Iowa

SHIPPERS &
DISTRIBUTORS

(CAPITAL BRAND)

**“LEADERS IN THE PRODUCE
INDUSTRY SINCE 1949.”**



515-981-5111

Joseph M. Comito, Rick Eggermont, Keith Brooks,
Kieran Comito, Christian Comito, Bob Harper,
Brendan Comito, Allen Cole, Jon Miller,
Wendi Spuehler, Eric Schwertley



Introducing... PerishableNews.com

Streaming
Ticker

Top Story

Easy Navigation

**Your online source
bringing you fresh
news and ideas for
success in the
Produce Industry...
and beyond!**

Subscribe now for instant,
daily or weekly e-mail updates.

It's FREE!

www.perishablenews.com

Stories
"Just In"

Multiple
Article
Sources

The screenshot shows the PerishableNews.com website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Home', 'About', 'Archives', 'Sponsors', 'Contact Us', 'Advertise', and 'Support'. A 'Sign Up' button is also present. The main content area is titled 'Produce' and features a featured article: 'Tastiness & Aisle Artisan Lettuce Featured On TV Show'. The article text includes: 'SALINAS, CA (December 2, 2010) - Tastiness & Aisle's Artisan Lettuce™ was featured on the Shopping & Home with Larry McDevitt program. The edition of Shopping & Home includes a segment featuring Rick Austin who was interviewed as a field of Artisan Lettuce was the company's backdrop in Salinas. Shopping & Home focuses on fresh ingredients from today's most innovative chefs, combined with farm-to-fork food. Each issue straight out of the field, right to your home. The key is the color - vibrant and inspiring food. Larry McDevitt: "You've heard of MTV's "Behind the Music"?? Well, Larry, "I've heard of "Behind the Music"..."'. Below the article is a navigation bar with categories: Bakery, Dairy, Deli, Floral, Meat & Poultry, Produce, Seafood, Retail & Foodservice. There are also several promotional banners for brands like 'Wishing you a Flavorful Holiday Season', 'REALSWEET', 'Red Blaine', and 'Giumarra'. A 'Reader Survey' section is visible on the right side of the page.

PerishableNews.com is an outlet for news about all the perishable categories typically featured in a retail store:

Bakery, Dairy, Deli, Floral, Meat & Poultry, Produce, Seafood

Plus we cover top-level happenings in Retail and Foodservice that are of special interest to a perishable food executive at a supermarket or other retail chain and at a foodservice chain operation or foodservice distributor.



made you look at your expenses even more closely to see if your dollars are being effectively spent. Even the best companies are always looking for ways to become better.”

The Comeback Trail

While the country is not quite on the upswing, reports from wholesalers indicate we may have turned the corner, and the worst of it is behind us. “Our wholesale side in 2010 had an outstanding year,” reports Four Seasons’ Carkoski. “But that was a rebound from a very rough year in 2009, which started well, but we started to see it degrade after July 4. Our customers struggled from August, 2009, to the end of the year. It was one of the few years we had a decline in wholesale sales, it was a weak period of time for our customers,” Carkoski says.

Four Seasons’ customer base is predominantly independent retailers and small chains, with additional customers among other wholesalers. “In 2010, we saw increases from our old customers and from new ones,” continues Carkoski. “Organic produce was one of the largest increases. In 2010, we had a 15 percent increase in wholesale volume over the



previous year. I don’t think we’re recession-proof, but long-term, I think we’re poised to function well.”

The extent of the recovery varies, however,

from region to region. “I don’t think there’s a lot of expansion going on,” says Community-Suffolk’s Piazza. “In New England, it’s been tough, and the future looks dubious. We had a real bad winter. It just keeps snowing, and that means the restaurants lost business they’ll never make up.”

The wholesale markets for perishable produce are always so dynamic that change is the normal reality. “We have a dynamic business model at the Hunts Point Terminal Market,” says D’Arrigo of D’Arrigo Brothers. “It’s like the stock market, except the goods are physically present. Very little has changed in the way we do business. There’s always opportunities, and it’s our job to go out and find them.”

The long-term prognosis for the fresh produce industry, however, remains healthy. “There has been opportunity because people remain health-conscious and to that end, are still eating fresh fruits and vegetables,” says Coast Produce’s Fragoso. “We have consistent business that doesn’t go away. We’ve been very lucky.”

Once the recession is completely behind us, the entire fresh produce industry can look forward to reaping the benefits of a long-term growth in the demand for more healthful and nutritious foods. “The great thing about being in the produce business is that we have a product people need, and we’re just seeing the tip of the iceberg with the health benefits of fruits and vegetables,” says Comito. “I think the industry can really take off after the economy gets better if we start eating healthier.”

pb

In Boston Since 1880

Eaton & Eustis Co.

Units 90-92-93-94
New England Produce Center
Chelsea, Massachusetts

617-884-0298 ss
617-884-0678
Fax: 617-884-2611
Anthony Sharrino

Receiver-distributors of
foreign and domestic produce including:
Garlic • Chestnuts • Coconuts • Onions • Peanuts

A FULL LINE OF NUTS AND DRIED FRUIT



10th Annual MASTERS OF MERCHANDISING SUPPLEMENT



SPONSORED BY





10th Annual MASTERS OF MERCHANDISING SUPPLEMENT

Every once in a while, the opportunity presents itself to do well while also doing good. Such is the case with this, our tenth annual Masters of Merchandising supplement. The industry owes a tip of the hat to the collection of industry leaders who elected to invest with us in a marketing vehicle that is both promotional and educational.

Each vendor worked hard to produce a piece of advice for the industry on how to more effectively merchandise the product category at hand. By sharing knowledge acquired while working with retailers throughout North America, these vendors help retailers move more product, help producers find outlets for production and help the world by encouraging a more healthful diet.

Increasing sales of fruits and vegetables is not only a matter of big pronouncements, such as the *Fruits & Veggies — More Matters!* program. Sales in general can increase only if sales of specific items increase. That means knowing how to build consumer trial and how to offer the most effective assortment; it means knowing how to market things on a day-to-day basis and how to do some out-of-the-box promotions just to keep consumer interest high.

Retailers, please take the time to review this offering carefully. When

did you last think about how to increase sales of celery? Or plantains? Or artichokes? Here is a chance to think of merchandising in a different way. When did you last really consider how to best sell bananas — was it when you were a produce department manager 10, 20 or 30 years ago? Here is an opportunity to revisit old subjects with a different perspective.

The sponsors of this year's Masters of Merchandising section are a special breed. We spoke to many producers who declined to participate, saying they simply had no idea how to merchandise their own items effectively. When we offered to help them research the

As retailers consolidate, they are in a position to expect more support from producers, and intellectual capital is just about the most valuable support one can provide.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CATEGORY	SPONSOR	PAGE	CATEGORY	SPONSOR	PAGE
Apples	Domex SuperFresh Growers	54	Green Beans	Mann Packing Company, Inc.	90
Artichokes	Ocean Mist Farms	56	Green House	Clifford Produce Sales, Inc.	92
Asparagus	Peruvian Asparagus Importers Assoc.	58	Hydroponic Butter Lettuce	Hollandia Produce	94
Avocados, Light-Skinned	Brooks Tropicals, Inc.	60	Kiwifruit	SunPacific Marketing	96
Avocados	California Avocado Commission	62	Lighting	Baero North America, Inc.	98
Bananas	Dole Fresh Fruit Company	64-65	Mangos	Ciruli Brothers, LLC	100
Berries	Driscoll Strawberry Associates, Inc.	68-69	Mushrooms	Monterey Mushrooms, Inc.	102
Cantaloupes	Del Monte Fresh Produce	72	Onions	Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Promotion Committee	104
Carrots	Grimmway Farms	74	Papayas	Brooks Tropicals, Inc.	106
Celery	Duda Farm Fresh Foods, Inc.	76	Plantains	Turbana Corp.	108
Cherries	Chelan Fresh Marketing	78	Potatoes	U.S. Potato Board	110
Citrus	DNE World Fruit Sales	80	Salad Dressings	Ventura Foods LLC	112
Dried Fruit & Nuts	Mariani Packing Company	82	Stone Fruit	Trinity Fruit Sales Co.	114
Fresh-Cut Vegetable Solutions	Apio, Inc.	84	Sweet Onions	Keystone Fruit Marketing, Inc.	116-117
Garlic	Maurice A. Auerbach, Inc.	86	Produce For Better Health		118
Grapes	Sunlight International Sales	88			



10th Annual MASTERS OF MERCHANDISING SUPPLEMENT

matter, we encountered all too many vendors who said, "That is the retailer's problem; we just book loads."

Merchandising is everyone's problem, and in the produce industry, "The Times, They Are A-Changin'." As retailers consolidate, they are in a position to expect more support from producers, and intellectual capital is just about the most valuable support one can provide. So kudos to our Masters of Merchandising sponsors.

There is always a temptation to try to keep knowledge tightly protected and controlled, but oftentimes what goes around comes around, and in sharing their knowledge, our sponsors are giving the industry a great gift. May it return to them many times over.

As an added service to our retail readers, we're printing additional copies of this guide, so if you would like extra copies of the 2011 Masters of Merchandising supplement to give to your colleagues, please fill out the form below and fax or mail it to us. For the cost of shipping and handling, we'll send you up to five supplements, so they will be available on a first-come basis. If you are a vendor and would like to see your category included next year, please use the same form.

If you require larger quantities for distribution to store-level personnel, please call our offices at 561-994-1118 for information on customized reprints.

pb



please send me _____ copies of the Masters of Merchandising Supplement
Cost: \$5 for one copy, \$10 for 5 copies. Amount enclosed \$ _____

Please make checks payable to: PRODUCE BUSINESS

Please print legibly

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Country: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Amex MasterCard Visa

Credit Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Signature: _____

Fax this form with your credit card information to:

561-994-1610 or mail with your check to:

PB Masters of Merchandising

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



DOMEX SUPERFRESH GROWERS



DOMEX
superfresh
growers®

151 Low Road
Yakima, WA 98908
Phone: 509-966-1814
Fax: 509-966-3608

lqueen@superfreshgrowers.com
www.superfreshgrowers.com
www.superfreshapples.com



QUICK TIPS

- Build Apple-Rama displays in October and November when all varieties become available
- Provide a large assortment of varieties — consumers are excited about the apple category and are looking to try different varieties
- Create promotions around all Holidays and major sporting events

During the past decade, apple variety has blossomed. With the success of new “club” varieties in the market and changing consumer attitudes toward the entire category, retailers are approaching apple sales with renewed vigor. Now more than ever, savvy apple merchandising will generate huge year around return on investment.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Nothing attracts attention and generates sales like a large apple display. The display should be well signed with variety name and flavor info and placed at the front of the department in your primary selling location. During the peak of the season (September – December), a secondary display either in the department or around the store can generate 27% in additional sales.

Color Breaks: With the large number of bi-color apples available in today’s market, color breaks are more important than ever. Using citrus or pears to create effective breaks can also generate impulse purchases between categories.

PACKAGING OPTIONS

There are more options than ever when it comes to displaying fruit. Clamshells, poly bags, mesh bags, display-ready boxes and high-graphic bins are among the tools you can use to increase your apple category performance.

Increase Sales with Bins: Superfresh Growers® has developed a high-impact-graphic sleeve-bin display that will drive impulse sales and generate incremental sales at the same time. Pair this display with our earth-friendly paper tote bags and you have the perfect opportunity to sell apples anywhere in the store. These displays are especially helpful for cross-promotions. These bins are also handy for creating bulk or bag waterfall apple displays.

Bags: Create a separate section for your bag program to deliver incremental volume and sales. Poly bags like the 2-pound Superfresh Kids™ bags are ideal for smaller fruit and appeal to families and seniors who may not be able to eat a typical large apple from the bulk display. Retailers featuring 2-pound bagged apple promotions can realize a 74.3% volume increase (“true lift”) and generate a 42.6% incremental volume lift!

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Mixing the ad items and types of ads maximizes impact: Frequency of advertising has a strong impact on the effectiveness of promotion plans. Because apples are so popular, there’s a temptation to advertise the same items at the same price many times during the season. However, experience shows that this can have a negative effect on the promotion goals.

Best single item ads will be the top two selling apple varieties for a retailer. When running combination ads, there should be a balance between what drives a retailer’s business today, and what they will want to drive incremental performance over time. Combinations of mainline varieties; Gala, Fuji, Red Delicious, Golden Delicious, Granny Smith, and premium varieties — Honeycrisp, Braeburn, Jazz, Cameo, etc. — are an effective mix of items to advertise. Advertising mainline varieties will

use the strength of the retailers’ core items, while the premium varieties will help increase awareness of new segments and reach out to those consumers who have already discovered these items. The result is an expanded customer base for the category and the best mix of sales and profits.

Ad Frequency: Starting September 1, it is recommended you feature apples at a minimum every two weeks. Maximum sales result from retailers that run 8 ads every quarter.

Apple-Rama: Almost any combination of apple varieties can be featured in your full-blown apple variety ads. It is recommended to run a major apple ad in early November as all varieties of new crop apples are available for promotion.

Health Promos: After the Holidays, consumers are looking for healthy foods to help them reach their weight-loss goals.

This is the ideal time for a major ad and display push of your “healthy” apple category. Superfresh Growers has created a 100 Calorie Snack ironman stand poster to help educate consumers. The poster features a QR code that consumers scan with their Smartphones to read more about healthy apples on the Superfresh Growers website.

Holiday-Specific Ads: Christmas, Hanukkah, New Year’s, Valentine’s Day and St. Patrick’s Day are the traditional holidays for apples, but don’t forget to include apples in your ads around other Holidays as well as major sporting events too.

Timing: Continue to feature apples year-round. Superfresh Growers Category Management team has conducted research revealing that stores lose sales and margin when they decrease shelf space for apples when stone fruit arrives. The average margin loss over a four-month period is 20.5%! Other studies have shown that when you position apples adjacent to stone fruit, the average increase in gross profit is \$595 per store per week.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Culling several times a day along with proper rotation are critical to building consumer interest in apples. Bruised apples or disorganized displays lower consumer confidence in the product and they will turn to other sources for good apples.

Temperature: Store cartons under constant refrigeration down to 32° F with relative humidity of 90% for maximum shelf life and eating quality.

Rotate: Ensure oldest product is staged to move to shelf display first.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- Utilize your customers’ Smartphones to create in-store ad opportunities and to announce when new apple varieties have arrived
- Offer samples of new varieties like Honeycrisp to create excitement for all apples
- Use Superfresh Growers high-impact-graphic full and half size bins to promote value-driven 3lb bags and 2lb Superfresh Kids™ bags in high traffic areas





Dave Gleason, Chief Horticulturalist, Kershaw Fruit Company



WASHINGTON

“I’m proud to work for a business built by growers for growers.”

Domex Superfresh Growers® is owned by the Kershaws - a 5th generation farming family - and represents 15% of the total conventional and organic apple, pear and cherry volume in the Pacific Northwest. Together with our own production and that of our trusted partnerships with independent family farms we ensure the quality, volumes and varieties you need when you need them. We provide regional representation, category management, promotional analysis, global logistics capabilities and more. All while continuing a commitment to quality relationships and customer and consumer satisfaction. It all comes together in what we call The Force Behind Fresh.™



151 Low Rd., Yakima, WA. 98908 | TEL: 509 966-1814 | www.superfreshgrowers.com

Find us on Facebook search: “Superfresh Growers”

Follow us on Twitter at: twitter.com/superfreshgrwrz





OCEAN MIST FARMS



Trusted Growers. Quality Driven.

10855 Ocean Mist Parkway
Castroville, CA 95012
Phone: 831-770-6435
Fax: 831-633-4363
www.oceanmist.com



RALEY'S STORE 328, MAY 2010

ARTICHOKE AVAILABILITY

Ocean Mist Farms is the only year-round grower of fresh artichokes. Three growing areas in California, along with proprietary varieties, provide a 52 week harvest schedule.

SPRING 2011 CROP

March through mid-May is peak season for the classic Green Globe variety artichoke only grown in Castroville, California region.

Traditionally, the larger sizes peak at the front end in March and April with the smaller sizes peaking in April and May:

April: Heavier volume on larger-jumbo sized Artichokes (12-18-24 COUNT).

May: Heavier volume on medium and baby-sized artichokes (30- to 36-count and baby sizes). The month of May is the peak of the year for the foodie favorite size: the baby artichoke.

We recommend leveraging the variation of the crop volume by size, to maximize sales throughout the spring months.

MERCHANDISING ARTICHOKEs

Artichokes are a natural complement to the produce department. Artichokes have a rich, deep-green color that complement other produce items and "stack" well for building large end-cap displays.

If handled properly, Ocean Mist artichokes will look and taste fresh for up to two weeks. It is important to keep them cool and moist. Here are some tips to help merchandise artichokes:

- Refrigerate artichokes on display at 34° F or 1° C.
- Asparagus trays or bowls work well as merchandising tools to keep stems hydrated.
- Merchandise artichokes on their sides, stem-to-stem, for easier handling by you and your shoppers.
- Place next to lemons and/or fresh garlic bulbs for color blocking and to encourage impulse purchases. Lemons and garlic are commonly used in preparing fresh artichokes.
- Create secondary displays in other departments to prompt an impulse purchase as a meal solution. Artichokes make the perfect side dish for any meat, poultry or fish entree.
- Side dipping ingredients such as mayo, balsamic vinegar and ready-to-eat sauces make a great cross promotion and encourage impulse purchases as meal solutions.



OCEAN MIST ARTICHOKE PETAL INSTANT REDEEMABLE COUPONS

NUTRITION STORY A WINNER

The antioxidant level of fresh artichokes is another powerful merchandising opportunity. Seventy-nine percent of survey respondents noted the fact that the artichokes are higher in antioxidants than any other vegetable will have a significant impact on future purchases. Use Ocean Mist's point-of-sale to draw attention to the artichoke display and educate shoppers about artichokes' nutritional value.

USE DIGITAL TOOLS TO SUPPORT PROMOTIONS

Artichoke household penetration is approximately 30 percent nationally, at approximately the same level as Brussels sprouts. With less than half of shoppers making the decision to buy at the store, it increases the importance of reaching out to people when they are not in the retail environment with information about artichoke usage, nutrition and preparation.

We see an opportunity this spring with social media tools and our Artichoke Aficionado Club members to update artichoke lovers about weekly advertised retail specials for fresh artichokes.

Social media tools, such as Facebook and Twitter, will allow us to communicate advertised specials to a targeted audience. Retailers can also leverage their internal corporate digital teams for promotional support.



facebook.com/californiaartichokes

twitter.com/artichokerecipe

UPC STICKERS

Ocean Mist Farms developed a UPC sticker, the first of its kind for bulk artichokes, to comply with the country of origin labeling laws. The stickers, available on two sizes of artichokes with the current PLU codes 4262 and 4084, are applied in the field during harvest. Ocean Mist worked with our packaging partner to create a special adhesive that is food safe.

CROSS PROMOTIONS

Ocean Mist Farms will be partnering up with Star Olive Oil and California Milk Advisory Board during 2011 to offer artichoke consumers more for their artichoke purchase. Look for exclusive artichoke petal shaped coupons that help build incremental sales.

APRIL 2011 SWEEPSTAKES

- Ocean Mist Farms will be promoting artichokes during peak of the spring season with a \$10,000 cash giveaway sweepstakes. Ocean Mist artichokes will be field packed with artichoke petal inserts with a QR code allowing shoppers to enter in-store or at home



LOVE



Ocean Mist began its love affair with artichokes over 80 years ago when it pioneered the commercial cultivation of artichokes and developed a line of exceptional, richly flavored varieties that today supply over 80% of the nation's demand year-round.

Today, more and more vegetable lovers are falling for the unique flavor, antioxidant boost and shared experience of enjoying the alluring artichoke.

Artichokes are just one of the objects of our passion. For more information on any of our 30 commodities, visit oceanmist.com



Trusted Growers. Quality Driven.



PERUVIAN ASPARAGUS IMPORTERS ASSOCIATION



Phone: 817-793-3133
 Contact: Priscilla Lleras
 prestige@1scom.net



Asparagus represents a growing potential for high ring sales in the produce department. Per capita consumption of fresh asparagus has increased by more than 47 percent since 1998. In the last decade alone, consumption of asparagus in the United States has almost doubled, exceeding the rate of growth exhibited by nearly all other vegetables.

Asparagus from Peru, a principal supplier, allows retailers to complement other seasonal sources and offer quality product year round. Retailers can count on consistent, quality Peruvian product to build sales and should be sure to offer ample displays of product 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 any PAIA member or the association office.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

The year-round availability of asparagus supports programs designed to build the category not only during peak holiday periods but throughout the year. Focus on the following key areas to boost sales:

- **Color:** A variety of colors is available from Peru and makes for attractive display alternatives. Fresh asparagus is readily available in green, white and purple. Showcase unique colors, like purple or white, by adding these products to displays where fresh green asparagus is featured to create interesting and impactful displays.
- **Visibility:** Strategically display the category to ensure consumers see it. Many retailers display asparagus at the front of the produce department. Make sure displays are especially visible and well-positioned in the produce department to gain attention.
- **Variety:** Fresh asparagus now comes in a wide variety of sizes and packaging to enhance display practices. Be sure to display several different packaging options to increase convenience for customers. Large display tables of different product forms (whole spear bunches, microwave tray-packed trimmed spears, packaged and bunched asparagus tips, white and purple asparagus) will increase sales and add profits to the produce department.

PROMOTION AND SIGNAGE

Fresh asparagus is a great item to promote for holidays and entertaining, especially during Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas. However, retailers should capitalize on the opportunity to promote asparagus during the summer for picnics or barbecues.

Promoting multiple colors of Peruvian asparagus together may encourage consumers to try a new color. Retailers can also use alternative pricing methods, such as by the bunch instead of the pound, to showcase the value of the product. Value-added and packaged fresh product can be used as part of a meal solutions offering. In-store demo programs increase consumer awareness of asparagus as an easy and economical dinner component.

Effective signage should stress suggestive usage ideas as well as the many nutritional benefits of fresh asparagus. Signage should recommend serving ideas such as:

- tasty party item • easy to barbecue
- microwaveable • quick and healthy snack

PROMOTE NUTRITION

Health-related promotion is a definite method of gaining sales. Asparagus is a good source of potassium, vitamin A, and vitamin C. Asparagus is low in fat and contains no cholesterol. Asparagus is also rich in rutin and folacin, which has been proven important in the duplication of cells for growth and repair of the body. Promotions designed to highlight the nutritional benefit will lead to loyal purchasers. Combine asparagus with other Superfoods in an in-store promotion outlining the health attributes of these products. Health aspects appeal to a wide segment of the market including seniors, kids and active life-stylists.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 5 spears (93g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 20	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 0mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 4g	1%
Dietary Fiber 2g	8%
Sugars 2g	
Protein 2g	
Vitamin A 10%	Vitamin C 15%
Calcium 2%	Iron 2%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:	
	Calories: 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less than 25g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g
Calories per gram: Carbohydrate 4 Protein 4	
Fat 9	

CROSS MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Fresh asparagus has numerous cross-merchandising opportunities including salad, oils and dressings, with deli or seafood items, and wines. During the summer, placing a display next to barbecue style meats and fish is a great way to promote picnic items. Tray-packed fresh asparagus can also be cross-merchandised with packaged fresh asparagus can be cross-merchandised with other departments to provide a meal solution for customers, for example in the meat department with steaks or in the deli with roasted chicken.

VALUE ADDED

In an effort to increase household penetration and reach new consumers, many Peruvian asparagus importers are working closely with their suppliers to bring value-added options — including microwaveable and ready-to-eat — to market that are designed for both retail and foodservice. These value-added programs provide the consumer with convenience and savings.

CARE AND HANDLING

Asparagus should be bright-looking with closed, firm tips. The butt-end of fresh asparagus should be cleanly cut and sufficiently hydrated. Display under refrigeration or with the butt-end in water or touching a wet pad. Be sure to monitor the condition of water in display trays and change frequently. In the backroom, keep asparagus cold (34-36 degrees F) and moist (damp room) prior to display. Fresh asparagus is not ethylene-sensitive but is susceptible to absorbing very strong odors.

FIVE WAYS TO GROW YOUR PERUVIAN ASPARAGUS

1. Promote alternative colors, especially for home chefs and entertaining.
2. Promote year-round, especially for holidays, barbecues and picnics.
3. Build promotion around nutrition and health. Asparagus offers excellent advantages in this area.
4. Good-looking, large displays will draw consumers. Don't be afraid to go big and promote the product! Make signage attractive.
5. Take advantage of ample cross-merchandising opportunity.




YOUR ASPARAGUS GROWER
Toll Free (800)292-8777
PH (305)594-9117 FAX (305)594-8506

JOHN LYONS - JLYONS@ALPINEFRESH.COM - (305) 594-7317
MIKE BEREND - MBEREND@ALPINEFRESH.COM - (786) 464-8989
CRAIG FLEMING - CFLEMING@ALPINEFRESH.COM - (305) 594-2028

ANDY GARCIA - AGARCIA@ALPINEFRESH.COM - (305) 594-8527
MAURO SANDO - MSANDO@ALPINEFRESH.COM - (305) 594-8528
GREG WELLS - GWELLS@ALPINEFRESH.COM - (786) 464-8989

Loading locations:
Miami, Philadelphia, McAllen, Yuma, Los Angeles, Salinas



Asparagus

Sales Handled By:
Mark Cotton, Jimmy Williams, Mike Isola,
Don Walters & Jim Hanson,
Brian Lower - Transportation Mgr.

Phone: 209.931.7900 • Fax: 209.931.7920 • Website: www.growerdirect.net

Where the grass actually IS greener!




954-788-6800
www.aycofarms.com
Deerfield Beach, FL

Our sales team is ready to serve you.

Year Round Asparagus & Nationwide Distribution



888 549 3421
www.missionpro.com




CARB-AMERICAS

Your Offshore Produce Source
Pompano Beach, FL (954) 786-0000
Contact Jeff, Danny, Scott or Hilda
Los Angeles
Patrick Ramirez
310-374-8286
www.carbamerica.com



NORTH BAY PRODUCE
ASPARAGUS AVAILABLE YEAR-ROUND
Standard, Large, Extra Large, & Jumbo in Bunches

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.

Sales: Nick Osmulski, Vic Cotner, Ryan Lockman & Ken Korson

231-946-1941 • Fax: 231-946-1902
www.northbayproduce.com
P.O. Box 988 • Traverse City, MI 49684

LETTUCE CLEAR YOUR ASPARAGUS IMPORTS



customized **Brokers**
A CROWLEY Company

(305) 471-8989
www.customizedbrokers.net



The Perishable Specialist Inc.

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

GREEN, WHITE & PURPLE ASPARAGUS




Gourmet
TRADING COMPANY

310.216.7575 | gourmettrading.net



Southern SELECTS

- East & West Coast Distribution
- Green & White Asparagus
- Southern Selects Value Added
- Year Round Availability
- Private Label Programs



954-784-6500
www.southernselects.com
www.southernspecialties.com



Contact:
Tracy Wood, John D'Albora - Florida Office
772-316-0364
tracy@keystonefruit.com
johnd@keystonefruit.com

Dan Borer - West Coast Office
509-526-9200
dan@keystonefruit.com




AMERICAS
FRESH, YEAR-ROUND

Contact:
Gary Meadows,
Don Hessel & Cory Stahl
- Los Angeles Office
323-890-8100
garym@progressiveproduce.com



AMERICAS
FRESH, YEAR-ROUND





BROOKS TROPICALS



18400 SW 256th Street
 Homestead, FL 33090
 Phone: 800-327-4833
 Fax: 305-246-5827
 www.brookstropicals.com
 www.brookstropicals.com/nutrition



INCREASE AVOCADO CATEGORY SALES WITH SLIMCADOS

It's the green-skinned avocado from Southern Florida with less fat and fewer calories.* The SlimCado's large size complements your current avocado offering, grabbing attention from the value-conscious customer and even the dieter — normally an infrequent visitor in the avocado aisle.

Don't forget your Hispanic shopper, who will appreciate having a wider selection of a favorite fruit.

Avocado aficionados were thrilled to hear that avocados contain "good" fat. Still doctors suggest even "good" fat be eaten in moderation (70 calories a day). Those 70 calories go much further with SlimCados. SlimCado's distinctive light avocado taste can be added to:

- Green salads — morsels of SlimCados tossed in make each forkful more delectable.
- Hot soups — cold cubes of these avocados floating on the top push the soup's zest appeal over the edge
- Chunky guacamole — mashed SlimCados become the party favorite of the buffet table.
- Sandwiches or hamburgers — diced into sandwich spreads or sliced thin to top the feast, these green-skinned avocados make bagged lunches hard to beat.
- SlimCado bowls — cut in half and filled with your favorite seafood salad.
- Finally, there's the simple joy of a Florida avocado cut in half with just a squeeze of lime on top and eaten with a spoon.

So it's official, avocados aren't just for parties. Any meal can be made into a little celebration with SlimCados. Besides being lower in fat and calories, these Florida avocado are also rich in vitamin A, high in potassium and cholesterol-free. SlimCados are not genetically modified — they come by these characteristics naturally.

PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Make a big splash in mid-July to kick off the SlimCado season. Look for promotional volumes of 12-count fruit in July and 10-count in August — just in time for chopping up into salads that make their yearly debut during summer barbecues.

Play up how SlimCados add gusto to guacamole, hamburgers and the salads of tailgate parties. The Florida avocado's tropical taste goes well with autumn's typical fare.

And for traditional holiday dinners, SlimCados make a healthy alternative side dish for those special meals.

Garnish in-store cooked food demonstrations with a piece of Slimcado. The food's heat will slightly melt the SlimCado for an added treat.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Display enough to sell in one day, roughly 15 to 30 pieces (depending on the traffic in your store). When replenishing, rotate any leftover day-old fruit to the front.

Remember, avocados are sensitive to ethylene.

OPTIMUM SHELF LIFE

Brooks' Continuous Cold Chain® keeps SlimCados at their best from the field to your store. The first link in the chain is the hydro-cooling that is done immediately after harvesting. Hydro-cooling takes the tropical heat out while keeping the fruit's freshness in. The chain continues with these green-skinned avocados being stored in dedicated coolers set at optimum temperature and humidity levels. The final link is the refrigerated loading docks that allow SlimCados to be shipped to your store at optimum freshness.

As the largest grower, packer and shipper of green-skinned avocados, Brooks Tropicals has a reputation for delivering this fruit with the best shelf-life. SlimCados have approximately a 4-day shelf life with the fruit being ready to eat for another one to two days.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

Store SlimCados by keeping their environment cool and humid, between 42° and 48° F. Do not store below 40° F. Optimum humidity is between 85 percent and 95 percent.

SlimCados are UPC/PLU-coded and boxed in flats, doubles and bruces.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Add SlimCados to your avocado section and give your customers a choice of great avocado tastes. But don't stop there. Place SlimCados near other salad ingredients. These green-skinned avocados make delicious sense in salads. When the avocados are displayed near bagged salads, your shoppers have a quick and easy way to make their salads special.

When you're rounding up ingredients for your guacamole display, make sure to include SlimCados for a fresh-tasting guacamole.

Merchandise Florida avocados, targeting your South and Central American customers. This is the avocado of choice for many Hispanic dishes.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY

Available July through February, Florida avocados are generally pear-shaped and green-skinned. Their weight can vary from 14 ounces to a hefty 34 ounces. The avocado will vary in size from four to 12 inches long and up to six inches wide.

**50% less fat and 35% fewer calories than the leading California avocado. SlimCado, Continuous Cold Chain and the Brooks Tropicals logo are registered trademarks of Brooks Tropicals, LLC.*

QUICK TIPS

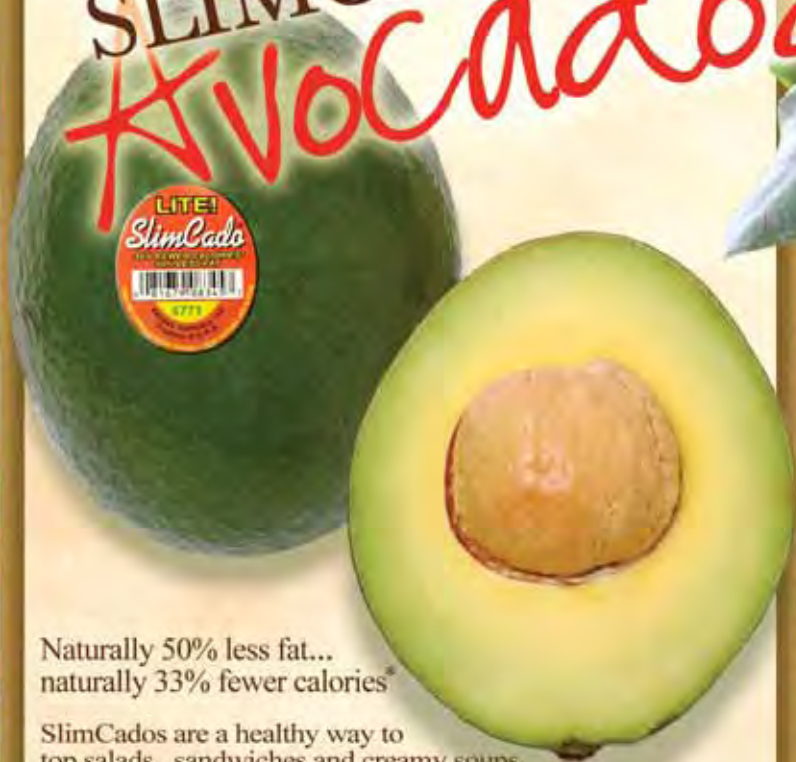
- Your customer may expect the SlimCado to turn black — like other avocados — as they ripen. SlimCados stay green. If you can give it a squeeze and it gives a little, it's ready to eat
- Keep SlimCados cool but not cold. To ripen, keep them at room temperatures
- To ripen faster, put in a paper bag. To ripen even faster, put in a paper bag with an apple or a banana
- For additional nutritional information and recipes, go to www.brookstropicals.com

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- Think big at the beginning of the season. Big displays, big signs alert the SlimCado aficionado that their favorite avocado is back in season. As the season progresses, create small multiple displays to cross-merchandise with bagged salads and guacamole ingredients
- Promotional volumes are available in mid-July for the SlimCado 12-count, just in time for a healthy addition to barbecue menus. In August, it's the 10-count that reaches promotional volumes
- The tailgate parties of fall always welcome avocado salads, guacamole or a Florida version of the Caprese salad with SlimCado slices partnering with mozzarella and tomatoes

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





CALIFORNIA AVOCADO COMMISSION



12 Mauchly, Suite L
Irvine, CA 92618-6305
Phone: 949-341-1955
Fax: 949-341-1970
CaliforniaAvocado.com/Retail
dcruz@avocado.org



QUICK TIPS

- Call the California Avocado Commission for all your retail support needs: data assets (including ongoing and custom reports), crop forecasts, retail sales trends, program details and promotional opportunities
- Visit us at CaliforniaAvocado.com/retail for the retail promotional planner and to order all your Hand Grown in California POS Materials. The site also has recipes, nutritional information and California Avocado Grower stories

AVOCADOS: A GROWTH CATEGORY

Sales of avocados continue to surge nationwide – up a remarkable 13.1% (52 weeks ending 12/06/10), outpacing both Total Fruit (up 6.9%) and Total Produce (up 7.3%).

CALIFORNIA AVOCADOS: DRIVING VALUE AT RETAIL

- California Avocados are an impact item in the produce department
- Retailers generated \$141 million more dollars during the April through September time frame, when California Avocados are at peak season, over the prior six months (October-March)
- Retailers produced, on average, \$733 more dollars per store, per month from April through September than during the prior six months (October-March)
- Consumer demand continues to climb, with retail sales growing nationwide
- Recent consumer surveys show that consumers prefer California Avocados 9 to 1!*

CONSUMER MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS DRIVE DEMAND

California Avocados are supported by programs and media designed to drive retail purchase and consumption:

- Radio and Billboards (in select markets)
- Print campaign in several popular national publications
- Consumer website with recipes, usage tips and nutritional information
- Social media outreach (over 51,000 fans on Facebook)
- Coming Soon: Dedicated mobile website!

IMPACTFUL PROMOTIONS DESIGNED TO DRIVE SALES

Look for these promotions of California Avocados:

- Avo BabiesSM encourages families to send their photographs of the youngest fans of California Avocados (babies) to a special website for a chance to win scholarship prizes
- The Copper River Salmon/California Avocados promotion (in select markets) encourages consumers to enjoy these premium foods while they are both in season
- The Mediterranean Diet promotion motivates consumers to live a healthy lifestyle with foods rich in nutrients
- Build a Better BurgerTM is a national promotion with remarkable in-store point-of-purchase material and support designed to bolster multiple purchases and increase the basket ring
- Use these special occasions and events to help you promote retail sales: Cinco de Mayo, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, Father's Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, St. Patrick's Day, Summer Grilling and Fall Tailgating
- In-store retail materials available for order now

RETAIL BUSINESS BUILDING PROGRAMS AND MATERIALS

Stay informed about California Avocados:

- Rolling crop forecasts and updates

- Market and regional sales and volume information (by PLU/UPC)
- Special data-driven retail report and research, customized for your needs
- Ongoing consumer and merchandising research
- Nutrition research and information
- Ripening information
- Plus, materials to help you build your California Avocado category: In-store POS materials, California Grower stories, recipes, and much more

NUTRITION INFORMATION

- Avocados are included in Fruits & Veggies-More MattersTM consumer educational program to promote increased consumption of fruits and vegetables for good health
- Avocados act as a "nutrient booster" by enabling the body to absorb more fat-soluble nutrients, such as alpha- and beta-carotene as well as lutein, in foods that are eaten with the fruit
- Avocados contribute good fats to one's diet, providing 3 grams monounsaturated fat and 0.5 polyunsaturated grams fat per 1 oz. serving
- Avocados contain 81 micrograms of the carotenoid lutein, which some studies suggest may help maintain healthy eyes
- One-fifth of a medium avocado (1 oz) has 50 calories and contributes nearly 20 vitamins and minerals making it a good nutrient choice
- Avocados contain 76 milligrams beta-sitosterol in a 3-oz serving of avocado. Beta-sitosterol is a natural plant sterol which may help maintain healthy cholesterol levels

EXPERTISE YOU HAVE COME TO RELY ON

- The California Avocado Commission, an industry leader in information resources since 1978, is represented by one of the most experienced produce merchandising and marketing teams in the nation
- Contact us for information or sales support materials

INSIST ON CALIFORNIA AVOCADOS

Visit CaliforniaAvocado.com/Retail for more information and to order your Hand Grown in California materials

*Source: Cooper Roberts Research, 2009 Avocado Tracking Study funded by the Hass Avocado Board

HASS AVOCADOS – ARE NATIVES OF CALIFORNIA

- The Hass variety, so popular worldwide, originated in Southern California
- Over 96% of avocados sold in the U.S. are the Hass variety
- The Mother Hass Tree was tended for, and named after Rudolph Hass, who patented the variety in 1935
- Every Hass Avocado worldwide can trace its lineage back to this California tree

CALIFORNIA

• AVOCADOS •

Driving Value At Retail



Sales in millions*

California Avocados—Growing Demand

California Avocados offers a wide array of programs, materials and resources that are readily accessible!

- Innovative consumer marketing • Custom retail promotions • In-store POS • Display bins •
- Retail data and analyses • Consumer and retail research •

The Result is Increased Retail Sales Year-after-Year!

For information about California Avocado retail programs,
please call (800) 344-4333 or visit CaliforniaAvocado.com/Retail



Insist on California Avocados

Peak Season: Spring-Fall



DOLE



One Dole Drive
Westlake Village, CA 91362
Phone: 818-874-4000
Fax: 818-874-6501
www.dole.com



**PROMOTE
SPECIALTY
BANANAS**

Make sure specialty bananas are clearly visible, in good condition, and merchandised with point of sale material that provides consumers with sufficient information on how to select these exotic treats and practical ideas to best enjoy them.

These tasty varieties can add excitement and color to your produce department as well as generate additional margins.

Your Dole representative can help customize a specialty banana program tailored to the demographic makeup of your stores.



BANANAS ARE WELL POSITIONED TO PROMOTE IN A DIFFICULT ECONOMY

We said last year that “consumers are faced with very difficult choices as economic conditions worsen.” While policy makers, economists, and financial markets point to better times ahead, many consumers are still waiting for relief.

In addition to the nutritional value, convenience, and flavor that bananas offer to consumers, bananas are also the lowest cost fruit in the produce department. Consumers clearly understand this. The table below demonstrates this by showing the change in retail dollar sales, pounds sold, and average retail price between 2009 and 2010 for the total United States.

Total US Retail Conventionally Grown Fresh Fruit Sales			
% Change 2009 - 2010			
Product	\$ Sales	Lbs Sold	Retail Price
Apples	-3.9%	0.7%	3.2%
Avocados	9.3%	21.0%	-9.7%
Bananas	-3.4%	2.4%	-5.5%
Berries	3.6%	-0.8%	4.5%
Cherries	5.7%	-5.1%	11.4%
Grapes	-1.1%	-5.3%	4.4%
Melons	5.9%	-0.3%	6.3%
Oranges	4.8%	4.6%	0.2%
Peaches	-2.0%	2.5%	-4.4%
Pineapple	7.3%	8.0%	-0.7%

Source: FreshLook Marketing

Despite the dreary economy in 2010, consumers increased their purchases of conventionally grown fresh fruit compared to 2009 according to FreshLook Marketing data.

Apple, pineapple, avocado, and orange category sales increased — in both dollars and pounds — in 2010 compared to 2009. The national trend is quite consistent across the regions of the United States; however, the competitive effects of changes in retail pricing had significant market share implications. Contact your Dole representative to review the results from your region and ensure you are getting your fair share of the market.

buy DOLE products. The next brand mentioned received only 14 percent.

Your DOLE Banana display should be positioned in a prominent area, preferably the front-end display unit in the produce department.

A beautifully stocked display will draw consumers into your produce department. Stocking is important. With the busy lifestyles that most people lead today, the time people shop is scattered around the clock. The morning and afternoon will bring in the stay-at-home-mom crowd, as well as seniors. Both of these demographic groups are loyal DOLE Banana consumers. In the evening, late at night and on weekends, you will have an influx of shoppers who work full time and fit shopping into their schedules.

All these consumers have one thing in common; they all like to buy their DOLE Bananas from a neat, fully stocked banana display. If the display appears half-empty, they get the impression the fruit has been picked through, leaving them with the leftovers. This is why it is critical to keep your DOLE Banana display fully stocked, cleaned and culled throughout business hours

GIVE YOUR CONSUMERS MORE OF WHAT THEY LOVE... MORE OF WHAT IS GOOD FOR THEM

Bananas continue to be the top selling item sold in grocery stores with household penetration exceeding 90%. Consumers love the banana's sweet taste, nutrition, and convenience. Still, the average retail banana transaction size remains at roughly 2.5 pounds.

This is due in part to the established daylight banana consumption patterns by consumers centering around breakfast or a snack early in the afternoon. DOLE has seized upon an opportunity to educate consumers about delicious and exciting new usages for bananas, nutritional benefits, and other incentives that promote purchasing more of the bananas they already love.

The goal of this integrated promotional strategy is to increase the average retail transaction size by one-half-pound without resorting to steep retail promotional price reductions. DOLE provides its customers with customized turn-key, easy to execute promotional programs that will increase the banana transaction size and banana profits!

DOLE provides retailers with all of the customized components to ensure success; including eye-catching point of sale materials that communicate clear messages to the consumer, in-store posters, take-one educational materials, and retail-specific webpages.

DOLE is committed to making it easy for retailers to give their consumers more of what they love, and more of what's good for them. Contact your DOLE representative today to start building your extra half-pound!

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDUES

Dole Fresh Fruit Company provides its retail and wholesale customers with services that improve the way products are received, handled, ripened and displayed. A knowledgeable team of technical service representatives work directly with Dole customers to perfect ripening, equipment management and handling procedures.

Our team of merchandising representatives works at retail stores to help develop displays that will move more DOLE Bananas.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

When building a profitable banana display at retail, there are several items to take into account. Brand recognition and loyalty are key. A recent independent study showed that consumers look for specific brands that they trust to buy. The study found, “DOLE continues to stand out as the brand consumers say they seek out and buy when available.” Thirty-five percent of respondents surveyed said they





DOLE



ARE YOU LOSING REVENUE AT THE CHECK STAND?

Consumer interest in fresh organic fruit continues to grow despite the rough economy. From 2009 to 2010 US retail of fresh organic fruit dollar sales increased 6% on flat pound sales according to FreshLook Marketing data. Consumers have shown a willingness to continue to pay a premium price for organic fruit in exchange for the reassurance that the bananas were grown in a more earth-friendly manner. Berries,

apples, and bananas are the top selling organic fruits in the produce department, while bananas are largest when ranked by pounds sold.

Unfortunately, retailers do not always realize the price premium between the organic and conventional produce item at the register. Unlike packaged goods with UPCs that are scanned at the checkout for an accurate ring every time, random weight perishable produce items still rely on the cashiers to key in the correct PLU code for the right price. While expediting the purchases of busy consumers, it is difficult for a cashier ringing large numbers of items, to differentiate between organic and conventional bananas.

To ensure retailers do not lose any banana revenue and to avoid confusion at the check stand, Dole has developed an attractive band to wrap around organic banana clusters. The band prominently highlights ORGANIC and the PLU code, making it easier for cashiers to identify it.

In parallel, the industry is now making strides toward the adoption of a new

barcode: the GS1 Databar. The data bar is encoded with a 14-digit GTIN (global trade identification number) that identifies the product and its supplier and also distinguishes from conventional and organic. This bar is small enough to fit on bananas, and most other products, and ensures the correct price is charged to the consumer.

Having cashiers scan the Databar on a banana instead of entering a PLU will allow retailers to ring the correct price for organic bananas and not lose any revenue at the check stand. Walmart and Loblaws are already scanning the Databar in some stores. Your Dole representative can assist you to maximize organic banana sales and reduce shrink due to misidentified product at the checkout stand.

Total US Retail Organic Fresh Fruit Sales			
% Change 2009 - 2010			
Product	\$ Sales	Lbs Sold	Retail Price
Apples	5.3%	-10.3%	17.3%
Avocados	13.7%	30.2%	-12.6%
Bananas	3.4%	7.4%	-3.7%
Berries	25.2%	18.1%	5.9%
Cherries	-75.6%	-80.7%	26.5%
Grapes	15.4%	13.1%	2.0%
Melons	-5.2%	-12.6%	8.5%
Oranges	33.8%	38.5%	-3.3%
Peaches	-9.4%	-13.2%	4.4%
Pineapple	-14.1%	-17.4%	4.0%
Total	5.8%	-0.3%	6.1%

Source: FreshLook Marketing

STEAKS, CHOPS, BURGERS, DOG... AND BANANAS?

All of these items are great on the grill, but it is likely your consumers have never experienced a grilled banana before. There are few ways that are more simple, delicious and fun to end a great barbeque meal than a grilled banana. Further, this is a perfect opportunity to demonstrate to consumers a new way to use bananas outside of the typical breakfast and snack occasions. Simply place a ripe banana in the peel on a hot grill for five minutes then turn over on the other side for another five minutes. The banana is ready when the peel turns dark brown and the banana has softened.

Now the fun begins! Slit the banana peel with a fork or knife and let the banana slide onto a plate. The warm banana will have the consistency of custard and can be topped with anything from the indulgent (ice cream, hot fudge, whipped cream) to the healthy (berries, yogurt, nuts).

Your Dole representative can provide materials and help you design promotions to introduce consumers to this great idea!



Dole leads the way
in nutritional education,
helping consumers to
achieve a healthy lifestyle.

The DOLE brand is
synonymous with
high quality and safety
standards for fresh
fruit and vegetables.





DRISCOLL'S

Driscoll's®

345 Westridge Drive
 Watsonville, CA 95076
 Phone: 831-763-5000
 Fax: 831-761-5988
 www.driscolls.com



EXCEPTIONAL BERRIES, UNIQUELY DRISCOLL'S

Driscoll's is the world's largest distributor of fresh strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and blackberries. Our proprietary plants are grown around the globe and we are uniquely positioned to offer a year-around supply of conventional and organic berries. A Driscoll's Berry Patch display featuring high quality berries is the ideal way to create a destination location in your produce department and makes a resounding statement about your store's commitment to quality.

ONLY THE FINEST BERRIES™

Driscoll's is passionate about producing great berries. The Driscoll's family has been growing berries for over 100 years, and developing new and better berry varieties is a vital part of our company's heritage and reputation. Driscoll's mission to continually delight berry consumers drives us to always seek ways to improve the berries we produce, balancing the art and science of berry farming. It's our brand promise to offer Only the Finest Berries™.

ONLY DRISCOLL'S HAS THE YEAR-ROUND BERRY PATCH

The Driscoll's branded Berry Patch strategy is the best way to increase volume, sales and consumer satisfaction. The Berry Patch, simply put, is the full complement of conventional and organically grown Driscoll's berries. The bright colors make for an eye-catching and profitable display for any grocer. And with the year-round availability, carrying the Berry Patch promotes return visits from customers.

Recorded IRI scan data and independent research conducted by A.C.Nielsen show continued strong growth in purchase intent in the berry category. In fact, fresh berry sales in dollars in 2010 were ahead of all other individual produce items including bagged salads, bananas and other traditional fresh produce purchases.

New data also reflects a change in the customer coming into the store: a berry destination location in store attracts a higher value shopper. A recently completed consumer attitude and usage study of frequent berry buyers showed they are more likely to:

- Purchase more types of fresh berries (e.g., strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and blackberries)
- Purchase fresh berries at least once a month year-round
- Seek out organic berries





DRISCOLL'S



DIFFERENTIATING YOUR STORE

Not only is the berry category number one in total produce department dollar sales, but berries are also an effective way to differentiate your store. The produce department offers the best opportunity to distinguish yourself, and berries are an item that can set one retailer apart from the others.

In addition to carrying the full Berry Patch, there are a few simple ways to reinforce a market leadership position with berries leading a healthy lifestyle campaign. Messaging that resonates with health conscious consumers should include:

- Berries are a good source of antioxidants and assist in disease prevention
- Berries are also good for the heart, bones and the brain and memory retention

Other campaigns can be built around targeted audiences, especially the 'Mommy Bloggers' — cost-conscious, internet-savvy shoppers who are looking for healthy snack alternatives for their families. Appealing to this growing market segment featuring fresh berries can only enhance overall sales. Focus should be placed on:

- Berries are a versatile ingredient/fruit for entertaining
- Berries are a good value for the money

DRISCOLL'S
 345 Westridge Drive, Watsonville, CA 95076
 Phone: 831-763-5000 Fax: 831-761-5988
 Website: www.driscolls.com



MIXED BERRY PUDDING WITH SABLE BRETON

QUICK TIPS

Just as important as how berries are cared for right up until the time they are purchased. Berries should be received into refrigerated warehouses, transported to the store in refrigerated trucks and quickly uploaded into a cold storage room. Optimal temperature for berries is between 32° to 34° with humidity levels at 90 to 95 percent. If berries arrive in plastic, be sure to unwrap them immediately. Here are a couple of other recommendations to make your displays more appealing and more profitable:

- Keep berries on display dry. Any moisture will hasten the berries' breakdown, directly impacting their shelf life and your sales.
- Make sure your Berry Patch display is plentiful and maintained at all times. Remove packages containing leaky or moldy berries. Depleted or ignored display can make a poor impression on customers and can negatively influence purchase intent.

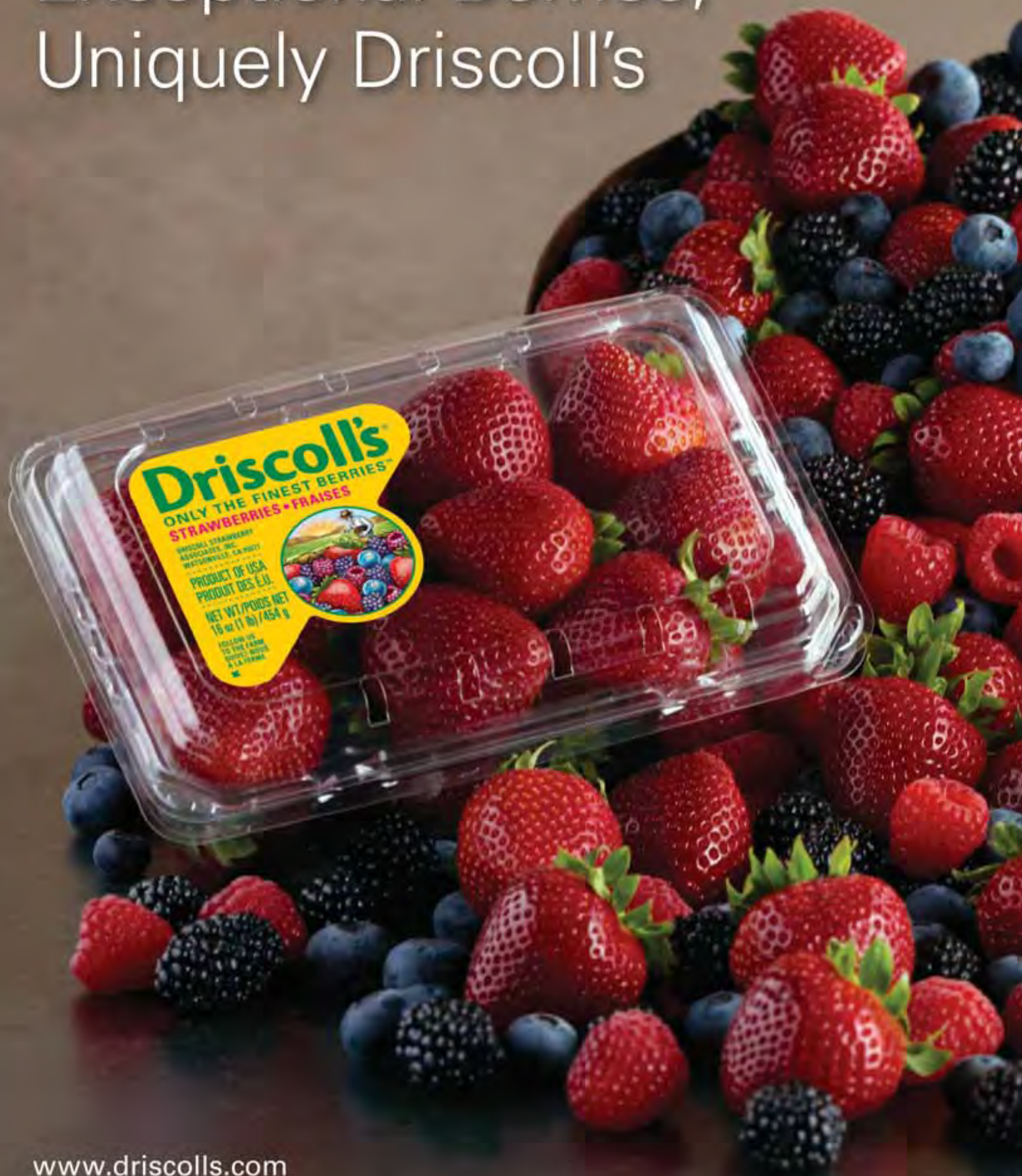


HEALTHY BLUEBERRY BRAN MUFFIN



MIXED BERRY GOAT CHEESE FONDUE

Exceptional Berries, Uniquely Driscoll's



Driscoll's
ONLY THE FINEST BERRIES™
STRAWBERRIES • FRAISES

NATIONAL STRAWBERRY
ASSOCIATES, INC.
WATSONVILLE, CA 95077

PRODUCT OF USA
PRODUCT DES E.D.

NET WT/POIDS NET
16 oz (1 lb) / 454 g

FOLLOW US
TO THE FARM
@DRISCOLLS
& #FARM

At Driscoll's, everything we do centers around continually delighting berry consumers. Our conventional, organic and specialty berries will delight your customers in a variety of healthy ways each and every day.



Driscoll's[®]
ONLY THE FINEST BERRIES[™]



DEL MONTE FRESH PRODUCE



Eat Healthy. Live Healthy.®

PO Box 149222
Coral Gables, FL 33114
Phone: 800.950.3683

Contact-US-Executive-Office@freshdelmonte.com
www.freshdelmonte.com
www.fruits.com



There is much opportunity for growth in the melon category and Del Monte has devoted significant resources in research and development for the introduction of new differentiable varieties. Del Monte also is constantly researching how to improve on the already strict farm-to-market quality and food safety programs we have in place. As a vertically integrated company, Del Monte is able to control its product from field to fork. Retailers can capitalize on the availability, consumer appeal and numerous variety and fresh-cut options to drive sales of cantaloupe.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Feature cantaloupe prominently and attract customers by displaying an open, cut fruit (overwrapped) with the display.

Be careful not to pile displays too high, or product in lower layers will bruise and crack.

Offering different sizes of cantaloupe will encourage different types of shoppers to buy. Larger families may want a big melon, but singles and elderly shoppers may prefer a small melon. Displaying cut fruit options next to whole melons will encourage sales for customers who don't want to purchase an entire melon.

POINT OF PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Capitalize on cantaloupe's nutritional benefits to promote as a healthy snack or breakfast item. Signage can include messages such as: fat-free, saturated fat-free, very low-sodium, cholesterol-free, high in vitamin A, high in vitamin C, good source of folate.

Use signage to educate consumers on usage. During summer months, signage can link cantaloupe to barbecues with "Great on the Grill" messaging. During holiday time, signage can suggest "Excellent Party Appetizer."

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Cantaloupes offer a wide variety of promotional opportunities. Del Monte Fresh Produce works closely with retail partners to develop promotional and merchandising activities that support retail sales by offering co-operative advertising campaigns, product displays, POP material, demo kits, and creative recipe cards. A few solid promotional ideas include:

- Demoin cut cantaloupe to encourage impulse buys.
- Promote as a skewer item for summer barbecues.
- Cross-merchandise by the bagged salad display and with a fruit-vinaigrette dressing.
- Cross-merchandise in the deli department with prosciutto.
- Display and cross-promote cantaloupe with other melons.
- Create a grab-n-go breakfast or lunch offering by offering an overwrapped cut, cleaned melon half full of strawberries, grapes, blueberries and other fruit.
- Promote healthier lifestyles and support healthy eating habits with cantaloupe.

QUICK TIPS

- Flavor sells! Ensure you're offering quality and flavor.
- Showcase cut melons and demo product for customers.
- Play up the cross-promotional opportunities.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- Promote cantaloupe with prosciutto and other meats and cheeses from the deli as part of an "Italian Antipasto" or "Spanish Tapas" theme.
- Include cantaloupe as part of barbecue skewer ingredients. Use signage for summer that states "Great on the Grill."

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY

Del Monte imports cantaloupe, honeydew, watermelon and charentais.

Del Monte shipments from Central America start December 6th and the season extends through May. Starting in 2011, we will be importing our MAG-nificent™ cantaloupe, a proprietary variety recently introduced at the PMA Fresh Summit.

The MAG-nificent™ cantaloupe is more consistent than traditional cantaloupe, has a longer shelf life and a unique golden shell. It also has a sweeter flavor and aroma and a smaller seed cavity with the flesh extending all the way to the rind. The cantaloupe will be available year-round starting in January 2011. Continued innovations, like Del Monte's MAG-nificent™ cantaloupe, will bring excitement and rejuvenate the category and will present many opportunities for growth within the produce department.

CARE AND HANDLING

Store at 40°- 42°F for optimal shelf life.

To further ripen cantaloupes with green grooves, leave at room temperature.

Do NOT store cantaloupes outside or at temperature above 80°F.

Do NOT store cantaloupe with watermelons, bananas, apples, stone fruit, pears, avocados, grapes, kiwi, mixed melons or tomatoes. Cantaloupes produce high levels of ethylene and can accelerate the shelf life of other produce.





(the mark of a really healthy produce department)

As the world leader of whole and fresh-cut fruits and vegetables, Del Monte Fresh adds value that really makes a difference to your bottom line

- Vertical integration for complete supply-chain control
- Faster delivery from DC's and fresh-cut facilities around the country
- Innovative category management and marketing support
- Trace-back system plus ISO and EuroGap certifications for food safety



EAT HEALTHY. LIVE HEALTHY.®

www.freshdelmonte.com 1.800.950.3683 www.fruits.com visit our facebook page



GRIMMWAY FARMS



A family of *Growing* companies.™

P.O. Box 81498
Bakersfield, CA 93380
Phone: 661-845-9435
www.grimmway.com



RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Carrots are among the categories that have most benefited from the value-added revolution. The merchandising opportunities available have led to dramatic increases in carrot category volumes, which justify substantial attention being paid to the proper merchandising and marketing of carrots. Some key display points:

- 1) Carrots sell best when they receive a high-visibility central display that includes the full range of carrot items plus a generous secondary display in the produce department, tying into similar items and being used as color breaks throughout the department.
- 2) The main carrot display should include baby carrots, microwavable petite carrots for cooking, carrot chips, carrot Stixx, crinkle-cut coins, shredded carrots, multipack baby carrots and Carrot Dippers snack packs, jumbo carrots, table carrots, cello carrots, bunch carrots with tops.
- 3) A large secondary display with other value-added produce should include baby carrots, carrot chips, carrot Stixx, crinkle cut coins, shredded carrot and microwavable petite carrots for cooking.
- 4) In addition, both baby carrots and table carrots, with their natural orange color, should serve as a terrific color break for use throughout the department.
- 5) Don't forget to include carrots as part of your organic display. Bunny Luv and Cal-Organic brands offer 52-week-a-year availability of a large range of certified organic carrots. Organic carrots consistently rank among the top selling organic items.
- 6) Salad bars also benefit from a full complement of carrot items. Grimmway offers foodservice packs perfect for putting baby carrots, carrot chips, carrot Crisps and shredded carrots in any salad bar.
- 7) Finally, all juicing programs require fresh carrots to be a success — the sweet juice of the carrot makes it a perennial favorite for those ordering fresh juices.

POINT-OF-PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Carrots are a naturally healthy snack. Let consumers know that the top messages are:

- All natural
- No fat, no cholesterol
- The kid-friendly vegetable™

Channel strips are an excellent way to grab the shoppers' attention. At Grimmway.com, we offer a range of point-of-sale material including a set of 1x 8-inch strips to add eye-catching clarity to your carrot displays.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Grimmway Carrots are available year-round with consistent quality. California's abundant sunshine and range of growing areas produce approximately 85 percent of the nation's carrots.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Due to their brilliant orange color, carrots can be part of eye-catching displays.

QUICK TIPS

- Carry the full variety of value-added Grimmway carrot products
- Emphasize the healthful attributes of carrots
- Display carrots in multiple locations in the store

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- Merchandise carrots in the deli next to fresh roasted chickens and other ready-to-eat items to integrate a healthful, colorful, vegetable meal-solution display
- Put carrots in the meat case next to the assortment of ready-to-cook meal items to remind consumers to serve healthful fresh carrots with their protein-based main course
- A display of baby carrots at the seafood counter reminds consumers of the need for a fresh vegetable with their fine fish

Carrots and carrot products are appropriate for sampling. You can keep up with Grimmway's latest ad campaigns on our Web site: Grimmway.com.

DISPLAY, CARE AND HANDLING

With bulk carrots, maintain temperatures from 33° to 35° F with relative humidity of 98 to 100 percent. Bulk carrots can be lightly misted but are ethylene-sensitive and should not be stored or transported with ethylene-producing items as they give carrots an off flavor.

The tops of bunched carrots should be fluffed to maintain air circulation. Beware that the tops draw moisture from the carrots themselves and will cause these carrots to have a shorter shelf life.

If the exterior of carrots starts to appear white, dunk them in ice water to freshen the carrots.

Maintaining the cold chain is of prime importance with value-added carrots including baby carrots.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Carrots and fresh-cut carrots are traditionally cross-merchandised with dips and salad dressings; one can also use peanut butter, yogurt, etc.

Carrot cake is a favorite for everyone. So cross-merchandise with all the ingredients. Sample carrot-cake cupcakes and give out a recipe.

Soups and stews create many cross-merchandising opportunities. And signage indicating that any salad can be enhanced with carrots is always a good idea.

Finally, don't forget to suggest carrot curls as a garnish with holiday meals.



the Very Versatile Carrot



Babies

The "Good For You" snack

- ✓ Great for lunches
- ✓ High in Vitamin A



Whole

The "Do It Yourself" carrot

- ✓ Use in stews & soups
- ✓ Adds color to meals

Shredded

The "Salad Maker"

- ✓ Great as a salad topper
- ✓ Try added to a sandwich



Chips, Sticks & Coins

The "Entertainers"

- ✓ Snack 'em or Dip 'em
- ✓ Great for holidays & parties



Microwavable Petites

The "Side Dish Kings"

- ✓ Cooks in minutes
- ✓ Perfect anytime of day



A family of *Growing* companies.®

661.845.9435

www.grimmway.com



DUDA FARM FRESH FOODS, INC.



Duda Farm Fresh Foods, Inc.
 P.O. Box 620257
 Oviedo, FL 32762
 Phone: 407-365-2111
 Fax: 407-365-2010
 www.dudafresh.com
 sales@duda.com



OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- Shoppers of celery are cooks or snackers. To capitalize on the cooker consumer category, cross-promote private branded eggs, sugar, flour, or milk since these tend to be basic staples in the cook's kitchen
- Center-of-the-plate proteins (meat or deli counter) offer a great way to cross promote for this category as well
- The snackers category would enjoy seeing celery next to the fresh dips and salad dressings

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Now in our 85th year of business, Duda Farm Fresh Foods is the world's leader in celery production. Since 1926 when we sold our first cash crop, we have been devoted to improving our product quality and investing in innovation as it relates to celery production. With five generations of family members leading us along the way, today we're proud to say that our company generates 1,000 to 1,200 lines of celery per year focusing on characteristics such as flavor, nutrition, texture and appearance.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Research on celery destination shows consumers are looking for convenience in their shopping trips. Merchandising can help provide this convenience by locating celery products adjacent to one another. Whole celery, hearts, sticks and branches located in the same display space make it easy for consumers to find and make selections.

There are two types of celery consumers — those consuming celery primarily as a snack and those using it as an ingredient in recipes. The snackers are helping grow the value-added segment as celery sticks are gaining in popularity. This presents a great opportunity for retailers to increase their celery business through sticks, sticks with dips, and snack packs for lunch boxes.

Research also indicates consumers in general would like to see more choices and new product options for celery like Dandy® brand washed and ready-to-eat celery sticks and trimmed, washed and ready-to-use Dandy® celery branches.

POINT OF PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Celery is a natural and healthy snack. Key health messages on in-store signage should include:

- Naturally Fat Free
- Naturally Cholesterol Free
- A Low Sodium Food
- Good Source of Vitamins A, C and K
- Good Source of Dietary Fiber

Channel strips and danglers are a great way to grab your shoppers' attention. Consider offering these in multiple languages if that makes sense for your store demographics. Duda Farm Fresh Foods will help you customize in-store display signage.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Back page advertisements and the buy-one-get-one-free (BOGO) promotions are the most effective type and result in large dollar and volume lifts and positively impact the entire category.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Maintain temperatures from 32° to 36° F with relative humidity of 90-98 percent. Bulk celery may be lightly misted to maintain freshness but are ethylene-

sensitive and should be kept away from ethylene-producing fruits. Celery tends to absorb odors from other commodities and should not be stored or transported with apples or onions.

If discolored or damaged, ribs should be removed from the stalk. If celery appears white at the ends or limp submerge in ice water to freshen. Maintaining the cold chain is of utmost importance in keeping celery fresh and crunchy.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Traditional cross merchandising items for celery include fresh dips and salad dressings. Peanut butter, caramel, and chocolate work well as additional items.

Hand out recipes for traditional celery stuffing during the holidays and merchandise all the recipe ingredients together. For an everyday recipe item such as peanut butter stuffed celery with raisins, merchandise the recipe items alongside the celery category items.

A *mirepoix* mix, consisting of diced celery, onions and carrots is at the heart of countless flavorful recipes, from stocks and sauces to hearty soups, stews and braised meats and casseroles. A *mirepoix* is used all over the world to build the first layer of flavor in many familiar specialties. Providing this tip near the celery, onions or carrots and tips on knife skills and proportional dicing of vegetables will show the cooker how these items further fit into their lifestyle.



BEING THE BEST ISN'T ALWAYS EASY...

but with 85 years of hard work and devotion,
it sure is rewarding.



celery sensations



Meet the faces of Dandy® celery.

Since 1926, when Andrew Duda harvested and sold his first cash crop, the team at Duda Farm Fresh Foods has been devoted to growing and delivering the highest quality, best tasting celery possible. Over the years, we've developed our own proprietary varieties and by doing so, have established a proven quality control process that is unmatched in the industry. As a result, Dandy® celery is now the leading brand amongst consumers.

PHONE 800-342-DUDA

FAX 561-804-1491

www.DudaFresh.com

Duda
farm fresh foods

JOIN OUR COMMUNITY.



Dandy Fresh Fruits and Vegetables



@Dandy_Fresh



dudafreshproduce



CHELAN FRESH MARKETING



PO Box 878
Chelan WA 98816
Phone: 509-682-2539
Fax: 509-682-2651
www.ChelanFresh.com



Northwest Cherries are mainly an impulse item which makes merchandising very important. Even though the Northwest Cherry season lasts only about eight weeks, these cherries can actually outsell other produce items that are available year-round. Cherry consumption continues to increase and retailers can take advantage of their growing popularity by properly displaying, handling and promoting this highly profitable item.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

A large, high quality display is the base of profitable cherry sales. Display cherries in your high traffic area. Allow ample shelf space in that high-traffic area and steadily rotate your supplies during the course of the day.

Remember, a display doesn't have to be mounded to look BIG! Use false-bottom boxes to avoid crushing fruit (especially the delicate Rainiers)! You can also display bulk Northwest cherries in the shipping cases.

Caution should be used in filling displays. Avoid dumping new cherries on top of old cherries as they sell down or you'll end up with spoiled cherries at the bottom of the display or box. As well, don't dump sold-down cherries over new boxes. Older cherries may not look as good as they should, and customers may pass by the entire display. Cherries should never be displayed where sunlight can shine on them. As temperatures warm, fruit becomes limp and stems quickly brown and shrivel.

Offering a mix of cherry varieties in the display including different packaging options will give consumers additional choices and spur extra sales. Pack types include slider bags, clamshells and FlowFresh wrapped trays. Disney Garden Cherries are a great product to market for kids and include the "Check it Out" seal

of approval to let concerned parents know the health benefits of each product.

These convenient packs are easy to handle and display, extend shelf life and reduce shrink.

Maintaining an ample supply of cher-

ries is critical for a successful cherry season. A successful cherry plan should include securing supplies from early June into early August. Order adequate supplies to avoid out-of-stock situations. Pre-booking will help ensure adequate supply and strong promotions.

CARE AND HANDLING

Handle cherries with utmost care to avoid bruising. Displays should be checked frequently to remove bruised fruit and rotate product. Good quality, good looking cherries will practically sell themselves!

For best results, cherries must be kept cool. Refrigerated displays maintain fruit quality. The cooler they are, the longer they'll last. Cherries lose more quality in one hour at 68°F (20°C) than in 24 hours at 32°F (0°C). Optimum storage conditions are 32° Fahrenheit (0°C) and 90% to 95% humidity. Under these conditions, fresh cherries will keep for several days.

Cherries should be kept in the retail cold room until they're ready to be displayed. When possible, refrigerate display supplies overnight. If a refrigerated display is not an option, make sure you properly rotate your supplies and put cherries back into the cold room in the evening. It's also important to keep cherries dry. Cherries absorb water and will soften if sprinkled.

Retailers can further customer satisfaction and repeat sales by training baggers to place cherries at the top of the grocery bag to prevent bruising. Satisfied customers will return to buy again and again!

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY

Northwest cherries are available from early June to mid August and include the Sonata, Sweetheart, Rainier, Lapins, and Bing varieties.

PROMOTION

Retailers can capitalize on the excitement of one of the few seasonal products left in the department. The limited availability of cherries allow a fantastic opportunity for retailers to promote a "get it before it's gone" product.

Promoting the health aspects of cherries will increase the fruit's appeal to several health conscious consumer segments including the elderly and parents.

Stores can also take advantage of new cherry sleeves which include POS information on new and interesting uses for cherries in cooking, baking and serving.

QUICK TIPS

- Display in a prime location to increase impulse buys
- Display bulk cherries with prepackaged containers or bags
- Display throughout the store (with ice cream or freezer bags)
- Promote freezing . . . offer 12- or 20-pound boxes
- Offer in-store sampling, especially with Rainiers
- Pre-book to ensure adequate supply and strong promotions

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- Use Chelan Fresh's promotional packaging highlighting the healthy benefits of cherries and incorporating posters and POS cards
- Promote Disney Garden Cherries to children and parents looking for a healthy snack
- Capitalize on cherries' limited season to create exciting "get it now" promotions



Delicious Premium Cherries

ONLY THE BEST FROM THE MOUNTAINS OF WASHINGTON STATE

CHERRIES ARE CHOCK-FULL OF ANTHOCYANINS, a group of compounds shown to have particular importance in terms of reducing cancer risk, preventing cardiovascular disease, enhancing anti-inflammatory response and protecting neuronal cells involved in neurological function. They're also fat-free, high in fiber, a good source of potassium and are a low-glycemic food. And did we mention they are one of the few plant sources of melatonin?

CHERRIES ALSO...

- may help lower blood sugar levels
- contain agents that could help fight cancer
- boost your fiber quota
- are low Glycemic Index

For even more health information,
visit the Chelan Fresh website at chelanfresh.com



CHELAN
FRESH





DNE WORLD FRUIT SALES



1900 Old Dixie Highway
Ft Pierce, FL 34946
Phone: 800-327-6676
Fax: 772-465-1181
www.dneworld.com
dne@dneworld.com



YEAR-ROUND SUPPLIES AND PROFITS

With the availability of great tasting citrus year-round, retailers now have the opportunity to grow citrus sales and profits considerably. Navel oranges from Florida, Texas and California complemented by imported summer navels from Australia, South Africa and Chile lead the way for a full year of navel profits. Clementines, with their nearly year round availability, are imported from Chile (mid May to August), South Africa (June to September), Morocco and Spain (October to February) in addition to being grown in California (October to May). They continue to be very popular with all ages because they are easy to peel and virtually seedless.

Specialty items such as Minneolas in the summer from Australia and South Africa and during the winter from Florida and California along with a full line of Tangerines from Florida (Fall-glos, Sunburst and Honeys) can bring even more profits to the line up. And finally, delicious juice oranges from Florida are available during most of the winter season for your customers who love fresh squeezed orange juice. California Valencia's are also available most of the summer time as well.

Florida and Texas grapefruit offer consumers the best tasting grapefruit available in the world. Peak flavor often comes in January and February. However, fruit is eating well as early as late October or early November depending on the season.

The lemon and lime category is growing with a nearly year-round supply from California, Mexico, Arizona, Florida and imported from Chile in the summer.

PROMOTIONAL/MERCHANDISING IDEAS

Retailers should remember not to promote citrus varieties too early and to focus their promotions around the peak flavor time period. They should have a weekly citrus item on ad and a sub feature and mix it up. Large sizes one week, small size the next and then offer bags. Retailers should rotate this monthly based on value and peak flavor.

It is important to provide an assortment of packaging to maximize your sales. Offer both bulk and bags to appeal to the different consumer segments; some consumers like to pick their own fruit and feel they are getting value while your convenient oriented shoppers find bagged produce appealing.

Effective citrus merchandising is to build a colorful citrus section in the produce department and also have the same product in another location of the produce section. As produce departments get larger, consumers may not go through the entire section so it is beneficial to have multiple locations of the same product.

DISPLAYS

Always maintain a clean, neat and well stocked display.

Consumers today are looking for valued added information pertaining to the product such as where it was grown, health benefits, serving suggestions and nutritional value. It is important to include this information in your signage or POS materials.

Oranges and Grapefruit can be piled without damaging the fruit; however, specialty citrus such as Clementines should be displayed at a shallow depth to avoid damaging rows on the bottom with pressure from those on top.

Free standing high graphic display bins can expand your citrus display. They can

display both bagged and bulk citrus and can be displayed in various locations in the store and serve as a secondary citrus display.



CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Florida juice oranges are a great way to enjoy fresh squeezed orange juice at home or are sweet and juicy to eat whole. A great cross-promotion for Moms and kids might be to give a simple juicing apparatus (50¢ to \$1) when your shoppers buy a 4- or 5-pound bag of juice oranges. A great time for this is February through June during Florida's Valencia orange season; the premier juicing orange variety. Honey tangerines are also a great juicing item with their incredibly sweet taste and the juicing device separates the seeds from the juice itself. Kids will love it and it is a great activity to do with the kids while teaching them healthy eating habits.

Cross promotions are a great tool to increase sales, but need to be executed properly to be successful. Great ideas to cross promote with citrus would be fruit cutting tools such as peelers, zesters or graters nearby. Performing a Tie-in promotion with a product that complements citrus is an ideal way to entice the consumer and grow sales for both products. Each January DNE offers a tie-in promotion with Ocean Spray fresh grapefruit and Ocean Spray juice drinks. This has been a very successful promotion for many years. January is the ideal time to promote Grapefruit because it is at its peak flavor; the New Year is a time when consumers are kicking off their new year's diet programs and it's primetime cold and flu season.



QUICK TIPS

- Promote bagged citrus during its Peak Flavor period to keep customers coming back for more
- Conduct in-store sampling
- Provide an assortment of packaging

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- Display citrus in multiple locations in the produce section
- Conduct contests or promotional give-aways to drive traffic and increase sales
- The bigger and more attractive the retail display space the higher the sales

Your Year Round Global Citrus Supplier



World Fruit Sales

1-800-327-6676
www.dneworld.com



MARIANI PACKING CO., INC



500 Crocker Drive
Vacaville CA 95688
Phone: 707-452-2800
Fax: 707-452-2966
mackerman@mariani.com
www.mariani.com



QUICK TIPS

- Provide a dried fruit destination for consumers with permanent branded racks and displays
- Target the full assortment of core dried fruit items, berries, tropicals and innovative dried fruit items
- Drive incremental sales with secondary displays during high volume promotional periods and with cross-merchandising placements

Dried fruit is a growing category as consumers continue to demand products that provide convenient nutrition and portable snacking year round. Dried fruit is a natural source of antioxidants, vitamins, and dietary fiber — key nutritional attributes on trend with consumer purchasing behavior. Not only do dried fruit products provide consumers with snacking options that are on trend, they provide high turn, high margin, and high profit dollars per sale with virtually no spoilage to the produce department.

With food safety being top of mind for produce retailers, it's important to align with manufacturers like Mariani, which produces its product in a state-of-the-art facility with advanced processing technologies using only premium quality fruit, and is regulated and certified by key governing agencies, including BRC, USDA and FDA among others.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Merchandise on Permanent Display Racks

The key to driving dried fruit sales within the produce department is providing a branded racking destination. A permanent display space for dried fruit creates consistency for consumers, which will increase repeat purchases and drive trial of new innovative items as they are introduced to the category. Merchandising displays come in a variety of sizes to accommodate department space configurations, height limitations, and inventory holding power requirements. Branded display racks create valuable merchandising space, freeing up produce tables for fresh produce, and allow for secondary dried fruit display locations for incremental sales during promotable periods.

Secondary Displays and Cross-Merchandising

Promotional activity is best supported with clean, minimal footprint shippers and modular displays that are available to provide secondary merchandising locations. Typically available in 4 case, 8 case, and half pallet configurations, their low profile allows for convenient placement at the corner of produce tables, sides of endcaps, or in-aisle placement. Secondary placement provides incremental selling opportunities, as well as extra floor inventory to ensure limited out of stock situations due to the relatively low inventory holding power on shelf. Secondary display placement is key for high volume selling periods including a return to healthy eating in the first quarter, holiday baking tie-ins in the second and fourth quarter and convenient snacking/back-to-school in the third quarter.

Mariani's dried fruit packaging allows for cross-merchandising with virtually any item within the produce department. The waterproof, factory sealed package protects it from moisture, temperature, and high-touch environments. Department sales can be increased by placing dried cranberries within the bagged salad section,



banana chips within the fresh bananas, or dried berry items within the salad toppings section. Dried fruit can be easily cut into a produce table, and are ideal for peggable locations above refrigerated sections and produce tables. Mariani's use of colorful packaging graphics compliments fresh produce displays.

Dried fruit is also ideal for cross-department merchandising (Dairy next to yogurt, center store in baking section, cereal aisle, snack aisle, or front end) utilizing shippers, clip strips, or shelf channel movable pegs.

PROMOTION

Promotional activity is best supported with aggressive pricing to hit key price points that resonate with consumers and drive multiple purchases, i.e., 2 for \$4, 2 for \$5. In addition to targeting key trade promotional pricing, Mariani drives consumers to retailer locations through national advertising FSIs and coupon support throughout the year. On-pack IRC's programs are available for savings off on dried fruit purchases, recipe and

usage ideas, and sweepstakes to engage consumers. Dried Fruit is also best promoted through participation in retailer specific couponing and customer loyalty programs to drive incremental sales to produce departments.

Dried fruit promotional programs should be supported with secondary displays to drive sales. Shipper size variations allow for Produce Managers to tailor their display size to be consistent with consumer pull, leaving limited overstock at the end of a promotion that can easily be merchandised as turn stock. Mariani provides flexibility to Produce Buyers by customizing the product mix of shippers to best fit their customers' needs.

ASSORTMENT

To keep up with consumer trends it is important to expand dried fruit segments outside of core dried fruit items such as prunes, raisins, and apricots and to accommodate for the wide variety of innovative products designed for the entire spectrum of dried fruit consumers. A developed dried fruit set should include these core dried fruit items as well as dried berries, tropical fruits and the latest category introductions of healthy indulgent items like Mariani Flavor Sensations and health and wellness focused items like Mariani's Enhanced Wellness products.

Packing size should also be considered within the assortment. Larger format value-sized items are great for heavy usage items like prunes and cranberries, standard retail sized packaging are perfect for everyday snacking and single serve multi-packs are ideal for lunch box friendly snacks.

Capitalize on this Growing Category



- **Provide a dried fruit destination** for consumers with permanent branded racks and displays
- **Target the full assortment of core dried fruit items**, berries, tropicals and innovative dried fruit items
- **Drive incremental sales with secondary displays** during high volume promotional periods and cross-merchandising placements



Four Generations of Quality, Innovation, and Family Heritage

Mariani Packing Co., Inc. | 500 Crocker Drive, Vacaville, California 95688 | Telephone 707.452.2800 | www.mariani.com



APIO, INC.



PO Box 727
Guadalupe, CA 93434
Phone: 800-454-1355
Fax: 805-343-2032
www.apioinc.com
info@apioinc.com



Apio Inc. is the recognized industry supplier of value-added fresh-cut vegetables and a category growth leader at retail, offering a complete selection of Eat Smart® brand fresh-cut vegetables in a variety of product sizes and configurations. Nationally, Eat Smart® bagged vegetables sold the fastest in stores where distributed. In 2010, Eat Smart® brand contributed \$706 per million of total store sales, exceeding our closest competitor by \$279 (Perishables Group FreshFacts® powered by Nielsen, 52 weeks ending 12/25/10)

SUPERIOR QUALITY

At Apio, we take pride in our extensive quality assurance programs. Our food safety program from field to consumer includes post harvest physiologists on staff, annual third-party and retail food safety quality audits, a complete HACCP program, vendor certification program, GAP and GMP/ Food Safety Training Programs as well as a California Leafy Greens Agreement signatory. Apio also utilizes proprietary Breatheway® modified atmosphere technology. A patented temperature switch feature adjusts membrane permeability to compensate for mild fluctuations in the cold chain and extends shelf-life naturally by providing ideal package atmosphere. Breatheway® helps to reduce shrink and increase sales, as well as provide a better eating experience.

DISPLAY STRATEGIES

Creating a prominent fresh-cut vegetable section within the produce department is a key component to driving sales in the category. Whether it is a 4-foot vertical, a 4-foot with half, maybe two or three shelves — whatever quantity of fresh-cut products that are sold best — it is important to display them separate from the salad category. Our research has shown that consumers looking to purchase fresh-cut vegetables don't look in the same area where bagged salads are kept. The best place is actually alongside the same commodities sold in bulk. Consider eye-catching channel strips or shelf-talkers to draw attention. Generate interest with periodic new product introductions and a variety of sizes such as Apio's new broccoli salad kits, and tray offerings.

ADVERTISING AND PROMOTIONS

To make the most of peak holiday periods and special events, display Eat Smart®

QUICK TIPS

- Create a prominent fresh-cut vegetable section. The best place is alongside the same commodities sold in bulk
- Develop periodic promotions and displays that feature seasonal favorites
- Frequent promotions and cross merchandising keep fresh-cut top-of-mind and bring new users to the category

Party Trays near the front of the produce section to stimulate incremental sales. To maximize impulse "special occasion" sales, promote larger format Eat Smart® Party Trays, which are available with beef, turkey and cheese for added variety. Year-round, offer smaller format trays as a healthful snack item for the office, home or as an alternative to chips and soda.

THE KEY IS FOCUS!

One store program that applies periodic display strategies during peak periods saw volume triple in the first year, and has seen consistent increases between annually.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Over 40 Eat Smart® fresh-cut bags, trays and salads — including popular dips, dressings and ingredients — are available every day. New items include 12oz. Salad Kits, 4 varieties of cooking Greens, and new tray offerings. Seasonal offerings include 12oz Brussels sprouts and 2lb Butternut Squash.

RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

Fresh-cut vegetables should be received from adequately refrigerated trucks and transferred immediately into storage rooms ideally cooled to 33° to 38° F. Shelves should be well stocked and products culled with attention to code date.

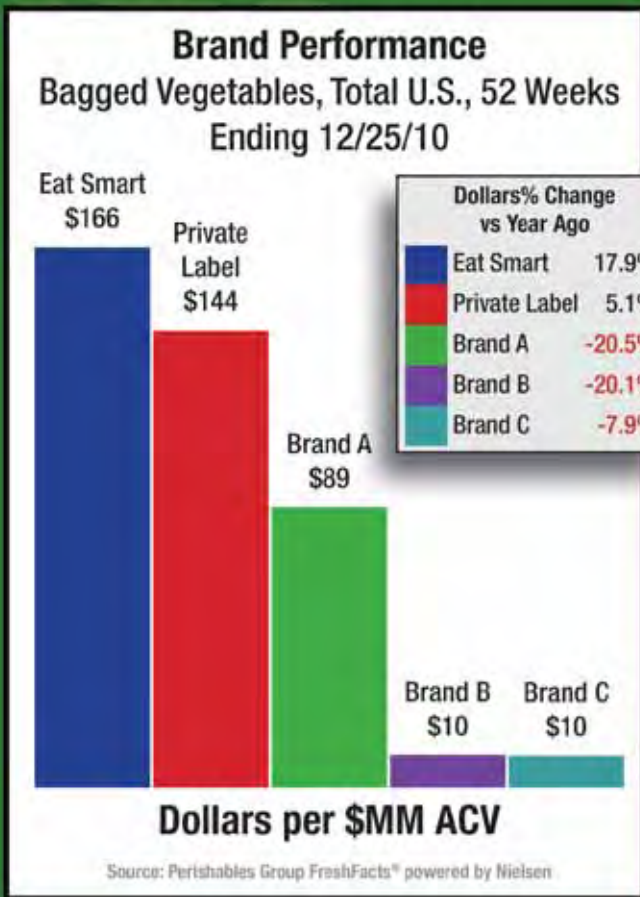
CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Promoting fresh-cut vegetables with center-of-plate items, such as poultry or fish, helps shoppers quickly identify healthful solutions for their entire family. A few key ingredients, such as a bag of Eat Smart® fresh-cut vegetables paired with whole grains, lean meat and spices can open the door to a variety of custom-tailored meal options. In addition, Eat Smart® Party Trays complement deli, meat and snack displays during peak holidays. Large cross-promotional displays featuring barbeque themes, tailgate parties, summer picnics or sporting events will entice shoppers to pick up all of their supplies for entertaining in one central location.

Innovative merchandising and cross promotions with refrigerated dips and dressings or slaws and salad toppers also keep focus on the category and increase the opportunity to bring in new users.



The Brand that sells more.



"Nationally, in 2010, Eat Smart bagged vegetables contributed an average of \$301 per week in each store where distributed, exceeding our closest competitor by \$81 per store per week"

(Source: Perishables Group FreshFacts® powered by Nielsen, 52 weeks ending 12/25/10)

www.apioinc.com • 800-454-1355





MAURICE A. AUERBACH, INC.



490 Huyler Street
 South Hackensack, NJ 07606
 Phone: 201-807-9292
 888-AUERPAK
 Fax: 201-807-9596
 www.auerpak.com



QUICK TIPS

- Display and promote a full range of garlic items
- Use jarred and fresh garlic, red, white, elephant and conventional garlic and garlic braids to make the section intriguing to consumers
- Focus on increasing usage — the key to increasing sales long term

Garlic lies at the confluence of all that is hot and happening in produce. Ethnic cuisines? Garlic is key. Health-oriented eaters? Garlic is prominent. Dieters? Use garlic instead of salted butter anytime. The product family runs the gamut from staple to specialty items — red garlic, elephant garlic, peeled, packaged, braided and certified organic.

The category includes both fresh garlic and various processed and semi-processed items, such as whole peeled garlic, chopped garlic, minced garlic and a multitude of jarred products. There are even garlic options that can serve highly decorative purposes such as braided garlic. Garlic can be used to adorn holiday wreaths and other holiday decorations. Many items are sold in both bulk and consumer package sizes.

DISPLAY IDEAS

The key to making good garlic displays is to avoid the specialty jinx in which a small area is set aside for a tiny row, or worse, a little basket of garlic. Instead, think of the romance of garlic: The Egyptians, Greeks and Romans all knew of garlic, and this rich heritage carries through to the cuisines of today, justifying generous space with a full range of garlic products displayed. It is well worth it to cultivate a garlic-buying clientele because garlic is never consumed alone. So every sale of garlic means the sale of other items both in produce and in other areas of the store.

POINT-OF-PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Signage and POP material near garlic should always have a three-fold message: First, make sure to highlight variety items, such as elephant garlic; this attracts attention to the overall garlic section and sparks consumer interest.

Second, always highlight the health benefits of garlic: fat-free, saturated fat-free, sodium-free, cholesterol-free and certified 100 percent organic are all watchwords that are permissible with garlic and attract the interest of health-oriented consumers.

Third, always provide recipes and usage ideas.

Garlic sales directly relate to consumer use of recipes requiring garlic, so always have a recipe next to the garlic display. Also remember that a festive arrangement of garlic braids functions as great signage to bring attention to the garlic display.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY

Garlic is available year-round with supplies coming from California and outside of the United States, including Argentina, Mexico, Chile and Spain. In recent years, Chinese-grown garlic has become prominent in the marketplace. Its use as both a seasoning and an ingredient in food means that year-round promotion is appropriate.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Because of its comparatively long storage life, deep discounts on garlic are likely to steal sales from future periods. Therefore, the focus in garlic promotion should be on usage. If it is barbeque season, promote the use of garlic in salads, marinades and rubs. Suggest that consumers try cooking whole garlic on the barbeque and serve it whole as a butter substitute. If the Super Bowl or another sporting event is

coming up, promotions can focus on the use of fresh garlic to make salsa with a kick.

Salad dressing is another great garlic application. Have a salad dressing of the month that is always under promotion and always uses garlic. Suggest ways that garlic can add flare to old favorites. Garlic mashed potatoes, for example, are a great way to jazz up a dish that may have grown boring. And at major holidays, suggest adding an ethnic dish. For example, it is an old Italian custom to serve a fish dish, almost always prepared with garlic, at major holidays. Use the trend to ethnic food, healthful eating and variety to tie in garlic.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Garlic should not be misted, and rotation is important since fresh garlic sitting out for long periods will tend to dry out. In addition, the skins of garlic tend to shed with handling so frequent attention to the display to keep it clean and dry will result in better sales.

BACKROOM RECEIVING

Garlic should be stored in a cool, well-ventilated place and kept dry.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

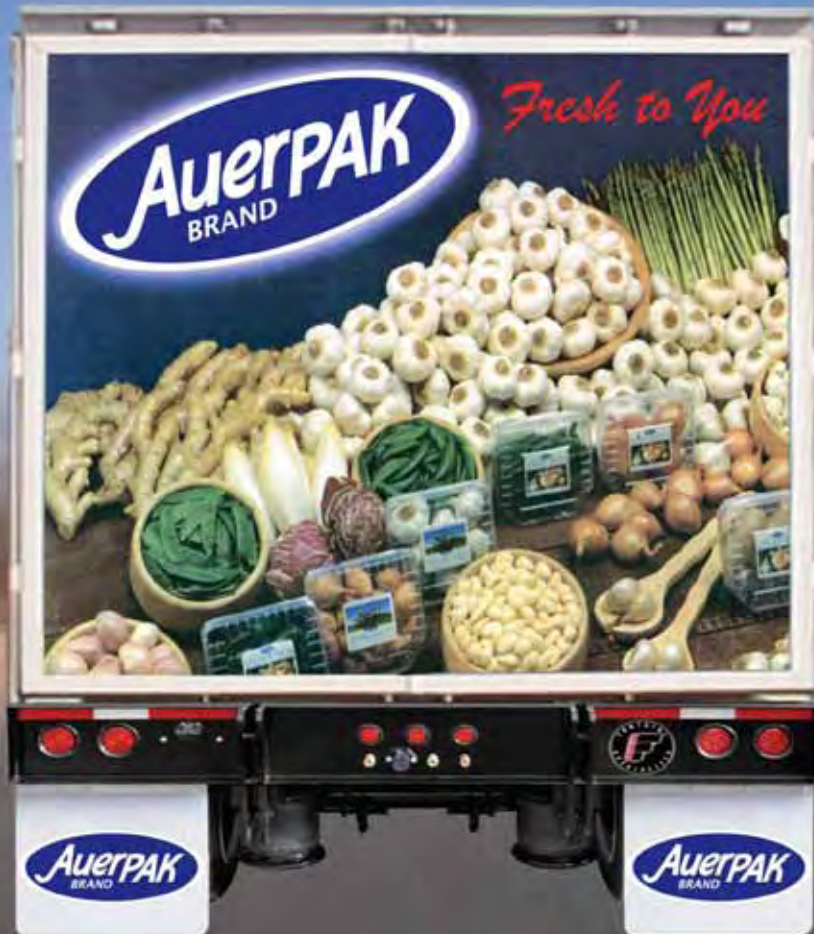
Garlic is a cross-merchandise's dream as it is always used in conjunction with other products. Cross-promote in the produce department with salad items since garlic is frequently tossed into salads as an ingredient as well as used in salad dressing. Put garlic next to ripe tomatoes, basil, cilantro, etc., to promote salsa. Suggest a make-your-own-pasta-sauce center with garlic, tomatoes and other ingredients.

Also consider secondary displays of garlic next to meat and poultry to promote as a rub and even next to baguettes in the bakery, promoting roasted garlic as a delicious and healthful alternative to butter.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- Do a bakery demo in which roasted garlic is served with sliced French baguettes. The mild flavor will make it a favorite with many consumers and you can emphasize the health aspect — no fat or butter!
- Educate customers about the taste benefits of rubbing the outside of their Easter lamb with cracked garlic prior to roasting
- Provide recipes encouraging customers to insert whole peeled garlic cloves into slits cut with the point of a sharp knife into their holiday roasts prior to cooking. Watch your garlic (and meat) sales take off!
- Hold a sauce competition in which consumers make homemade pasta sauce using garlic. Get a local newspaper to judge it and have the winning sauce recipes be part of a "saucy special"

Fast and Fresh!



At Maurice A. Auerbach, Inc., location is the key to getting produce to you fast and fresh.

From our South Hackensack location, our network of refrigerated trucks covers the tri-state area. With unsurpassed service to all Northeast area retailers and distribution centers, we provide the highest quality garlic, asparagus, radicchio, sno peas, ginger root, Belgian endive, shallots and many other produce specialties.

Maurice A. Auerbach, Inc.

490 Huyler Street • South Hackensack, NJ 07606

Call 888-Auerpak

Paul Auerbach • Jeff Schwartz • Ian Zimmerman • Bruce Klein • Jim Maguire • Josh Auerbach



SUNLIGHT INTERNATIONAL SALES, INC.



P.O. Box 1027
 Delano, CA 93216
 Phone: 661-7926360
 Fax: 661-792-9070
 www.dulcich.com
 sales@dulcich.com



QUICK TIPS

- Create waterfall, end cap, or free-standing displays for impulse purchasing
- Cross promote grapes throughout the store
- Plan ahead & order early for holidays/events
- Rotate & "fluff" the product frequently, displaying multiple varieties together
- Never rinse the grapes in preparation for display
- Once chilled, it's best to keep at that same temperature to maximize shelf-life

RAISE THE STAKES...WITH GRAPES!

Every produce department wants to sweeten its sales. And we at Sunlight International, the marketing arm of JP Dulcich & Sons, know there's no better way to do that than with colorful, attention-getting, customer pleasing table grapes. Plus, it doesn't hurt that they're as good for you as they are at driving impulse buys. But exactly what steps do you need to take to help grape sales meet their full potential? The following are some suggestions that may help your grape merchandising sing, as well as make your cash registers ring.



MERCHANDISING DISPLAYS THAT PAY

The right display can make all the difference in the world, which is why we at Sunlight suggest creating waterfall displays or end caps during the peak grape promotion period from summer to fall. Creating tiers using raised cases or step-ups with shipping boxes are very effective ways to display, remembering that multi-level displays sell product. Spot displays also drive sales, and a good example of this type would be the Pretty Lady free-standing bins with their stand-up bags on top so they're easy for customers to pick up and "grab-n-go." These types of spot displays are exceptional at promoting impulse buys, especially when placed in front of the

produce department, by the front door or near the deli/quick service counter.

Signage and shelf talkers can also catch the eye and grab a customer's attention, and here again, the Pretty Lady danglers are a prime example. Danglers simply pop into existing price bars or can be easily secured with tape inside the bin or on an end cap.

HOLIDAYS & GRAPES GO TOGETHER

Whether it's Fourth of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving or Christmas, grapes make for a perfect holiday treat. And whether in salads or just placed in a bowl by themselves, grapes will add to any festivities. Which is why as a produce manager or buyer, planning for upcoming holidays and placing the order early so as to get enough to meet customer demand is an important point to remember. In addition, creating a bright display that captures the mood of the impending holiday can really send those grapes flying off the shelves even faster.

Take, for example, Dulcich's Harvest Hobgoblin program for October. Featuring beautifully illustrated Hobgoblin stickers, shelf-danglers, bags — and new for this year — free-standing bins, this program perfectly embodies the spirit of Halloween, and helps drive sales with its fun, inviting look. Just introduced a couple of years ago, this program has been a huge hit with retailers



across the nation, and is looked for by consumers (and more importantly, asked about ahead of time) as Halloween approaches.

PROMINENTLY INTRODUCE NEW, UNIQUE ITEMS TO CREATE A "BUZZ"

Sometimes it's not the product that changes so much (at Dulcich & Sons, we carry a long-standing list of more than 15 different varieties of table grapes every year), as it is the container or label the product comes in or with. That would be the case with our new disposable colander bags introduced last year, developed specifically with the consumer in mind.

With expertly placed holes for perfect drainage, all the customer has to do is open the top of these ingenious colander bags, run under the kitchen faucet, and then let dry on their rack for a minute or two. And while the design is innovative and helpful for customers, retailers everywhere have discovered this new packaging has a variety of benefits other than just as a disposable colander that saves the consumer time. Many produce managers have reported that they find the self-standing, flat bottom bags easy to display, and the bags certainly live up to their "grab-n-go" status thanks to the easy-to-carry handles. So it's a win/win for all, but most importantly draws attention to the product by being something new and unique that piques the customers' interest and drives them to purchase on the spot.

GRAPES MAKE FOR GREAT CROSS PROMOTIONS

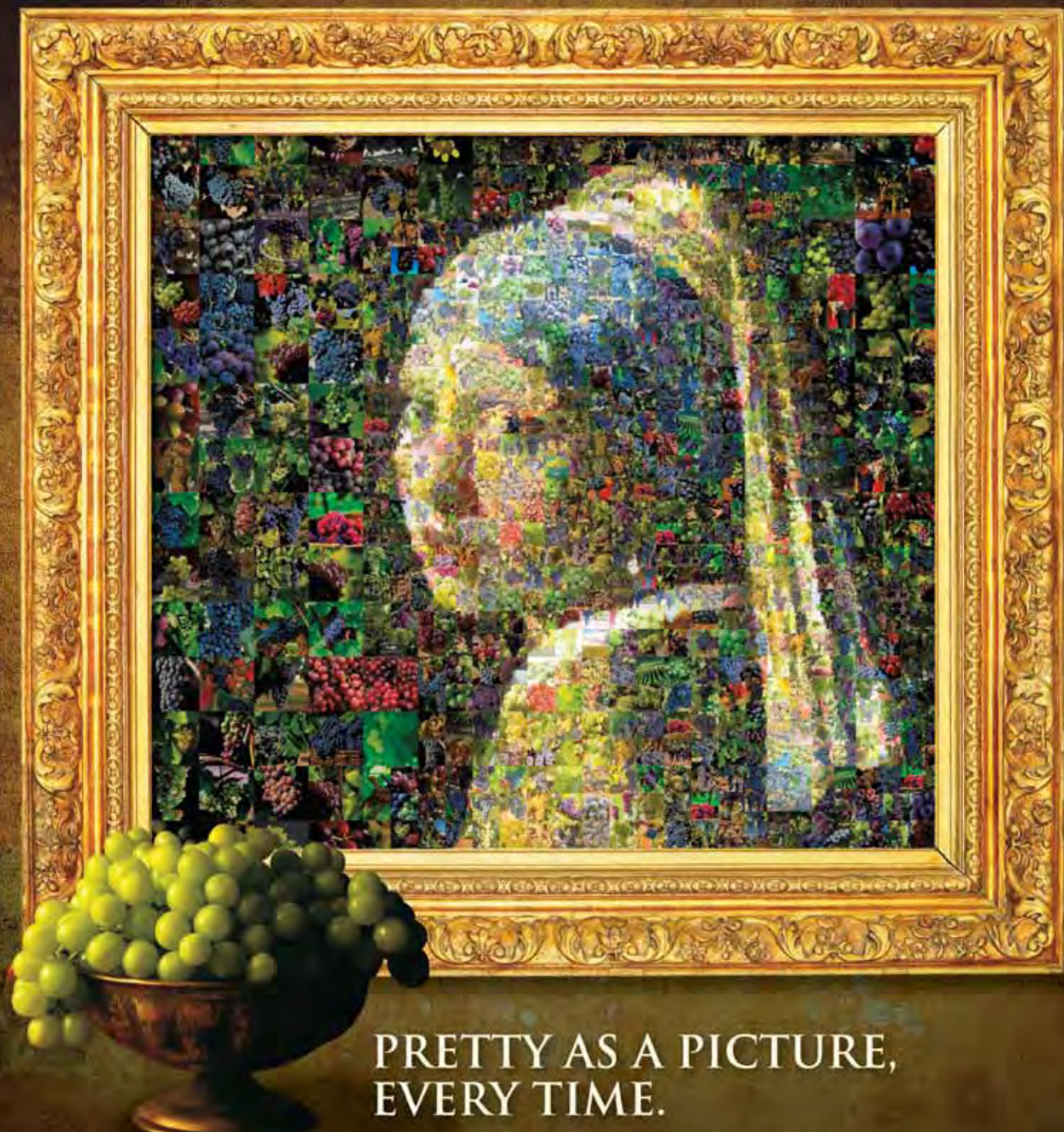
Whether it's in salad recipes featuring other produce items, stuffing for Thanksgiving, or placed in a wine and cheese display, grapes can make for one of the best cross-promotional items in the store. Don't be afraid to get creative and make suggestions to your customers by pairing grapes with other items. With their healthy attributes and color that will brighten any table, your customers will appreciate the creative ideas, and thank you by coming back for more!

PROMOTE GRAPES WITH ADS THAT PAY BACK IN SPADES

Studies show that promoting multiple grape varieties in large, full-page ads will significantly increase sales, with front page ads generating a 72% increase in volume as opposed to back page placement, which generate only a 20% increase. But either way, both numbers demonstrate that when planning an ad or promotion campaign, it's important to always have grapes as an integral part of the mix.

DISPLAY PREPARATION

While water may in fact clean and refresh some produce, it does the exact opposite to grapes. Since rinsing them will most likely speed up the grape's deterioration, it's important to remember to never wash the grapes in preparation for display. Also, once delivered to the store, grapes should be kept at 34°F with the humidity high whenever possible. Once chilled, it's best to keep them that way for maximum shelf life. By following these helpful tips, the product will remain at its freshest for your customers to purchase, with many happy returns from those same customers in the months to come.



PRETTY AS A PICTURE, EVERY TIME.

The Art Of Growing Dulcich Premium Table Grapes.

While they're lovely to look at, we at Dulcich know that beauty is in the eye of the taster. Which is why it's no surprise that our Premium Table Grapes' fantastic flavor, superior size and amazing aroma have gotten rave reviews for over 50 years.



www.dulcich.com • 661-792-6360

Home Of The
**Pretty
Lady**
BRAND



MANN PACKING COMPANY



PO Box 690
Salinas, CA 93902
Phone: 831-422-7405
Fax: 831-422-5171
lorri.koster@mannpacking.com
www.mannpacking.com



QUICK TIPS

- Maintain proper temperature of product for optimum freshness and consumer satisfaction
- Educate consumers on nutritional benefits of steamed vegetables
- Promote during non-peak consumption periods to garner year-round sales

Green beans are the top selling fresh-cut vegetable item in the United States with a 12 percent annual growth rate.* Retailers can complete their fresh-cut vegetable category by stocking Mann's fresh-cut green beans, now available in 12-ounce and 32-ounce bag options — with Steam-In Bag™ technology.

The main fresh-cut green bean eating occasion is dinner, which means green beans fit the overall Mann value-added strategy of providing high-quality convenient foods — emphasizing cooking vegetables. Leverage this opportunity to gain fresh sales from center store as canned and frozen green beans continue to be an option. Opportunities also exist to drive consumption at other meal occasions such as breakfast and lunch by providing recipes and other usage ideas at the shelf level. Green beans— they aren't just for dinner!

Seasonal opportunities should be capitalized on as well with strong recipe and cross-marketing promotions. After the holiday

lift on sales, green beans are primarily consumed during warm weather months — which provides an opportunity to tie into

in-store seasonal BBQ programs and promotions.

REACHING THE TARGET

Adult females are the primary shoppers for fresh-cut vegetable items. Most green beans are still boiled on the stove; however microwaving is growing in importance. Take advantage of educational opportunities to explain the benefits of using Steam-In Bag™ products.

To capitalize on the health benefits vegetables provide, they are best eaten fresh. The next best option to preserve flavor and nutritional value is “steaming.” Microwave “steaming” delivers the best results due to speed and heating at a lower level. It also utilizes less moisture to cook the products. Both heat and water will break down the health benefits of the product over time. These simple messages can be used by retailers to educate consumers and drive sales.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Steam vegetable items are ideal for “build-a-meal” type of advertising vehicles. Partner them with rotisserie chicken or other ready-to-eat protein products, a packaged salad and a loaf of bread. Another idea is to incorporate them into any weekly meal planner tools offered to consumers.

CARE AND HANDLING

Merchandise washed and ready-to-eat vegetable items in the value-added produce case next to other fresh-cut vegetables, packaged salads and refrigerated dips/dressings. Proper temperature control is paramount to the success of these items.

*Nielsen W/E 12/25/10

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- Put together dinner-solution displays of steam-in-bag green beans with a featured protein
- Include value-added green beans in weekly meal planner tools
- Demo steam-in-bag beans in the department using a microwave to highlight ease of preparation and taste to consumers
- Create “build a casserole” displays during peak holidays with like ingredients such as dried, fried onions, sliced almonds and soups



MANN'S STEAM-IN-BAG™ PACKAGING SHOWCASES CONSUMER RECIPES AND NUTRITION INFORMATION.



We Look Good in Green.

Your sales will look good too!

Incorporate Mann's Sunny Shores® Green Beans into your fresh-cut vegetable set!

Why Green Beans from Mann?

- Quality
- Superior Sourcing Model
- Best In Class Category Management
- Year-Round Promotions
- Vendor Efficiencies
- Shelf Uniformity
- Popular Sizes

Because green is good!



Salinas, California 93901 | www.veggiesmadeeasy.com | 800.884.6266





CLIFFORD PRODUCE SALES



PO Box 250
Ruthven Ontario N9Y 0A4
Phone: 519-796-2199
Fax: 519-326-5332
Contact: Anthony Totta
www.cliffordproduce.com

The greenhouse vegetable category is increasing steadily in popularity with consumers. The wide variety of products and their consistent quality have made the greenhouse category successful in the retail environment. Retailers can increase greenhouse item sales even more by following these suggested merchandising tips.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Attract customers to the wide variety and quality of greenhouse products by displaying new or slow-moving items front and center using easy Superseller display units. These free standing displays utilize just two cases of product but attract customer interest with their high graphic design. Utilize the Superseller Merchandiser displays, available from Clifford, to help introduce new items without the need to do a full category reset. They boost sales on items that don't have high visibility and help educate the consumer on the use and nutritional value. Once the item proves its viability on this secondary display then working it into the permanent inline category will make more sense.

Using the variety of colors in different greenhouse products is an excellent way to build an eye-catching display. Not only do these items offer colorful presentation but have compatibility in most food preparation. Most greenhouse items blend together in salads or on the grill. Build displays showcasing various greenhouse products together to encourage consumers to buy more than one product. Including recipe pads or "recipons" gives the consumer added value and ideas for meal preparation.

POINT OF PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

A variety of useful Point-of-Sale (POS) material available to interested retailers from the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers Association (OGVG), which can be contacted via their website: www.ontariogreenhouse.com.

Beautifully colored cardboard Eco Trays are a great addition to any store display. They feature full color graphics and handy recipes on the bottom and are 100% recyclable. Overwrapped, these trays offer a tamper proof option for every category.

Offer integrated meal solutions ideas for the consumer by using Clifford's eco friendly attractive packaging. Product can be offered with a coupon or linked back to a full bank of recipes on Clifford's website www.cliffordproduce.com.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Retailers should be sure to maintain the following basic greenhouse items year-round:

- Beef tomatoes in larger sizes
- Cluster on the vine tomatoes
- Sweet red bell peppers
- Sweet yellow bell peppers
- Sweet green bell peppers
- Seedless cucumbers



Adding additional displays of the following will also boost incremental sales:

- Bagged baby cucumbers
- ECO trays (flow wrapped value added trays) which include beef tomatoes, eggplant, cherry on the vine tomatoes, stop light or multi variety sweet bell peppers.
- Tear drop tomatoes in red, yellow
- Super Cherry tomatoes in red, yellow, and brown
- Mystic peppers

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Capitalize on the maturity level of most greenhouse produce by promoting the taste factor to consumers.

Promote snack-ready packages to parents and children as an easy healthy snack for during or after school. Clifford's resealable, breathable bags offer a convenient snack option.

Demo's of baby greenhouse vegetables will encourage impulse buys.

Use Superseller Merchandiser displays to cross-merchandise products at any place in the store.

Cross-merchandise greenhouse vegetables in the produce department by the bagged salad display.

Cross-merchandise greenhouse vegetables in the seafood or meat departments to offer a meal-solution side to whatever protein the customer is buying.

Make sure to provide customers with beautiful and informative POS materials from the OGVG.



BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

The number one rule of thumb in care and handling is to NEVER CHILL THE PRODUCT. When cucumbers drop below 52 degrees, peppers below 45 degree, and tomatoes below 60 degrees, it negatively affects the texture and flavor. Tomatoes, peppers, and cucumbers are better off without refrigeration than being chilled.

Over half of consumers report that flavor is the number one reason they chose to buy fresh tomatoes. An additional 40% chose tomatoes for their nutrition and health benefits.

QUICK TIPS

- Use color breaks in displays
- Combine recipes or cross-promotional items
- Do not chill
- Remember aroma draws shoppers

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- Many greenhouse items are great for children because of their smaller size
- Use Superseller displays to allow for front and center focus to the consumer. Off-refrigeration displays optimize quality, integrity, and shelf life, and taste will be enhanced over chilled product

Recipes for Success



A Great Addition to your Store Lineup

Our consumer friendly eco trays feature unique, flavorful recipe ideas in convenient package sizes.

Size, convenience and earth friendly, our eco trays are the recipe for success.



CONSUMER FOCUSED, RESULTS DRIVEN

1-888-662-8620 • sales@cliffordproduce.com • www.cliffordproduce.com

Clifford
PRODUCE



HOLLANDIA PRODUCE, LLC



P.O. Box 1327
Carpinteria, CA 93014
Phone: 805-684-8739
Fax: 805-684-9363
www.livegourmet.com
info@livegourmet.com



QUICK TIPS

- The prime location for our Live Gourmet butter lettuce is directly next to iceberg lettuce in the leafy green section of your produce display
- Place and reface frequently; with the clamshell package, daily trimming and product refreshing will be nominal

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- Be the first in your region to offer a greenhouse-grown section in your produce department. Merchandise greenhouse-grown lettuce, cucumbers, tomatoes, bell peppers and herbs in one central location
- Stress the benefits of controlled environment growing, uniform quality and reduced pesticide use to generate cross-selling and up-selling of your produce department shoppers

Since 1996, Live Gourmet brand hydroponically grown living butter lettuce has offered an improved category solution for innovative produce merchandisers across America. With its extended shelf-life and protective, interlocking, and easily merchandisable clamshell package, Live Gourmet butter lettuce has saved hours of labor, significantly reduced shrink and generated higher dollar rings, creating increased gross margins for the butter lettuce category.

Live Gourmet butter lettuce is "Absolutely fresh because it is still alive!"

By harvesting our butter lettuce with its roots intact, we provide each delectable leaf with a source of nutrition after harvest, helping the leaf remain fresher and more flavorful for days longer than butter lettuce harvested in the conventional manner. Fresher lettuce means higher flavor profiles and greater nutritional value, which generates higher levels of consumer satisfaction and helps drive increased purchase frequency.

Our lettuce is pest-free naturally as we utilize integrated pest management (IPM) regimes — a natural, more ecologically sound pest control method. IPM incorporates naturally occurring pest regulators and beneficial predatory insects that reduce harmful insect populations in the growing environment. No organophosphates or carbamate pesticides are ever used.

The Live Gourmet clamshell packaging concept — we like to call it a mini-greenhouse — provides a micro-environment around the lettuce helping it stay fresher longer. The clamshell protects each delicate leaf from physical damage during handling and acts as a food-safety barrier between the product and the consumer, an area of increased interest for many consumers.

The clamshell's interlocking feature aids in ease of maintaining a presentable, attractive display on your produce section shelf. Just place and replenish the facings daily. Our clamshells are made from post-consumer recyclables and are Level-1 recyclable, a very important feature for most of today's shoppers.

Live Gourmet Advantages:

- Absolutely fresh because it's still alive!
- Consistent uniform product quality all year-round
- Pest free naturally
- Extended shelf-life and reduced shrink that helps you sell more units
- Attractive, see-through and easily merchandisable packaging

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Live Gourmet butter lettuce is truly a value-added offering and can be merchandised successfully in several locations within the produce section of your store. Refrigerated free-standing island displays, end-cap displays and second- and third-level shelving above the wet rack can prove to be excellent merchandising zones, depending upon your store's produce department configuration.

Our research suggests the prime location for our Live Gourmet butter lettuce is directly next to iceberg lettuce in the leafy green section of your produce display. This requires closing of the wet-rack mist system nozzle directly above our product display, thereby eliminating unattractive water spots on the container.

We find that merchandising the product in the bagged salad case is often the area of last resort, and it may lead to buyer confusion. The bagged salad shopper is

looking for tear-and-pour convenience, and our product requires processing before use. In every instance, eye-level multiple facings that create attractive displays help generate increased sales velocity for our product.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Combining offers with other salad ingredients — from croutons to gourmet cheeses and salad dressings — can help acquaint your shoppers with this uniquely fresh butter lettuce.

Promoting your private-label salad dressing in conjunction with our butter lettuce is a great way to generate increased velocity for both categories. Interdepartmental cross-promotional offers, such as a BLT promotion that offers the ingredients for a bacon, lettuce and tomato sandwich, can drive traffic to several areas throughout your store.

Use of cents-off coupons for ingredients located at displays of the corresponding items can be used to draw your meat department shopper into your produce section and bakery goods section of the store.

RECEIVING, STORAGE AND HANDLING TIPS

Maintain the cold chain at all times and observe suggested temperature ranges to extend the product's shelf-life.

Inspect all shipping cartons for the enjoy-by-date or best-if-used-by date and maintain proper product rotation in the storage cooler and on the store shelf.

Visually inspect each clamshell during placement on the shelf to insure your display is the very best it can be.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURE

Observe the enjoy-by-date stamped on each package and maintain a proper rotation to insure maximum value for your customer.

Place and reface frequently; with the clamshell package, daily trimming and product refreshing will be nominal.



Consistently Superior Quality

Day In - Day Out



Live Gourmet® Living Butter Lettuce:

- Superior product uniformity paired with an unsurpassed quality assurance program gives your customer a product they can count on.
- Year-round availability and stable year-round pricing helps build your category sales with higher gross margins and increased category velocity.
- Our unique mini-greenhouse packaging protects every leaf, extends shelf life, limits merchandiser inputs and merchandises attractively on your shelf while reducing shrink.
- Sustainably grown in state-of-the-art greenhouses where we minimize, conserve and recycle all agricultural inputs.
To find out more, please visit www.livegourmet.com/sust.html

Offer Your Customers the Best! Live Gourmet®

Hollandia Produce ■ P O Box 1327 ■ Carpinteria, CA 93014
(805) 684-4146 ■ www.livegourmet.com





SUN PACIFIC MARKETING



1601 E Olympic Blvd Ste 105
Los Angeles CA 90021
Phone: 213-612-9957
Fax: 213-612-9956
www.ripeandeasykiwi.com



Merchandising Kiwi has never been easier when you have the right tools and consumer information to work with! Consumers love Kiwi. When featured peeled and sliced on a salad bar it's one of the most popular selections. However, consumers are challenged with selecting fruits in the store that are ready to eat and with at home preparation of peeling and slicing. When you offer a consistent "ripe" program there's no prep time needed. Educate your customers to simply scoop and eat!

DISPLAY AND PRESENTATION

While bulk displays are the most common, they struggle to communicate the fruit's vibrant interior flesh and educate consumers about nutrition or the fact that consistently ripe product can simply be halved, scooped and eaten. Ripe & Easy™ Kiwi is ready to scoop and eat. The high graphic cartons, display shippers and package inserts "tell the story".

1, 2, and 3-pound clamshells with labels featuring kids scooping and eating halved kiwi can be merchandised with tropicals, fresh berries, and tree fruits. Stacked DRC's and attention-getting display bases for DRC's also serve to reinforce the fun and ease of scooping and eating while also communicating Kiwi's powerful nutrition in easy to understand terms:

- More Vitamin C than an orange
- More Vitamin E than a serving of avocado
- More fiber than a bowl of bran cereal
- More Potassium than a banana

Ripe & Easy Kiwi display bases can be strategically located in the produce department as a side stack (wing) or waterfall display next to end caps and tables, as a standalone or adjacent to bananas, pears, berries or tropicals. Also, consider placing Kiwi displays near check outs and value added cut fruit areas.

While displaying Kiwi in bulk is certainly a merchandising option, displaying Ripe & Easy Kiwi in DRC's or on the POP display bases will attract your customer's attention and stimulate new and repeat purchases. Also, clamshells will reduce shrink from handling and improve transaction size, store stocking, and rotation productivity.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Consumers respond to full displays. Whether you merchandise Ripe & Easy Kiwi in a refrigerated case with berries or on a dry table near tree fruits or tropicals, keep bulk fruit and clamshell packs well stocked and rotated.

Having secondary display locations for Kiwi and offering various size packs will also stimulate purchase behavior while providing options for your customers. Consider placing 1-pound packs on the refrigerated table or in the multi-deck case with berries and value added items. Place 2-pound packed DRC's on display bases for side stack displays near tropicals or place 2 displays back to back creating an island. The display bases are a single footprint in size and designed so they can be moved easily. Consider placing displays at check out during promotional periods to optimize consumer exposure and availability.

QUICK TIPS

- Promote as: *Ripe & Easy Kiwi — Just Scoop and Eat! It's ripe, ready to eat, and easy too — simply slice in half and scoop with a spoon*
- Photographs of Mom and kids are a strong visual message of how easy and fun it is to eat
- Merchandise Ripe & Easy Kiwi 1# clamshells in refrigerated "grab n' go" cases with sandwiches, salads, yogurt, and other lunch items
- Promote nutrition & convenience: 2 medium Kiwis are 1 full serving at only 45 calories a piece. Kiwi is low on the glycemic index and provides a natural boost of energy without the fat and calories of a candy bar. And, each clamshell contains a Kiwi knife/spoon to simply cut Kiwi in half to scoop and eat!

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND STORAGE

Ripe & Easy Kiwi should be received and stored at temperatures between 32°F and 41°F to retard further ripening prior to being displayed on the sales floor.

POINT OF PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

A picture paints a thousand words. Ripe & Easy Kiwi packaging and cartons are high graphic billboards that tell the always ripe, easy to eat and good for you story.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY

Sun Pacific is the largest grower of California kiwi and the exclusive marketer of Ripe & Easy Kiwi with the ability to precondition and utilize pressure sorting technology at locations nationally.

RIPENESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Ripe & Easy Kiwi is pressure sorted to ensure ripe consistency which is sure to boost customer confidence. Preconditioned Kiwi will still provide days of in store shelf life and up to one week of refrigerator shelf life for your customers.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Inside each pack is a tri-fold insert that further educates the consumer about this nutrition powerhouse and provides recipes that change seasonally and can be customized for account specific promotion.

No need for shoppers to write down a recipe or pull from a tear pad. A quick response (QR) tag is featured on DRC's and display bases that instantly connect any smart phone to www.ripeandeasykiwi.com. Consumers will find useful information and great recipes to enjoy at home. A QR tag communicates promotional offers via the smart phone and can be used on store signage and be linked to specific consumer promotions or coupons. It's one of the fastest growing trends in consumer marketing.

RECIPE & USAGE IDEAS

- Utilize store signage to promote sweet and savory uses for Kiwi such as:
 - A naturally sweet fruit salad topping for ice cream, yogurt, cottage cheese, waffles, or oatmeal — combine chopped Kiwi, blackberries, strawberries, raspberries, fresh mint, and a touch of simple syrup.
 - For a little zip to traditional savory salsa add chopped Kiwi and pineapple to tomatoes, red onion, cilantro, jalapeno, and lime — great on grilled chicken and fish.

Tell the Ripe & Easy[™] Story
Kiwi

Wake Up The Sleeping Giant

THE OPPORTUNITY

- U.S. consumes nearly 120 MM lbs. of kiwi per year but pales in comparison to Europe or Canada.
- Consumers love kiwi that has been peeled and sliced for them but lack the time and inclination to prepare at home.
- Consumers are generally unaware that kiwi is a nutrition powerhouse, and that you simply scoop and eat ripe kiwi. No need to peel and slice!



THE SOLUTION

- Offer Ripe & Easy[™] consistent, ripe packs of kiwi.
- Educate consumers to simply halve and scoop.
- Communicate nutrition with package insert and our website www.ripeandeasykiwi.com.
- Tell the Ripe & Easy[™] kiwi story using clamshell packs, display ready cartons and display bases with photographs of Mom and kids scooping and enjoying halved kiwi.
- Build trust, offer Ripe & Easy[™] kiwi that is consistently ready to eat.



Single Footprint Display



1, 2, 3-lb. Clamshells



Tri-fold Inserts

Display Ready Cartons



© 2011 Sun Pacific
Los Angeles, CA 90021
213-612-9957

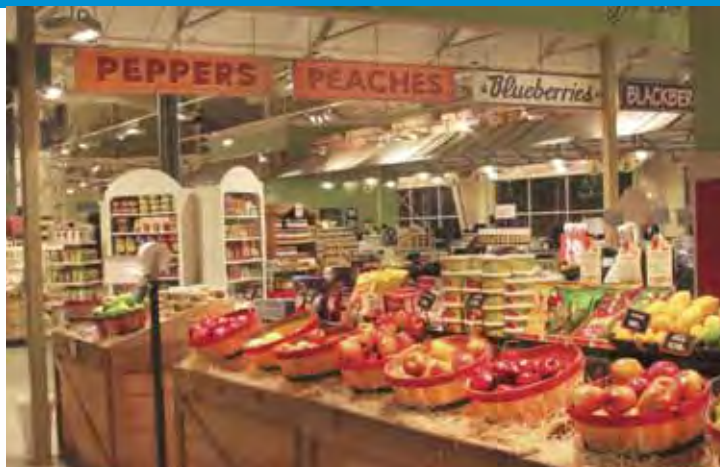
www.ripeandeasykiwi.com



BAERO NORTH AMERICA, INC.



10432 Baur Boulevard
St. Louis, MO 63132
Phone: 314-692-2270
Fax: 314-991-2840
Contact: Lee Rhoades
lee.rhoades@baerousa.com
www.baerousa.com



QUICK TIPS

- Separate signage from product lighting with different color tones and increased brightness to draw extra attention to your message
- Make sure your lighting system provides UV protection to keep your produce fresh
- Give your produce displays a beauty test — place them under varied light sources to see the enormous differences HID, fluorescent, and LED lighting have on your product

THE L.E.D. CONVERSATION

A conversation almost every supermarket in the land is having right now is — to L.E.D. or not to L.E.D.? While 50,000 operational hours might seem like the pot of gold at the end of the proverbial rainbow, is there an actual treasure trove of savings to be had?

The search for “green” lighting that truly delivers the lowest cost of ownership without sacrificing the quality of product illumination and store atmosphere is proving to be just as elusive as that pot of gold.

PROFITS THROUGH PRESENTATION

If your competitor up the street has opted to use to LEDs in search of operational savings, a window of opportunity has opened for you.

The ability to differentiate your market from the big box store and others by providing your patrons with a shopping experience that surpasses their expectations and exceeds the competition will result in longer and more frequent visits by those shoppers. Visually arresting displays of peppers and apples, colorful presentations of strawberries and carrots are results of great lighting. The result of great lighting is fuller shopping carts.

your current lighting design does not serve all of these functions, it might be time to look at other lighting options.

THE POWER OF COLOR

At this point, you have to ask yourself the question, “Do I want to simply light my department or do I want to light it well?” If you choose to be better than the competition, then sacrificing color probably is not the path you want to take. To customers, color means quality and freshness and the power of color in displays, whether apples or azaleas, translates directly into sales. Impulse buys are increased and store brands are enhanced by quality lighting.

The most efficient way to harness this power is with the newest generation of HID lighting.

Compact versions of metal halide and high pressure sodium lamps provide the color “pop” and light quality that creates product displays which entice shoppers to fill carts. They impart a lively light which provides for the contrast of colors and textures, the base for any successful produce display, while providing greater lumens per watt ratios than LEDs.

THE REST OF THE STORY

While the benefits of a lighting system that might last 50,000 hours or more are undeniable, make sure you know the rest of the story.

First, it is a fact that ceramic metal halide lamps are far more energy efficient than the LED fixtures on the market today. With an output of around 100 lumens per watt, CMH lamps provide much more bang for your buck than the LED average of 50 or so. Saying a 20 watt LED fixture can replace a 70 watt HID fixture is like saying a Gremlin can replace a Ferrari. Sure it might get you there but are you going to enjoy the ride or attract any attention, positive attention that is?

Second, take time to perform your own side-by-side in-store comparisons of the two systems and encourage shopper input. A lighting system that lasts a long time will not do you any good in an empty store.

Third, make sure you know everything about your lighting options including the advantages and disadvantages. For example, some questions you must consider are: After those 50,000 hours are up, then what? Do I have to buy all new LED fixtures? How much of the 50,000 hours is covered by warranty? Those are just a few starter questions as you search for the end of that rainbow.

WHAT IS GREAT LIGHTING?

Especially in the fresh food areas, lighting is crucial for superior product presentation and creating an atmosphere that customers want to return to again and again.

As LEDs are rushed to the market with claims of being able to

effectively replace existing lighting

systems, the LED’s relatively low light output and general color performance leave some store owners doubting their investment.

To illuminate produce departments, as well as floral, bakery, meat and seafood areas, it is not enough to provide a minimum amount of footcandles. The lighting must serve several functions and serve them all well. Lighting should accentuate all the carefully chosen color palettes of both the décor and merchandising displays while creating subtle but distinct color changes for each separate department. That same lighting must enhance the appearance of all products from peonies to peppers to prime rib providing heat and UV protection for each. On top of that, truly quality lighting should create a warm, relaxing atmosphere with “shop-ability” and do so with a level of energy efficiency that meets the standards of today and tomorrow. If



When Ordinary Is Not An Option



With roots in the markets of Europe, BAERO specializes in lighting for grocers wanting to set their store apart from the competition. BAERO lighting creates a unique shopping experience that has been proven to increase sales where it has been installed.*



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-

*Based on actual customer provided comparative sales figures



CIRULI BROTHERS, LLC

CIRULI BROTHERS

Growers and Shippers Since 1940

PO Box 1476
Tubac AZ 95646
P: 520-281-9696
info@cirulibrothers.com
www.cirulibrothers.com
www.champagnemango.com



QUICK TIPS

- Consistency plays a key role in repeat purchases. Be consistent in supplies, quality and maturity in your displays
- Mangos should not be displayed on a cold rack – leave them at room temperature
- Mangos should not be displayed near ethylene-sensitive products

Reputed around the globe as the king of fruits, the delicious mango is making a name for itself across the U.S. due to its alluring flavor, bright aroma, and extensive nutritional benefits. Mangos are not only delicious, they are good for you.

Increasing sales potential also makes mangos particularly important for US retailers. Per capita mango consumption has doubled in the past decade, and though considered an exotic fruit by many, mangos have long since captivated the hearts (and palates) of Latino and Asian consumers, which happen to be the largest growing ethnic groups in the US.

MERCHANDISING & DISPLAY IDEAS

Retailers can run ads coupled with bold displays that feature fruit in different ripening stages to boost sales. Where larger displays are appealing and draw traffic, abundant fruit supplies, particularly fruit that is ready-to-eat, can help seal the deal. Because roughly one in three U.S. consumers have tried a mango, having ripe fruit on display allows produce staff to offer in-store sampling, and to explain the difference between hard, immature mangos and softer, riper fruit. Ripe fruit also helps ensure customers have a great eating experience. Conversely, if a customer samples a hard, immature mango, chances are the customer will not return for a repeat purchase.

Another merchandising concept that is gaining momentum is multiple promotions. Try mixing up bulk displays with multiple packs like display-ready boxes or clamshell packs. Specialty packs can be a great way to promote the fruit because you can add valuable consumer information to your packaging, whether it's a delicious recipe or a cutting chart for novice customers.

Retailers can also provide diverse varieties to highlight the differences between them. Not all mangos are created equal; attributes like taste, color and nutrition can vary between varieties. Ataulfo mangos, for instance, contain almost five times the Vitamin C as most other popular mango varieties in the U.S. Playing up nutritional benefits is particularly important as people look to find ways to eat healthy. Retailers should know that mangos are an excellent source of Vitamins A and C, a good source of dietary fiber and they are naturally fat free.

EDUCATION SPURS SALES

Education plays a key role when it comes to merchandising. On one hand, produce staff must be made aware of proper handling and storage of mangos to ensure they are cared for appropriately. One way retailers can stay in the know is by communicating with their suppliers, who are excellent sources of information.

Retailers can also focus education efforts to their customers to arm them with tools that help them make better informed purchases. A very effective way to do this is with Point of Sale signage, which can include proper selection tips, ripening guides or pre-printed recipe ideas.

More information on mango marketing is being made available each year as the industry

strengthens its efforts to build more consumer awareness through public relations campaigns and extensive research.

VARIETY & AVAILABILITY

Mangos are primarily supplied to the U.S. by Mexico, but increased offshore deals now make them available year round in many varieties and plentiful supplies. The most popular varieties are:

- **Ataulfo (Feb – Aug):** Slightly smaller and kidney-shaped, this variety turns from green to deep yellow when ripe. Its flavor is intensely sweet and velvety due to minimal fibers. Only the finest Ataulfo is marketed under the Champagne® mango label.
- **Haden (Feb – Jun):** This delightfully sweet and fragrant fruit is known to develop a red blush with some yellow when ripe. Hadens are round and oval, with firm texture and slightly more fiber.
- **Tommy Atkins (Mar – Jul):** More oblong and oval-shaped, this variety accentuates displays due to their vibrant red and green hues. They are sweet with firmer flesh due to a moderately fibrous texture.
- **Kent (Jun – Sep):** Rounder and somewhat bigger, Kents develop smooth, green skin with faint hints of red. The flavor is very sweet and the texture is soft and juicy with some fiber.
- **Keitt (Jun – Oct):** This large, oval mango develops a bright, sweet taste and flavorful aroma. The texture is smooth with mild fibers, and the predominantly green skin sometimes forms a slight rosy blush.

RIPENING RECOMMENDATIONS

The best way to judge ripeness is to give mangos a gentle squeeze. If it's hard, it's green. Conversely, the softer the mango, the riper it is. Color is not the best indicator because some varieties don't change color as they mature. The varieties more prone to color change are Haden, whose green and red patches turn yellow with a rosy blush, and Ataulfos, which turn from a lime green to deep yellow when fully mature.

DISPLAY CARE & HANDLING

Proper handling is important for retailers to preserve the integrity of the fruit. The main facts that produce staff should know when handling mangos are:



- Mangos should be displayed at room temperature and not on a cold rack.
- Store mangos between 50 - 55 F. Anything lower may cause chilling injury.
- Mangos shouldn't be displayed near ethylene-sensitive products.
- Color is not a good indicator of ripeness because not all varieties change color.
- Color is not a good indicator of quality. A mango's color can vary depending on the variety and growing region.



The one and only.

There's only one Champagne® mango. Everything about it is unique: its incomparable taste, its smooth texture and rich golden color. From flower to harvest, the Champagne is the most pampered of all mangos. They flourish in the fertile volcanic soil of central Mexico and are caressed by mild south Pacific breezes gently drifting through meticulously cultivated mango groves.

There are no finer mangos available at any price. And you can only get them at Ciruli Brothers.*

* Champagne® is a registered trademark of Ciruli Brothers

**CIRULI
BROTHERS**
Growers and Shippers Since 1940
**Champagne®
mango**

WWW.CHAMPAGNEMANGO.COM WWW.CIRULIBROTHERS.COM



MONTEREY MUSHROOMS



260 Westgate Drive
Watsonville, CA 95076
Phone: 831-763-5300
Fax: 831-763-0700
www.montereymushrooms.com



RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Research shows that sales can increase up to 40% by grouping all varieties together, providing proper space allocation and positioning mushrooms next to the salad section. Demographics play an important role in determining space allocation.

- Exceptional departments allocate 32 linear feet in the multi-deck case;
- Larger departments allocate 24-28 linear feet;
- Smaller departments with lower income shoppers allocate 16 linear feet;
- Small departments and higher income shoppers allocate 20-24 linear feet.

SECONDARY DISPLAYS

Because of the versatility of fresh mushrooms, secondary displays are effective in bringing meal solutions to the mind of the consumer. On-going secondary displays in the salad case and the meat case will generate **12% growth** in category sales. In addition, seasonal displays can be utilized to feature eggs, potatoes, rice, pasta, tortillas, cheese, onions and other cooking vegetables. Organic, natural, and diet meal solutions are other ideas that are effective with mushrooms.

POINT OF PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Attention brought to the category through use of section signage, recipe cards, shelf talkers (on usage, selection, care & handling) will drive sales. Mushroom consumption will grow only if consumers become more educated on usage and benefits, such as mushrooms' contribution to nutrition and weight management. Most stores carry 15-25 varieties/package types; so consumer education about what to do with various types of mushrooms is important.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Meal solutions can easily be achieved year-round by cross-promoting sliced mushrooms with bagged salads and capitalizing on grilling opportunities with steaks, stir-frys and shish kabobs on the grill. Steak-Mate thick sliced mushrooms are outstanding displayed in the meat section, as are Portabellas during grilling season. Mushrooms are an ideal item to utilize as a flavor enhancer and meat replacement or complementary ingredient in pastas, soups, eggs, rice, casseroles or pizza.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Maintaining a full variety of white, portabellas, specialty, and dried mushrooms will help drive sales! Practice maximum assortment, which includes a variety of whole and sliced, Portabellas, Organics, Baby Pearls and value-added, Specialty mushrooms, dried and bulk. Look for new varieties, such as **Monterey's Grill-A-Bella®**, and **sliced whites and browns that provide Vitamin D benefits** for the consumer.

Mushrooms are available throughout the year, so it is important that they continue to be well displayed and promoted, especially when you consider the average mushroom dollar ring is over two dollars, and mushrooms generate over \$60 in sales per square foot display space.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Mushrooms need promotional activity to help bring shoppers to the category. However, they are not price-sensitive, so deep discounts are not necessary. On

average, promotions should be utilized 6-8 times per quarter to maximize overall sales. Discounts should generally be between 20-33%. Two-for-\$X, or multiple pricing, tends to be the most effective method of promoting mushrooms. Research shows that multiple-item ads in the mushroom category generate the most volume and profit for the category. Feature advertising should be utilized once per quarter to high-light mushrooms.

RIPENESS RECOMMENDATION

Mushrooms are highly susceptible to breakdown and should be refrigerated upon receipt. On average, mushrooms have a shelf life of 6 to 8 days; therefore it is critical that backroom inventory be kept to a minimum. It is important to note that **mushrooms gain more flavor as they age**, so white mushrooms with a tinge of brown can still be sold as fresh. Brown and specialty varieties usually have an extra day or two in shelf life.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Mushrooms must be displayed and stored between 32 to 36 degrees, 85 to 90% humidity. For every five-degree increase in temperature, mushrooms lose a day of shelf life. Due to their high perishability, mushrooms should never be stacked more than two high. Rotate product properly.

RECEIVING, STORAGE AND HANDLING TIPS

To manage shrink effectively, holding coolers should carry minimal overstock. Avoid out-of-stocks. Plan accordingly for promotions and feature ads. Refrigerate mushrooms immediately. Additionally, store mushrooms up high and off moist floors, away from warm doorways, out of direct airflow and away from odorous perishable items.

QUICK TIPS

- Keep mushrooms refrigerated and dry
- **Promote mushrooms consistently** year-round and particularly throughout the summer. Vary promotions to include all varieties. Deep discounts are not necessary. In-store promos help, too
- Utilize multi-item advertising highlighting all category segments
- Merchandise based on department sales and consumer demographics. Use sampling, educational info and recipes to encourage trial, repeat purchase and to drive sales
- **Definitely add a second display** of sliced mushroom packages in the salad section. Cross merchandise with complementary items
- Promote larger pack sizes and exotics. Use promotions to build consumer awareness of specialty varieties and **trade them up**

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- Promote and merchandise **Monterey's Grill-A-Bella®** mushrooms in the high profile biodegradable tray. Provides **100% daily requirement of Vitamin D** per serving for consumer health benefits
- Sell bulk Portabellas by the each versus pound — sales increase up to 300%
- Merchandise **Monterey's Sliced Mushrooms with 100% Vitamin D in the new "Resealable Bag"** on pegs for maximum visibility near the bagged salad section, to increase your sales and expand your profits. Plus, your shoppers will appreciate these time-saving mushrooms that help save 10 minutes of prep time and provide Vitamin D!
- Pictures of recipes on-pack, like Monterey's Bag products, or in the section get the consumer thinking immediately, "What's for dinner?" Serving suggestions and healthy recipes are on every bag

WHAT'S THE NUMBER ONE FOOD SOURCE FOR VITAMIN ?



Only Monterey Mushrooms
provides a full range
of mushroom products
with 100% of your
daily value for
Vitamin D.



100% of the DV of Vitamin 
Per 3 oz. Serving



IDAHO-EASTERN OREGON ONION COMMITTEE



P.O. Box 909
Parma, ID 83660
Phone: 208-722-5111
Fax: 208-722-6582
www.BIGONIONS.com



QUICK TIPS

- Promotional materials and recipe cards should tout Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onions as great raw, on burgers and for cooking
- In-store sampling and co-op advertising drive retail sales and product awareness
- Don't forget: "The bigger the better"

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onions are versatile onions that may be used at any meal or in any favorite onion recipe. The appeal of Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onions is their golden globe shape and their remarkably mild flavor. Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onions retain their texture when cooked, adding flavor and consistency to any dish.

When it comes to displaying Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onions, we say, "The bigger, the better." The bigger and more dramatic you can make your displays, the better your sales will be.

Good signage that distinguishes the different varieties and versatility of onions will go a long way in increasing sales.

POINT-OF-PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Make quick-idea recipes available near the onion section to encourage impulse purchases.

To help consumers decide which onion to purchase, display an Idaho-E. Oregon Onion QR Code that, when scanned, launches consumers to the Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Website (www.BIGONIONS.com) for sizing and onion variety information. For example, large-size onions reduce preparation time while their firm flesh makes them ideal for blooms, ringing, slicing and dicing.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onions are available in yellow, red and white varieties. Harvest begins in August with onion availability lasting from August through March.

During the growing season, the Idaho and Eastern Oregon Onion region provides from approximately 30 percent of the bulb onions consumed in the United States.



PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

In-store sampling and co-op advertising drive retail sales and product awareness. The aroma of onion rings sampled in the produce department is sure to draw a crowd. Contact the Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Committee office to learn about the promotional opportunities for your store. The Idaho-E. Oregon Onion Committee also holds an ONION LOVERS' Retail Display Contest each January and offers cash

prizes to winning displays.

Funds are also available to retail outlets that wish to increase the promotion of Idaho-E. Oregon onions through creative media advertising.

Plus, the Idaho-E. Oregon Onion Committee has developed a new label that will be sure to draw customers to an attractive display of consumer packs and 10lb. bags. Many shippers carry the new label, so ask for it on your next order!

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onions are known for their long shelf life. You can increase profitability by reducing shrink if you follow these simple steps:

- Onions should be kept dry and unrefrigerated at retail. Good air circulation is critical for onions.
- Keep product rotated and remove separated and loose skins from the display bin.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

When onions are received, they should be placed one foot away from the wall for proper air circulation. Air circulation is crucial for long-term storage of onions.

Remember not to use plastic pallet wrap on onions in storage, as the plastic wrap limits air movement.

Onions should be kept cool and dry, ideally at 34° to 45° F with about 65 to 70 percent humidity.

Onions should not be stored with other produce that gives off moisture, such as potatoes.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Precut onion blooms filled with a variety of cut produce could be offered in microwavable containers for take-and-bake onion blooms.

In addition, try cross-merchandising onions in the meat department. Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onions are the perfect size for topping hamburgers, and king-size onion rings will just naturally have your customers thinking steak for dinner. For summer, try merchandising onions along with barbeque sauces to suggest a perfect outdoor grilling accompaniment.

Salad tie-ins have proven successful, too.

Display onions right next to other salad ingredients and see how they help sell more of your other produce items.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- Include the new Idaho-E. Oregon Onion Quick Response (QR) Code with your display that prompts customers to scan it with their smart phones to receive a downloadable Full Color Onion Recipe Cookbook. Contact the Idaho-E. Oregon Onion Committee for more details



**You Want `em? We Got `em!
Onions on Demand!**

**Idaho-E. Oregon
Spanish Sweet Onions**



**Your Reliable Onion Source
from the U.S.A.**

www.BIGONIONS.com

208-722-5111



BROOKS TROPICALS



18400 SW 256th Street
Homestead, FL 33090
Phone: 800-327-4833
Fax: 305-246-5827
www.brookstropicals.com
www.brookstropicals.com/nutrition



RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

Display papayas as whole fruit as well as cut in half and shrink-wrapped. Use both methods simultaneously for increased sales.

Cutting a ripe papaya lengthwise shows customers that it might have some green on the outside, but inside the fruit is red, juicy and ready to eat. Demonstrate that the papaya can be eaten by the spoonful or cut up for salads, salsas or smoothies. Increase overall sales by selling it as an edible bowl filled with other fruits, yogurt or salads.

Whole papayas, when displayed with other tropical produce, make for a colorful, unique and interesting display, piquing the curiosity of new consumers. Generate excitement by displaying a large number of papayas — 15 or more pieces of Caribbean Red.

Keep an eye on your papaya display. Be quick to sort out any fruit that is less than cosmetically appealing. This fruit is still great tasting, so chop it up to add a tropical taste to prepared fruit salads or blend into fabulous smoothies or, as Hispanics call them, *batidos*.

POINT-OF-PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Brooks Tropicals provides placards and tear-off pads for your produce department. The placards provide details on the papayas' origin, taste, color, availability, size and quality, as well as preparation and storage tips and nutritional information.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

Brooks Tropicals is the exclusive grower of Caribbean Red papayas. Brooks grows, packs and ships these papayas year-round from food safety audited facilities in Belize, Central America. North America distribution is available from Homestead, FL and McAllen, TX.



QUICK TIPS

- Amongst fruit, papaya is a nutritional powerhouse with a myriad of vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytonutrients. But papayas take nutrition two steps further than most fruits

- 1 Papayas have a digestive enzyme called papain that aids in protein digestion and has a mild, soothing effect on the stomach

- 2 Caribbean Red papayas — as indicated by their vibrant red color — have carotenoids — such as lycopene — that act as antioxidants in the body. Antioxidants reduce inflammation and are considered cancer-fighting agents. Recent studies show that a high intake of lycopene-rich foods, such as Caribbean Red papayas, can reduce the risk of several types of cancers, most notably prostate cancer. For more nutritional information email maryo@brookstropicals.com or go to www.brookstropicals.com/getyourredon

- When is a papaya ready to eat? Your customer may assume the fruit has to be all yellow. Not so, a Caribbean Red papaya is ready to eat between 50 and 100% yellow as long as the fruit gives with a little squeeze

- There's an easy way to cut up a Caribbean Red Papaya; To find out how, go to www.brookstropicals.com/CRchop-BW.pdf

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Brooks Tropicals actively works to increase consumer awareness. We work with food editors, TV producers and celebrity chefs to promote the benefits of including papayas in healthful diets. Our Web site, which is included on our label, is a favorite go-to spot for answers on papayas.

RIPENESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Caribbean Red papayas are ripe starting at 50 percent color break. If the fruit gives when gently squeezed, it's ready to eat.

BACKROOM RECEIVING AND PREPARATION PROCEDURES

Caribbean Red papayas can be stored at 42° to 58° F to minimize ripening. Storing them at higher temperatures will speed the ripening process. Storing at 40° F or below for prolonged periods may cause injury to the fruit.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Papayas have soft skins, so they are delicate when ripe. Stack up to two or three deep. If using wicker baskets with uneven bottoms and sides, provide a layer of protection between the wicker and the fruit. Do not mist papayas. Keep them at room temperature. Caribbean Red papayas have a shelf-life of two to five days depending on ripeness; If possible, display papayas with the larger more colorful end up.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Don't fence these papayas in. Occasionally display them outside the tropical produce section by grouping with other popular recipe ingredients, such as salsas or fruit salads. Display a cut-in-half papaya with lime wedges and a plastic spoon in the meals-to-go section.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- We've known for some time that Caribbean Red Papayas are nutrient-dense and help digestion. Your customers may not know of recent studies that show this fruit's ability to reduce the risk of several types of cancer. Reproducible materials for in-store materials available, email maryo@brookstropicals.com

- For your breakfast or lunch-to-go crowd, cut a Caribbean Red Papaya in half, fill with berries or lime slices and add a spoon

- The best way to display Caribbean Red Papayas is stacked on its side with its ends out. Makes it easy for your customer to select the desired color and size

FOR OVER 20 YEARS

FROM OUR PAPAYA FIELDS
TO YOUR STORE

CARIBBEAN RED®
Papayas



Great taste and proven shelf life delivered by one company – from our fields to you. One integrated process pushes papaya quality to its utmost with:

- In-house research and development
- Food safety audited facilities
- State-of-the-art packing house
- Dedicated ripening rooms
- Quality control team
- Continuous Cold Chain® from field to your store



All that hard work delivers quality – Caribbean Red Papayas with great taste and proven shelf life. Call Brooks today to get Caribbean Red Papayas coming your way.



800.327.4833 • Fax: 305.246.5827

www.brookstropicals.com

© 2011, Brooks Tropicals LLC. The logo, Caribbean Red and Continuous Cold Chain are all registered trademarks of Brooks Tropicals, LLC.





TURBANA CORPORATION



550 Biltmore Way, Suite 730
Coral Gables, FL 33134
Phone: 305-445-1442
Fax: 305-443-8908
www.turbana.com
info@turbana.com



QUICK TIPS

- Plantains should always be cooked, never eaten raw
- Keep plantain display full and well maintained
- For increased sales, display both green and ripe plantains
- Specify the differences between the different plantain varieties to educate consumers

The time has come to move plantains from a product to a category. Plantains have grown from an ethnic product to a staple item in many areas.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Plantains have shown to be a great tool to attract ethnic consumers to stores, and at the same time, other consumers have shown interest in experimenting with new and exciting products.

HOW DO WE BUILD ON THIS SUCCESS?

Expand the product line to include new varieties.

VARIETIES

Our traditional plantains have always been the Harton variety. Turbana produces Harton plantains because they provide the best market flexibility. This is a unique variety that can be merchandised in both its green and ripened stages.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Burros are about six to eight inches long, and up to two inches thick. The fruit has very little curvature. Consumers can enjoy this fruit ripened like a fruit or in its green stage as a vegetable.

Hawaiian plantains can grow to nine inches in length and three inches in diameter. Consumers use it as a vegetable.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

To appeal to shoppers, it is important to:

- Keep the display full and well maintained.
- Display the three varieties together as a category.
- Differentiate the products by showing the names of each product and providing a short description for each of them.
- Display both green and ripe plantains.

Many shoppers who consume plantains are of ethnic origin, they always look for their own plantain preferences and for good quality.

American shoppers are interested in trying new varieties if they look appealing. A large display with adequate padding will definitely spark their interest. Another key element to boost sales is to implement a two-color program by displaying both green and ripe plantains together.

PRICING

It's been proven that sales of Harton plantains increase when they are sold by the dollar instead of by the pound (i.e., 4/\$1).

As Burros and Hawaiians come in clusters, it is recommended to sell them by the pound.

POINT-OF-PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

It is important to include signage and POS materials at the point-of-purchase to

differentiate each variety of the plantain category and increase sales. Turbana offers its customers advertising material with recommendations on ripening and storage as well as an array of recipes for consumers who are interested in sampling them. Teaching mainstream Americans how to prepare plantains will boost your sales; they have a very positive response once they realize how delicious plantains are!

Turbana also offers bilingual signage with nutritional content in both English and Spanish. Many shoppers who eat plantains are Hispanic and seeing their own language in your store will make them feel welcome, which builds loyalty.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

Plantains are a staple food among ethnic groups. Stores located in areas of high Hispanic household density should advertise in Spanish through local radio stations, cable TV or through flyers to help them reach this audience. Turbana can help you with your advertising needs in Spanish.

Sampling plantains at different stages is a great way to teach consumers the many different ways to cook them and to show how versatile plantains are.

RIPENESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Unlike bananas, plantains are grown with the intention of being cooked in every stage of ripeness, from green to yellow to black. The riper it is, the sweeter the taste. The taste changes as the plantain goes through a series of biochemical reactions as it ripens, which is an ongoing process of converting starches to sugars.

Burros can be used as a fruit or cooked as a vegetable. They are harvested and shipped green. If the fruit is ripened like a banana the fruit reveals an interesting taste somewhat between a strawberry and a banana. If used unripened, the fruit is often fried to make excellent *tostones*. Consumers like the versatility of this fruit.

The Hawaiians are used as a vegetable. They are known to have no fiber and with their larger diameter they are used to make excellent *tostones*. Also, they can be baked either ripe or green.

Plantains can be prepared and enjoyed at many stages in the ripening process. This versatility is why most consumers would like to see them offered in both the green and ripened stages.

DISPLAY CARE AND HANDLING

Store Harton plantains at a room temperature between 47° and 50° F, away from freezers and loading dock doors. For Burros and Hawaiians, fruit should be stored at 58° F.

Use cardboard boxes to transport fruit to display area to minimize handling. Plantains should be displayed on padded shelves to avoid scarring and/or bruising.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Plantains are most commonly consumed with black beans and rice among Hispanic populations, so putting black beans and rice around the display makes good business sense. To appeal to mainstream Americans, place honey, whipped cream, chocolate or other fruit with the display to encourage sweet dessert ideas.



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

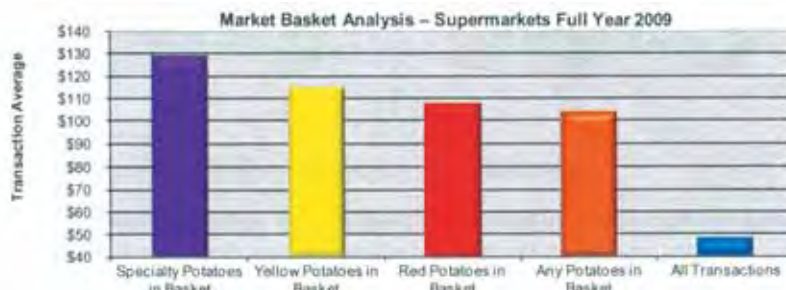


US POTATO BOARD



UNITED STATES
Potato
BOARD

7555 E. Hampden Ave., Ste 412, Denver, CO 80231
Phone: 303-873-2312 Fax: 303-369-7718
www.uspotatoes.com, www.potatogoodness.com
ktriu@uspotatoes.com



The United States Potato Board (USPB) is committed to creating an insight-driven, consumer-centric potato category that drives sales throughout the supply chain. By understanding the potato consumer and shopper, leveraging category trends, identifying the highest-potential opportunities and implementing proven best practices, retailers can ensure potatoes continue to maintain their dominance and leadership position in the produce department.

The USPB works closely with the retail trade to highlight the opportunities for educating shoppers on the nutrition benefits of potatoes. Through consumer research, the USPB has identified two critical messages: potatoes are healthy, and potatoes can be part of a convenient meal solution. Consumers are often unaware of the high potassium levels found in potatoes, and that potatoes contain 45% of daily vitamin C requirements. This, along with their low caloric content, makes potatoes one of the most affordable and healthy categories in produce.

POTATO PURCHASES DRIVE BIGGER BASKETS

To understand the impact of fresh potato purchases on retail transaction averages, the USPB commissioned a study using loyalty card data from two major supermarket chains during the years of 2008-2009 that looked at the purchase transactions of over 200,000 households. The study found that when any type of fresh potatoes were purchased, there was a 216% increase in basket size from \$48 to \$104. When looking further into specific potato types, we found that red potatoes grew the average basket size to \$108 (a 225% increase) and yellow potatoes raised the transaction average even higher, to \$115 (a 240% rise). The purchase of specialty potatoes had the greatest impact, generating an average basket ring of \$129 – a 269% increase over the norm.

EDUCATING CONSUMERS

The “Potatoes...Goodness Unearthed®” industry platform, developed in 2008, has successfully delivered new opportunities for the U.S. potato industry to reach consumers. This platform is based on extensive consumer research to identify the optimal message that will reach the target consumer in the most effective and meaningful way. The platform was first developed into a print campaign entitled, “Peel Back the Truth,” generating 90.3 million impressions and reaching 45 percent of the target audience in its first year (2008-09). The following year (2009-10), the campaign grew to deliver 126 million impressions and reach 51 percent of the target audience.

During the current fiscal year, additional research was fielded by the USPB and led to an evolution of our advertising communications and a refinement of the target audience. The new messaging invokes a stronger emphasis on how flavorful potatoes are while reinforcing their fresh & natural qualities and addressing how easily they can be prepared. The 2010-11 media campaign will deliver this message to 75% of our newly refined target, generating over 110 million targeted impressions and positively positioning fresh potatoes BEFORE shoppers enter the supermarket. This same messaging hierarchy and approach will be applied to the USPB’s new retail merchandising materials going forward.

FOUR KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCREASING POTATO SALES IN RETAIL

Opportunity #1: Increasing purchase intent by communicating nutritional benefits

A USPB study discovered that while only 1 in 6 shoppers knew about potatoes’ nutritional benefits, 2 out of 3 shoppers stated they would be more likely to purchase fresh potatoes after learning about their nutritional

values⁴. And the just released Burton-Freeman study has confirmed that potatoes can be included as part of a healthy weight management regimen, as it’s the calories and not the carbohydrates that count⁵. By using circulars, in-store signage and potato packaging to let shoppers know about how naturally healthy potatoes are, retailers can ring up added sales.

Opportunity #2: Triggering in-store purchase decisions

Recent research has found that 28% of potato purchase decisions in retail are unplanned. Even among those shoppers who were using a list and had purchased fresh potatoes, 20% admitted that they did not have potatoes on their list. The study also found that 36% of shoppers who were purchasing fresh potatoes already had potatoes at home⁴.

Ethnographic studies have found that most inspirations for meal ideas while shopping tend to come from the meat, fish and prepared foods areas¹. Given that the strongest purchase influencer for potatoes is when shoppers see a display or other visual cue⁴, one of the most effective ways for retailers to increase potato sales is by utilizing signs or recipes outside of the produce department to remind shoppers of just how much their family enjoys potatoes.

Opportunity #3: Increasing usage through appreciation of potato types and their favored uses

Research has shown that when shoppers use more types of potatoes, they purchase and consume more fresh potatoes overall². When we increase shoppers’ knowledge of the differing qualities and uses of potatoes, we elevate their perception of potatoes as “special” and help them to see potatoes as more valuable. This in turn gives consumers reasons to buy and use more types, and helps to motivate the purchase of multiple types during a single shopping trip. The most effective way for retailers to educate their shoppers is using signage at the potato table or via the potato packaging itself.

Opportunity #4: Suggesting convenient and innovative ways to prepare and serve potatoes

Consumers increasingly want dinners that go from prep to table in 30 minutes or less³. That desire for convenience has driven a 13% increase in microwaving baked potatoes during the period 2000-2009³, and sales of smaller-sized potatoes are increasing as they cook faster — providing the opportunity to serve a fresh, natural starch as quickly as rice or pasta. To take full advantage of this trend, retailers should showcase value-added potato offerings like steamable bags and microwavable baking potatoes while using signage and circulars to suggest convenient preparation options such as slow cookers.


Sources:

1. Hartman Group - Consumer Perceptions and Usage of Fresh Potatoes for Dinner Occasions 2009
2. USPB - Potato Attitude & Usage Study 2010
3. NPJ Group - National Eating Trends Study 2010
4. USPB - Consumer Shopping Behavior: Planned vs. Impulse Purchases Shopper Intercept Study 2009
5. Weight Management Study, UC Davis and the National Center for Food Safety and Technology, IIT; lead researcher Dr. Britt Burton-Freeman, PhD, MS -October, 2010

RESULTS TO BE PROUD OF

Through the USPB’s ongoing marketing efforts, we are seeing improvements in shoppers’ attitudes towards potatoes. Our annual Usage and Attitude Study confirms consumers’ negative attitudes have decreased 6 percentage points since 2008, and NPJ’s National Eating Trends report shows that annual eatings of fresh potatoes have stabilized after 15 straight years of decline! The USPB is committed to continuing its strong, integrated communications & merchandising programs that deliver increased demand at retail.





**Don't think potatoes
stack up compared
to other produce?
Guess again.**

Peel back the truth!

**Actually, our retail programs
can turn your potato category
into one of the biggest sales
opportunities in your store!**

© 2011 United States Potato Board. All rights reserved.

POTATOES
GOODNESS
UNEARTHED

The U.S. Potato Board supports you with national print and online advertising, powerful consumer PR and a full complement of retail programs and resources. Contact us and put our category expertise, shopper insights and proven best practices to work for you by calling (303) 369-7783 or email don.ladhoff@uspotatoes.com.



MARIE'S DRESSING AND DIP VENTURA FOODS, LLC



40 Pointe Drive
Brea, CA 92821
Phone: 972-569-6813
Contact: Matt Middleton
mmiddleton@venturafoods.com
www.maries.com



QUICK TIPS

- Merchandise with fresh vegetables for an increased produce ring
- Cross-merchandise with slower moving products for double benefit
- Use POS throughout the department to remind customers to check out the dressings

If you are looking for items to promote that provide homemade flavor, freshness, quality and variety, look no further than Refrigerated Salad Dressing. Refrigerated dressing provides a great opportunity to add profit to the produce department. Based on average retail prices across the country, a typical retailer profit is approximately \$1.50 per unit. Combine this high dollar margin with the ease of handling the product and minimal shrink and you have a product that can really help you improve your overall produce department margins.

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

At Marie's we believe the best types of promotions ultimately help our consumers easily put a great tasting meal or side-dish on the table. That means getting consumers to pick up a jar or bottle with every produce purchase. To do this effectively, it is less about straight discounting and more about merchandising the product directly adjacent to fresh produce to help the consumer recognize that there are easy ways to transform that produce into an extraordinary meal!

Merchandising fresh produce and dressings together or through effective point-of-sale creates a strong linkage that not only delivers consumer benefit, but also assists in driving increased sales and profits. For instance, by merchandising Marie's Coleslaw Dressing next to heads of cabbage and attaching a coupon or recipe, you can not only assist the consumer in figuring out how to transform a commodity into a meal, but also create a link between fresh produce and the fresh, homemade dressings.

VARIETY AND INNOVATION

The Refrigerated Salad Dressing category delivers delicious homemade flavor, fresh taste and product variety, with category-leading Marie's Chunky Blue Cheese Dressing and innovative new Yogurt Dressing and Potato Salad Dressing, Marie's is committed to the growth of Refrigerated Salad Dressing. As we look forward, Marie's will continue to focus on delivering new products that help consumers turn produce into extraordinary meals and we encourage our retail partners to join us in building on the positive role that produce can play in consumers' diets.

TASTE AND NUTRITION

Refrigerated Salad Dressing also present a healthier and more wholesome dressing alternative for consumers — attributes which can also be promoted and are particularly applicable to the produce department.

Help consumers to understand the taste and ingredient benefit they derive from a produce department refrigerated dressing through educating them on the ingredients as well as providing tastings when possible. The Marie's line of Refrigerated Salad Dressing is NATURAL, which means:

- No Artificial Preservatives
- No High Fructose Corn Syrup
- No Modified Food Starch
- No Artificial Flavors

Ensure your entire category is NATURAL and then take advantage in promoting this fact to your fresh-minded produce consumers.

POINT OF PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

POS materials and signage are an effective way to get consumers to link the use of dressings and fresh produce with serving suggestions and recipes. Marie's has a variety of point-of-sale items designed to complement our refrigerated dressing products.

CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Refrigerated dressings present a host of cross-merchandising opportunities. Their location right in the produce department gives produce personnel easy access to utilizing them in a variety of cross-promotions. From utilizing signage to actually incorporating the dressings as part of a temporary promotional display, the creative prospects are endless. Dressings can be successfully paired with fresh produce items to give them a kick in sales, for example Coleslaw Dressing with cabbage, Chunky Blue Cheese with celery or Potato Salad Dressing with potatoes.

USAGE SUGGESTIONS

Suggesting particular usage ideas to consumers will help increase sales:

- Marie's makes any ordinary produce item into an extraordinary meal.
- Chunky Blue Cheese works great as a dip.
- Marie's Creamy Yogurt Dressing can be substituted for regular dressing for a healthier dressing.
- Six of Marie's Vinaigrette Dressings are made with Extra Virgin Olive Oil, for lighter healthier taste.

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

Take advantage of Marie's Yogurt Dressing and present a healthy and unique alternative to your customers. Marie's Yogurt Dressing is naturally low in fat and calories, helping you reach health conscious consumers. They are premium-positioned items that trade consumers up, driving additional profits to your bottom line. And, they're based on award-winning formulations ensuring great homemade taste.



Marie's® delivers flavor, freshness and variety – Naturally!



Marie's is the #1 Brand of Refrigerated Salad Dressing.*

Our dressings are made using only the finest, real ingredients: real blue cheese chunks, buttermilk, sour cream, eggs, extra virgin olive oil, balsamic vinegar and spices like garlic, parsley and onion. All Natural Marie's has the great tasting, homemade flavor your customers love.

Marie's is the #1 line of Refrigerated Pourable Dressing.

Lower in calories and fat, Pourables are in line with consumer trends and have experienced unit sales growth +19.4% vs. YA.*

Marie's

Makes the ordinary... **EXTRAORDINARY!**[™]

For more information on Marie's products, contact your Marie's Representative or Matt Middleton at 972.569.6813 or mmiddleton@venturafoods.com.

www.maries.com

* Information Resources Inc. Infoscan® Reviews Data (52 weeks ending 1/9/11)
© 2011 Ventura Foods, LLC.



TRINITY FRUIT SALES



9479 N. Ft. Washington Road
Suite 103
Fresno, CA 93729
Phone: 559-433-3777
Fax: 559-433-3790
www.trinityfruit.com
sales@trinityfruit.com



RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

The combination of peaches, plums and nectarines displayed side by side with signage that depicts their special ripe characteristics would work very well.

POINT OF PURCHASE/SIGNAGE

Signage should let consumers know that this fruit has been pre-ripened naturally in order to give them an outstanding piece of fruit every time. Recipe tear-off cards are proven to drive sales.

PROMOTIONAL/ADVERTISING IDEAS

In-store tasting demonstrations are the ultimate promotional tool for these commodities. The taste will sell the product since all the ripening work has been done at shipping point. When done in tandem with conventional newspaper ads, look forward to an explosion in sales.

RIPENESS RECOMMENDATION

Peaches and nectarines should be displayed at eight to ten pounds, plums at four to six pounds.

RECEIVING, STORAGE AND HANDLING TIPS

1. Upon receiving, take firmness pressures on 10 pieces of fruit per lot. Pressures should be taken on the shoulder, tip and both cheeks, then averaged. Pressures should be

taken on fruit that has pulp temperatures in the 68 to 70 degree range.

2. Fruit with pressures at eight to ten pounds average should be stored at 34 to 36 degrees. Higher temperatures will increase rate of ripening.
3. Pressures should be monitored daily to guard against over-ripening.

VARIETY AND AVAILABILITY GUIDE

- Peaches, plums and nectarines are available from late May through September.
- We can provide a continuous supply of all three commodities throughout the season.

QUICK TIPS

- Preconditioned fruit will be protected against internal breakdown if the shipper has conditioned fruit for at least 24 to 48 hours with proper humidity (85-95% Relative Humidity)
- Monitor storage temperature and fruit pressures daily to maximize fruit quality and minimize loss. Pressures must be taken on fruit that is room temperature and representative of a given shipper's lot specifications
- The aroma of pre-conditioned fruit is great for advertising because the aromatic appeal catches customers' attention

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- Fabulous Tie-In whether it be a garnish, appetizer, salad, dessert or an extraordinary addition to your favorite dish. Think California Pre-Conditioned Fruit
- For conventional or organic, Trinity Fruit will assure that you and your customers are guaranteed a sweet and fresh taste





CALIFORNIA
grower packer shipper

Trinity Fruit Sales is a year round grower, packer & shipper of fresh fruits. Our focus has and continues to be growing the most flavorful fresh fruits available. It all starts with our exclusive relationships with world-renowned plant breeders. From the fields to the state of the art solar powered packing facilities - Trinity Fruit Sales is fully committed to bringing you and your customers a great eating experience.

Offering Full Lines Of:

WHITE & YELLOW PEACHES | WHITE AND YELLOW NECTARINES

FLAT WHITE & YELLOW PEACHES | APRICOTS | BLACK & RED PLUMS

PLUOTS | TABLE GRAPES | APPLES | KIWI | ASIAN PEARS | CITRUS | PEARS

CHERRIES | ASPARAGUS | PERSIMMONS | POMEGRANATES

Our Brands:



Fresno, CA | (559) 433-3777 | www.trinityfruit.com

David E. White | John Hein | Vance Uchiyama | Dennis Surabian Jr. | Oscar Ramirez



KEYSTONE FRUIT MARKETING

Keystone
Life should be this sweet.

11 N. Carlisle St., Suite 102
Greencastle, PA 17225
Phone: 717-597-2112
Fax: 717-597-4096
www.keystonefruit.com



Onions are the most consumed produce item in the world. Average annual onion per capita consumption in the United States is 21 pounds — a tremendous opportunity for consistent sales.

Being able to ensure a consistent sweet onion flavor profile is an important element for repeat and consistent sales. Retailers can now ensure their consumers an enjoyable eating experience every time! Sweet Onions also offer ample opportunity for promotion and cross-merchandising with a variety of products in and out of the department.

AVAILABILITY: YEAR ROUND OPPORTUNITY

Certified Sweet® onions are available 365 days a year. Consistently purchasing the highest quality sweet onion brands from only reputable industry leaders is the easiest way for retailers to provide consumers with confidence that they are buying the highest quality, safest, freshest and most flavorful sweet onions all year long. Forming a win-win relationship between vendors and retailers provides long-term, sustainable and uninterrupted supply. Use regional freshness as an educational vehicle to educate consumers on uniqueness of recognized sweet onion growing districts. As consumers increase interest in buying local and knowing the grower, stores can capitalize on the fantastic regional information available for the various sweet onion regions. Creating brand awareness translates to consumer loyalty and repeat sales.

Certified Sweet® onions include:

- Vidalia®: available spring and summer
- Walla Walla River®: available summer and fall
- Mayan Sweets®: available fall, winter and early spring



CROSS-MERCHANDISING OPPORTUNITIES

Sweet Onion usage is very diverse, and cross-merchandising opportunities are virtually limitless. Their sweet mild flavors make them fantastic on a hamburger or in a fresh salad — simply slice and enjoy. As an ingredient they are guaranteed to enhance your favorite recipes; sweet onions will take any menu offering to a whole new level! Sweet onions are an excellent ingredient in:

Guacamole • Fajitas • Salads • On hamburgers • In kabobs • Steaks





KEYSTONE FRUIT MARKETING

"The flavor I count on are the brands you can trust."
- Chef Dave Morrison

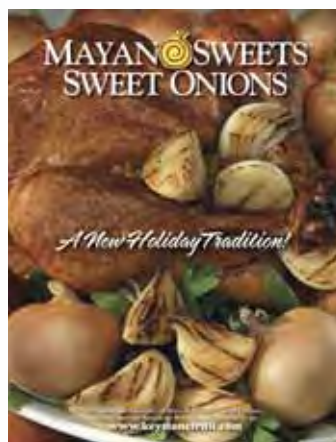


Certified Sweet®

Flavor you can trust – your sweet onion guarantee!

For more information on our Mayan Sweet Onions, recipes, Chef Dave and the Keystone Kitchens, please visit us at: www.KeystoneChefDave.com

"Certified Sweet" is a registered trademark of Keystone Sweet Onions, Inc., Lakeside, VA.



KEYSTONE VIDALIA® GROWER JIM COWART

QUICK TIPS

- **Ensure your sweet onions are SWEET!** Get them from a reliable, certified source
- **Educate Store Personnel:** Ensure store-level personnel are aware of how to store and handle the product, the difference in sweet onions versus other varieties, and usage ideas. They are the front line in helping to promote the product and provide information to customers
- **Help customers use sweet onions.** Tap into industry websites for information and promotion resources. Don't underestimate the power of Demo's to sell product

OUT-OF-THE-BOX PROMOTIONAL IDEAS

- Hold a customer contest for the best Sweet Onion recipe
- Schedule a celebrity chef demo at new store openings

RECOMMENDED DISPLAY IDEAS

GO BIG!!! Capitalize on one of today's hottest trends — fresh produce. It's healthful, colorful and bursting with freshness. Nothing says, "Buy Me" quite like big, prominent bulk and consumer bag displays. End caps, stand-alones, value-added product offerings, multi-size strategies and consumer bagged displays offer consumers multiple buying options and ensure incremental sales lift!

Establish secondary display areas, especially during promotional periods, to increase sales and consumer awareness. Effective point-of-purchase materials and signage also help to showcase the nutritional benefits and outstanding flavor of high-quality sweet onions to consumers.



IN-STORE DEMO WITH CHEF DAVE

FLAVOR AND NUTRITION DIFFERENTIATION

Product differentiation gives consumers reasons to buy with confidence. Emphasizing the quality, flavor, and nutrition differences of Certified Sweet® onions over regular cooking onions will promote higher rings at the cash register. The top two reasons people eat fruits and vegetables are taste and nutrition. Product education and tasting demos allow consumers to experience products and always generate sales lifts.

PROMOTION

Emphasize Certified Sweet® onion's nutritional benefits and variety of uses. Promote as ingredient for holiday or party entertaining, including Superbowl, Cinco de Mayo, and summer bar-b-que's. Include as part of a fruit basket.

With the growing consumer interest in where food comes from, using a "Back to our Roots campaign" will help customers connect with the product. This campaign allows the store to feature pictures, biographies, and a history of growers (real people) who produce sweet onions.

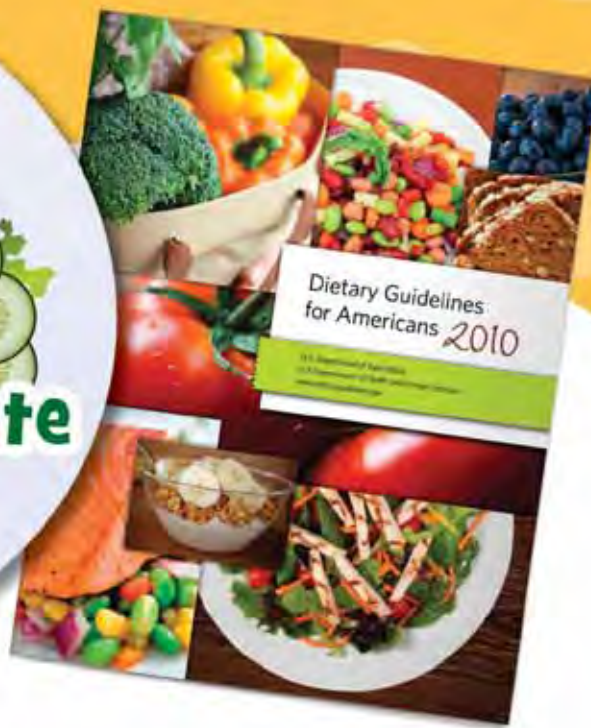
Thirty percent of consumers said they would buy and eat more fruits and vegetables if they knew how to use them – go ahead and help them... Stores can take advantage of various websites such as Keystone's Kitchen Website, the Vidalia Onion Association's site, and the Walla Walla Sweet Onion Committee site to provide additional information and resources for customers and to seek out new and creative promotional ideas.

Keystone
 Life should be this sweet.

11 N. Carlisle St., Suite 102
 Greencastle, PA 17225
 Phone: 717-597-2112
 Fax: 717-597-4096
www.keystonefruit.com



A Perfect Pair: Fruits & Veggies—More Matters & the 2010 Dietary Guidelines!



Filling half your plate with fruits and vegetables is one of the key recommendations in the newly released **2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans**. This half-the-plate concept is a simple way to explain the quantity of fruits and vegetables that are needed, making it easier for consumers to figure out if they are getting enough. It's also a core message of the **Fruits & Veggies—More Matters®** health initiative. It's used to help motivate moms and show them how to make fruits and veggies the focal point for each family meal or snack.

The Fruits & Veggies—More Matters national health initiative provides a wide variety of free, consumer-friendly tools and advice at **FruitsAndVeggiesMoreMatters.org**. Encourage your company to support the important work PBH is doing on this national call-to-action and take steps to **become a champion** for improved public health. Show your support for PBH as we continue our efforts to increase fruit and vegetable consumption for America's better health.

For more information on becoming a donor, contact Renee Bullion, Development Director,
at rbullion@pbhfoundation.org or 302.235.2329, Ext. 371.

©2011 Produce for Better Health Foundation
1283-3211 (Produce Business - March)

Produce for Better Health Foundation
7465 Lancaster Pike • Suite J, 2nd Floor • Hockessin, DE 19707
302.235.2329 • www.PBHFoundation.org



Eight Tips To Grow Your Avocado Sales

Smart promotions, stickered ripe fruit and varied displays keep avocados in consumers' baskets. BY CAROL M. BAREUTHER, RD



Cross-merchandising avocados with ingredients for popular dishes, such as guacamole, catches consumers' attention and increases basket ring.

Man kind has enjoyed avocados since 10,000 B.C. Over the millennia, this favorite tropical fruit has been popularized in folklore and fact. For example, according to the Produce for Better Health Foundation's Fruits & Veggies — More Matter's Fruit of the Month profile, it's believed that a Mayan princess ate the very first avocado and that it held mystical and magical powers. Today, avocados have miraculously gone from a specialty to a shopping cart staple that represents 2.48 percent of total produce and 4.76 percent of total fruit sales at retail for the 52-week period ending December 5, 2010, according to IRI/FreshLook data supplied by the Irvine, CA-based California Avocado Commission (CAC).

Jan DeLyser, the CAC's vice president of marketing, reports, "Avocado category performance continues to defy economic gravity with value remaining strong, even with continued unprecedented availability. Additionally, ripe programs providing ready-to-eat fruit, expanded usage concepts demonstrating the versatility of avocados as a key ingredient or featured dish, and strong communication of avocado nutrition attributes have been keys to

creating increased demand."

1. Supply The Demand

Eating avocados appears to be habit-forming. Per-capita consumption reached an all-time high of four pounds per person in the 2009/10 season, according to the USDA's Economic Research Service. In addition, according to research conducted by San Francisco, CA-based Cooper Roberts Research in the fall of 2010, avocado consumption is on the rise with one-third of all users eating more avocados. Over 50 percent of avocado users fall into the heavy and super-user categories with an intake of 37 to 120 and more than 120 avocados per year, respectively.

"These numbers will continue to grow," contends DeLyser, "as demand is still in a strong growth phase."

Dave Austin, director of marketing for Mission Produce Inc., in Oxnard, CA, agrees. "The potential is huge, especially if you consider that many households of shoppers in the Southeast, Northeast and Midwest don't buy avocados," he asserts.

The upsurge in consumer demand for avocados is, in no small part, due to greater availability.

Giovanni Cavaletto, vice president of oper-

ations for Index Fresh Inc., in Bloomington, CA, reports, "Ten to 15 years ago, California accounted for 90 percent of avocados sold in the United States. Then we saw increased plantings offshore. Today, there is year-round supply from California, Mexico and Chile."

Peru received a green light from the USDA to import its Hass avocados into the United States in 2010. This South American country's season is similar to California, and its fruit will provide a boost to supplies during the spring and summer when the domestic crop is light.

In spite of greater quantities, there is still an ebb and flow in avocado volume caused by natural factors such as weather and the fact avocados are an alternate-bearing crop.

Rob Wedin, vice president of fresh sales and marketing for Calavo Growers Inc., in Santa Paula, CA, predicts, "The first nine months of 2011 will see less product and higher prices, with a predicted return to more normal supplies in 2012."

2. Stock Hass & More

More than 96 percent of all avocados sold in the United States are of the Hass variety, reveals Maggie Bezar, the Aptos, CA-based marketing director for the Chilean Avocado

Importers Association (CAIA). “The Hass quality and versatility is what consumers look for and love.”

However, Cavaletto cautions, “There are certain risks in a mono-culture, but the Hass is hard to beat. It’s the choice variety in all three major growing regions; it’s a consistent producer; it ships well and it has a deep rich flavor.”

Approximately 500 varieties of avocados grow throughout the world, offering a potential to some markets for sales of niche varieties. At Northgate Gonzalez LLC, a 34-

store chain based in Anaheim, CA, assistant produce director, Alfonso Cano, notes, “When available, we also bring in Zutano, Cuban and Pinkerton varieties. Our customers are such sophisticated avocado buyers that they would try and buy all varieties.”

“Market areas such as the Northeast, where there is a large Caribbean population, will carry the smooth green-skinned variety in addition to Hass,” says Ed Figueroa, avocado category manager for L.G.S. Specialty Sales Ltd., in the Bronx, NY.

“Avocado category performance continues to defy economic gravity with value remaining strong, even with continued unprecedented availability.”

— Jan DeLyser, California Avocado Commission

Your One Stop Shopping for Premium Indoor Quality out of Mexico

Nearly 200 Qualified Growers

Tomatoes, Bell Peppers & English Cucumbers Available Year Round
More than 11,600 acres of Indoor Veggies

AMHPAC
 ASOCIACIÓN MEXICANA DE HORTICULTURA PROTEGIDA
www.amhpac.org

México **SAGARPA**
www.gobiernofederal.gob.mx
www.sagarpa.gob.mx

Photos of growers: Escobedo y Jose Maria Olivares, Celalga, Guadalupe; Javier Espinosa, Culiacan, Sinaloa; Carlos Cueto, Sahuila, Jalisco.

Brooks Tropicals LLC, in Homestead, FL, markets its green-skinned avocado by the name of SlimCado, as it has a higher water and lower fat and calorie content compared to the Hass variety. Mary Ostlund, director of marketing, contends, “Increased demand for avocados shouldn’t automatically equal a larger display of Hass. Rather, this is when smart retailers will provide depth in the avocado category. SlimCados are an excellent choice as they focus on a growing segment of consumers — the health-conscious.” SlimCados, which are grown in Florida, are available June through January.

3. Ripe Sells

Rankin McDaniel, president of the McDaniel Fruit Co., in Fallbrook, CA, believes “Ripe fruit is extremely important to the success of avocado sales at retail.”

Cano agrees, adding, “For Northgate, it is No. 1. The main thing for our customer is service, with service being a well-stocked and pre-conditioned display. Propaganda and pricing would be irrelevant if we displayed green and/or poor quality fruit.”

At Scolari’s Food & Drug Co., a 16-store chain based in Reno, NV, director of produce and floral merchandising, Paul Dzedzic, details, “We offer a mix of ripe and green fruit. It represents two different sales. Some customers buy for today, while others want to enjoy their avocados over a few days.”

Selling both ripe and unripe avocados can increase volume by up to 7.3 percent, sales by up to 10.2 percent and gross profits by nearly 12 percent, according to research shared by the CAC. Using Ripe stickers helps the shopper to identify ripe fruit and can increase sales up to 28 percent. In addition, retailers nationwide that have adopted a ripe program have seen a monthly lift with an average sales increase of 11 percent during the first year. This increase can vary by region; with retailers in the Northeast experiencing annual sales increases of 30 per-

Bringing You The World's Best

LGS
We Produce

DARLING CITRUS

DARLING CLEMENTINES
Nature's Sweet Temptations

SUAVO
AVOCADO

LGS Specialty Sales, Ltd.

718-542-2200 • 800-796-2349 • Fax: 718-542-2354

www.lgssales.com

cent, the West 23 percent and Mid-West 19 percent. CAC's DeLyster recommends, "Retailers who implement a dedicated ripe program need to announce this in ads and use POS materials to make sure customers know that they are assured of a consistent eating experience."

"Contrary to popular belief," says Calavo's Wedin, "ripe programs will decrease, not increase shrink. This is because ripe fruit sells faster. In addition, consumers aren't squeezing the fruit and potentially damaging it in an effort to see if it's ripe."

4. Offer Organic

Organic avocados represent approximately two percent of category sales, reveals Emiliano Escobedo, the Los Angeles, CA-based marketing director for the Avocado Producers and Exporting Packers Association of Michoacán (APEAM). "Sales continue to increase from there."

Sales of organic avocados grew by 22 percent in dollars and 37 percent in volume, according to IRI/FreshLook data supplied by the CAC.

"Organic avocados offer the retailer an

additional promotional opportunity at a different price point," says DeLyster.

5. One Size Doesn't Fit All

Selection is the name of the game when it comes to effectively merchandising avocados. For example, Bob Newton, produce division manager for Unified Grocers, a Portland, OR-based retailer-owned wholesaler that supplies over 3,000 stores, explains, "Some stores choose a particular size in order to offer a certain price point. Others want nothing but large fruit, up

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

Retailers Find Avocado Sales Success With Display Contests

One of the most successful tools to increase avocado sales is a retail display contests. Strong support in the form of POS materials and other incentives from the California Avocado Commission (CAC), Mexican Hass Avocado Importers Association (MHAIA) and Chilean Avocado Importers Association (CAIA) has created many opportunities for retailers to capitalize on and participate in this category growing practice.

Bob Newton, produce division manager for Unified Grocers, a Portland, OR-based retailer-owned wholesaler that supplies over 3,000 stores, says, "We started running display contests with avocados a few years ago because we felt the need to grow this category and it has definitely worked."

In-store excitement is why Paul Dziejcz, director of produce and floral merchandising at Scolari's Food & Drug Co., a 16-store chain based in Reno, NV, details, holds display contests. "Our produce guys get excited because they can tap into their creativity and customers get excited when they see three to four displays around the store. As a result, we sell a lot more avocados."

Contests are held throughout the year. Alfonso Cano, assistant produce director for Northgate Gonzalez LLC, a 34-store chain based in Anaheim, CA, says, "We like to run display contests when all resources align. Since we do not grow, transport, pack or condition avocados we cannot do this ourselves. Our suppliers know our volume, and in

to a 32-count, while still others go with a 4-count bag. The majority sells 60-count fruit in bulk. It all depends on what the store's customers want."

Customers will find three choices of Hass avocados at Northgate Markets, notes Cano. "We go with a medium, a large and a bagged."

Retailers who display two sizes of avocados with a distinct price point for each benefit in enhanced sales performance. For example, according to research provided by the CAC, a Midwest retailer in a new demand market that

added small Hass avocados saw an increase of 10.7 percent in volume and 12.2 percent in dollars. Likewise, a Western retailer in a developed market that offered both small and large fruit increased volume by 6.8 percent, dollars by 7.5 percent and gross profit by 10.2 percent.

"There should be at least three size differences between fruit in a two-size program," details Escobedo. "This is enough to make a visual difference with customers in order to justify a price difference and at the check-out to prevent checker-error."

Packaging can also help with this differentiation. L.G.S.' Figueroa says, "Many retailers offer a large avocado in bulk and smaller fruit in bags."

"Bagged avocados provide a chance for retailers to provide cost-conscious consumers with a value," says the CAC's DeLyser, "and to generate a higher ring. Research shows that stores with bags have experienced greater sales growth generating up to 24.3 percent more dollars than stores without bags."

"A four-pack of avocados in a plastic

the end, it is a give and take. Together, we forecast dates and/or events that we would consider valuable occasions to promote," he explains. "We can do it every week, yet would rather choose events like Super Bowl or Cinco de Mayo. Therefore, we need to coordinate mostly the quantities and conditioning of the fruit in order to optimize both sales and customer appreciation."

Criteria for display contests can help guarantee success. Newton details, "We specify several criteria for our stores. For example, a minimum amount of avocados must be on display. There can't just be two cases. Use of vendor support and support from the avocado organizations are also required. In addition, we specify that hothouse tomatoes should be integrated into the display. Some stores also add dry guacamole mixes, lemons and limes for color, chips and even beer for an entire store tie-in."

What are the results of these efforts? Richard Trickel, produce manager at a Bloomington, IL, Kroger Co., headquartered in Cincinnati, OH, won the grand prize in the MHAIA-sponsored *Big Hit* display contest held in October 2010. "We sold six to seven cases a week, which is double what we normally sell."

At Scolari's, which ran its display contest from December 24 to February 6 with support from CAIA, Dziedzic says, "We saw an average 25 percent increase in avocado sales."

Finally, Newton at Unified Grocers, who runs two two-week display contests a year during Super Bowl and Cinco de Mayo with help from the CAC, says, "Growth has been phenomenal. We've seen the avocado volume increase from pallets to truckloads." **pb**



**NEPC
Produce & Floral Expo
2011**

Register today to exhibit at the NEPC Produce & Floral Expo.

Showcase your product to retailers and foodservice personnel from New England and beyond.

Retailers and foodservice personnel, register today to attend this great show and get a chance to view new products and exciting lines.

Come to this baseball themed event and meet our special guest sport celebrity!

**Wednesday
April 27th
2011**

Boston Convention & Exhibition Center

For more information about exhibiting, attending or sponsoring, contact Laura Sullivan at 781-273-0444 or nepc2@rcn.com

“There should be at least three size differences between fruit in a two-size program. This is enough to make a visual difference with customers in order to justify a price difference and at the check-out to prevent checker-error.”

— *Emiliano Escobedo, APEAM*

clamshell with guacamole spice packet is something that Calavo has tried,” says Wedin. “It’s not been effective because it adds too much packaging with an unpalatable price point. Mesh bags are much cheaper.”

6. Display In 1-2-3 Locations

DeLyser advises building at least two displays of avocados: “One primary location that is prominent and permanent at or near the front of the department, and a secondary and even third location next to the packaged salad case, salty snacks or in the beverage aisle,” she details.

“Secondary displays are a staple at Northgate Markets,” acknowledges Cano. “The service meat area and in front of the cash registers are prime merchandising spots. When possible, produce staff go outside and go big with pallets drops.”

“Make sure to maximize sales with a minimum 4-ft. display,” says CAIA’s Bezart. “Bin displays are a great way to increase profits through secondary displays in smaller departments. Additionally, avocados stack exceptionally well depending on the ripeness of the fruit. Single layers are optimum, but harder fruit can be double-stacked in high traffic areas and during promotions.”

Utilize signage to highlight the nutritional benefits of avocados. Jackie Bohmer, marketing director for the Mexican Hass Avocado Importers Association (MHAIA) in Coral Gables, FL, reports, “Research reveals that lighter avocado users will purchase more avocados once exposed to key health messages, such as the fact that avocados offer nearly 20 vitamins and minerals, as well as new usage ideas. For example, suggest sliced avocados on sandwiches and salads.”

7. Go Beyond Guacamole

“Guacamole continues to be the No. 1 reason why consumers buy avocados,” reveals APEAM’s Escobedo. Many more ingredients than just avocados go into making guacamole, and cross-merchandising all these items together can increase basket ring. Tomatoes are a natural. In addition, research by the CAC shows that bagged avocado sales increase 15.6 percent and 6.18 percent, respectively, when displayed next to onions and lemons.

“Beyond guacamole,” Unified Grocer’s Newton says, “some of our stores will put avocados next to the bagged salad cooler along with croutons, while others cross-merchandise avocados next to the meat, chicken or fish.”

Omelets, sandwiches, tacos, sushi and soups are other usages that lend to cross-merchandising opportunities for avocados in the dairy, bakery and deli.

CAC’s DeLyser recommends displaying a recipe with the ingredients merchandised together for easy shopping or meal solutions.

Shoppers who buy Hass avocados are definitely customers to court. According to a Market Basket Data Analysis conducted by the Perishables Group for MHAIA released May 14, 2010, in the two retailers studied, baskets that contained Hass avocados were more than double the average basket size for any transaction, averaging \$103.

8. Promote Repeatedly And Resourcefully

“Pricing is everything when it comes to promotion,” says Scolari’s Dziedzic. “When we put organic avocados on sale for 99-cents they go like crazy.”

“Ten-for-\$10 ads are also popular,” says Newton.

“Advertise and promote avocados to build sales and volume,” recommends DeLyser. “Promoting avocados without a discount improves volume sales by as much as 52 percent. An advertised price promotion can lead to an increase of up to 146 percent in sales.”

APEAM’s Escobedo suggests promoting avocados often. “In developed markets west of the Mississippi, we recommend promoting 33 to 40 times per year with a discount of 11 to 30 percent. In underdeveloped markets, we recommend an ad frequency of eight to 15 times and a price discount over 20 percent to incentivize consumption.”

Holidays are huge for avocado promotions. In 2010, avocado sales topped 65.3 million pounds for Super Bowl and 74.7 million pounds for Cinco de Mayo. Surprisingly, Fourth of July moved 72 million pounds of this fruit, while St. Patrick’s Day sold 58.9 million pounds.

Sporting events, such as football and baseball, are also ideal hooks on which to base promotions. This theme has and continues to be capitalized upon by marketing organizations such as the CAC, MHAIA and CAIA. “Consumers think of avocados as a celebration food, so every growing region has the opportunity to take advantage of holidays and events that occur each year,” DeLyser explains.

“The real challenge going forward,” says MHAIA’s Bohmer, “is to create promotions that are meaningful to consumers, making them think about avocados when they normally would not.”

pb



Eight Ways To Make Berry Sales Blossom

Keep berries top of mind with careful and creative merchandising techniques. **BY CAROL M. BAREUTHER, RD**



PHOTO COURTESY OF ACME MARKETS INC.

To catch customers' attention, this past summer, Top Crop blueberries were sampled recently at an Acme store. Themed bags and other POS information were distributed by a "farmer" and her blueberry counterpart.

Berries are one sweet category. Near seamless supply, improved varieties, aggressive retail promotions and a super-fruit status are skyrocketing sales of this lush little fruit and blossoming the produce department's bottom line. According to Fresh Look Marketing data as analyzed by San Ramon, CA-based advisory firm Encore Associates, the berry category represented 8.27 percent of total produce sales for the 52-week period ending December 5, 2010.

Jay Schneider, produce business development manager for Acme Markets Inc., a Malvern, PA-based chain, says, "Berries are such a strong category today that you don't want to miss stocking them for even a week. If you do, it's tough to replace the dollar sales."

1. Showcase Strawberries

Schneider maintains, "Strawberries are the foothold of the berry category. Barring any major weather issues, gaps that happened in the past are gone, and instead, there is a nice transition between Florida and California, and especially late-season opportunities out of California in September and October. I think growers saw consumer demand and responded."

Strawberries represented 51 percent of

berry category dollar sales, up 4.6 percent from the year prior, and 67 percent of category pounds, up 0.8 percent, according to Fresh Look Marketing data.

Availability of strawberries looks strong for the year ahead. Florida's crop escaped major damage during a December freeze due to grower's use of protective irrigation. The state's 8,800 acres produced a winter crop valued at \$313 million in 2009, while California's 37,425 acres generated a fresh market strawberry crop totaling \$1.9 billion the same year, according to the *Commodity Strawberry Profile*, published in August, 2010, by the Ames, IA-based Agricultural Resource Marketing Center.

Chris Christian, vice president of trade and nutrition for the Watsonville, CA-based California Strawberry Commission (CSC), asserts, "Expect another record crop. In 2010, fresh shipments increased 3 percent to 180 million trays on 4 percent fewer acres than 2009."

"Breeding programs, both private and public, strive to produce varieties that meet the needs of growers, such as greater per acre production, and the needs of consumers with better size, shelf-life and flavor," notes Stephanie Hilton, director of marketing for Beach Street Farms LLC, in Watsonville, CA.

"Flavor, especially, will create repeat sales."

Jim Grabowski, merchandising manager for Well-Pict Berries Inc., in Watsonville, CA, says, "We've planted a new proprietary strawberry variety in a 20 to 25 acre test plot in Florida and plan to expand this next season. One attribute is its eye-popping size."

2. Bring On The Bushberries

"Bushberries — blueberries, raspberries and blackberries — are incremental and don't take sales away from strawberries," contends Douglas Ronan, vice president of marketing for Driscoll Strawberry Associates Inc., in Watsonville, CA. "Heavy to medium strawberry users not only buy more strawberries, but more of all types of berries as well. This leads to a total increase in fresh berry sales."

Keith Mixon, president and CEO of Sunnyside Farm Inc, headquartered in Winter Haven, FL, says, "All four berries are not promotable 52 weeks a year. However, there is always one or more varieties available at the same time and always something to promote."

Like strawberries, the value of the bushberry crop has created an incentive for varietal development. Ben Reilly, Midwest business development manager for Giumarra VBM

“Organic strawberries are still very popular in key markets and still the category leader, but we are seeing some increased demand for organics in other berry types.”

— Cindy Jewel, California Giant Berry Farms

International Berry LLC, based in Los Angeles, CA, details, “We have ongoing research in place with growers constantly replanting new varieties. This strengthens our ability to supply large, flavor-rich berries throughout the year.”

According to Acme’s Schneider, “Blueberries are the golden gem of the berry category. Demand is phenomenal and it is feeding category growth. It seems that consumers can’t get enough. For example, even in a month when there aren’t promotional volumes and blueberries sell for \$3.99 per pint, dollar sales remain strong.”

Blueberries represented 24 percent of berry category dollar sales, up 1 percent over the year prior, and 18 percent of category pounds, down 5 percent, according to Fresh Look Marketing data.

Increased availability from multiple growing regions including 18 U.S. states and

Canada, as well as Chile and Argentina, has really expanded blueberry production and the season, points out Mark Villata, executive director of the U.S. Highbush Blueberry Council (USHBC), in Folsom, CA. “Consumption is up and fresh is leading the way. For example, per-capita consumption five years ago was 20 ounces, with 8.7 of these ounces fresh. In 2009-2010, consumption rose to 31.4 ounces, with 20 ounces fresh.” This represents a 57 percent increase in total blueberry sales and 130 percent rise in fresh berry consumption.

Total production is expected to reach 800 million pounds in the next five years, Villata adds. “This means we must double consumption.”

“To achieve this, we must focus on sweet-eating varieties,” believes Don Goforth, director of marketing for Reedley, CA-based Family Tree Farms Marketing LLC. “We’ve obtained exclusive North American rights to grow and market

several varieties of blueberries from an Australian breeder. The first of these Australian varieties have been planted in Mexico and we anticipate our first crop in early 2012. The fruit is intensely sweet, just like candy.”

Raspberries represented 15 percent of berry category dollar sales, up 13 percent over the year prior, and 8 percent of category pounds, up 5 percent, according to Fresh Look Marketing data.

Cindy Jewel, director of marketing for California Giant Berry Farms, in Watsonville, CA, reports, “We are participating in a raspberry breeding program that we hope will generate some new varieties for us and other industry members. At this time, we see this as a weakness in the marketplace limiting growth and it shows in the annual category reports with less growth in raspberries than the other berry types.”

The big growth item has been blackberries. While blackberries represented only 6 percent of berry category dollar sales and 3 percent of pounds, according to Fresh Look Marketing data, dollar sales and pounds were up 15 percent and 23 percent, respectively.

Jim Roberts, vice president of sales for Naturipe Farms LLC, in Estero, FL, says, “The Tupi variety blackberry out of Mexico is a real

VBM VITAL BERRY MARKETING S.A.

Giumarra
Feeding the world in a healthy way.

Our NATURE'S PARTNER family

Our blueberries are grown by an amazing network of family farmers. Many are second and third generation growers, caring for the same land their mothers and fathers nurtured. You can taste this experience and attention to quality in every delicious berry.

Right now, fresh blueberries from the southeastern United States are approaching their flavorful peak.

For the West Coast contact Gregory Atkinson at 323.415.8330 or gatkinson@giumarra.com and for the East Coast contact Alan Abe at 610.268.0286 or aabe@giumarra.com

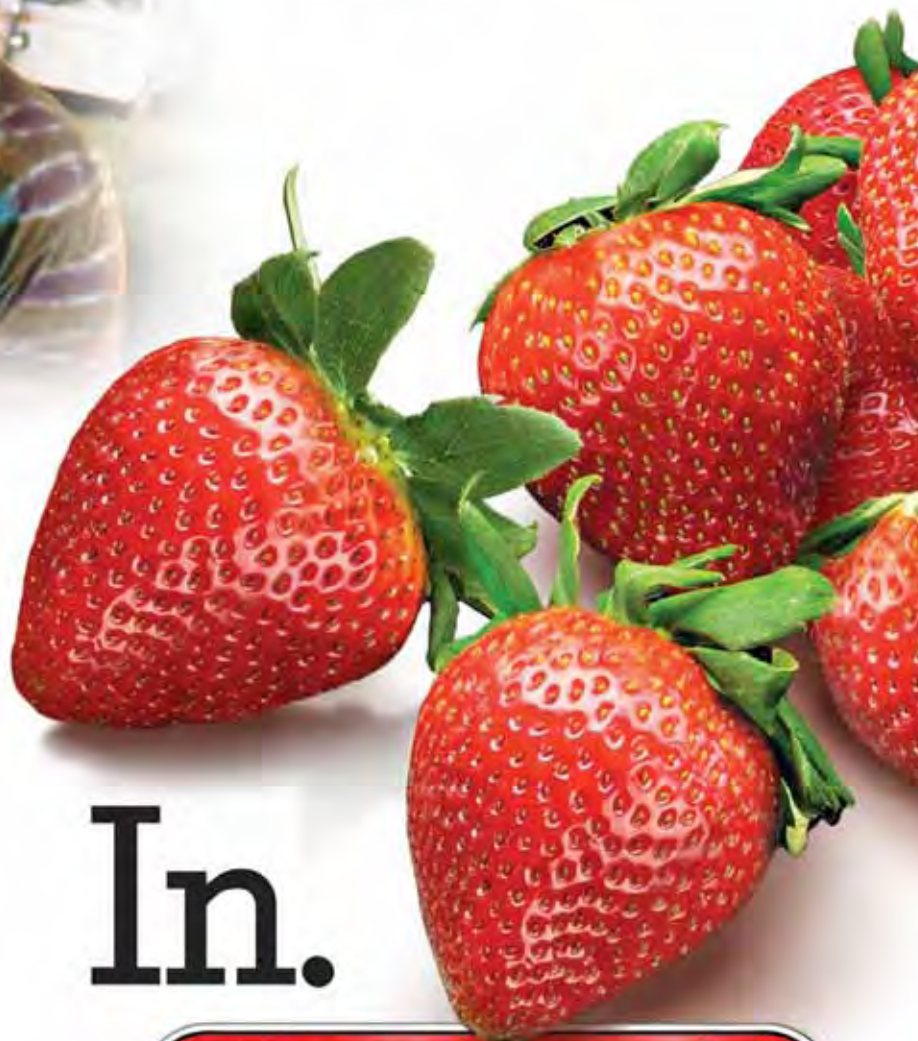
Premium produce from around the globe for more than 70 years.

giumarra.com - naturespartner.com



Out.

In the 1960's, while everyone else was getting groovy at Woodstock, Well•Pict was hip to creating their very own brand of berries along California's coast. Some 50 years later, that's exactly what they're still doing, shipping premium berries year round that are superior in size, flavor, shine and aroma all across the globe. Over the decades their undistracted focus on being an industry leader led them to such forward-thinking innovations as introducing recyclable clamshells and perfecting shipping techniques to save both fuel and the environment – all things that today others have adopted as standard operating practices of their own. In the end it's clear that while everyone else was seeing psychedelic, there was only one color lighting up Well•Pict's eyes – bright, beautiful, berry red.



In.



Great Berries Never Go Out Of Style.



www.wellpict.com USA 831-722-3871

Our family of berries are
FLAVOR-FUL!
Fresh from SunnyRidge Farm

It's time you got to know the entire
**FAMILY OF SUNNYRIDGE
BERRIES**

SunnyRidge's innovation has made us a leader in fresh, year round Blueberries and Blackberries for over a decade. Now, that innovation has yielded all new Raspberry and Strawberry program opportunities.

New Varieties. New Growing Regions. New Volumes.
SunnyRidge Farm... Delivering the Future of Berries!

Meet the entire SunnyRidge family of berries at Southern Exposure, Booth #818.

SUNNYRIDGE
QUALITY BERRIES. EQUALITY PEOPLE.

www.sunnyridge.com • 863.299.1894

“A well planned strawberry ad will bring customers into your stores and increase overall dollar volume. Fifty-two percent of heavy strawberry consumers will switch stores just to shop a strawberry ad. Forty-nine percent of heavy users put strawberries on their shopping lists in advance. Sixty percent of all strawberry purchases are on an impulse.”

— Stephanie Hilton, Beach Street Farms LLC

game-changer. It's a sweet, low-acid berry that grows well and ships well. In addition, the breeding program at the University of Arkansas has introduced excellent-eating blackberry varieties that grow well in the Southeast.”

3. Don't Overlook Organic

Organic berries represent 6.8 percent of category dollars and 4.8 percent of pounds.

However, Tom DeMott, executive vice president and chief operating officer for Encore Associates, reports, “Organic berry sales grew over 25 percent in both dollars and pounds in 2010, so in spite of economic issues, more consumers are buying organic.”

Gary Wishnatzki, president and CEO of Wishnatzki Farms, in Plant City, FL, adds, “We're expanding our organic strawberry production up to 100 acres this year, significantly up from 40 acres last year.”

Jewell adds, “Organic strawberries are still very popular in key markets and still the category leader, but we are seeing some increased demand for organics in other berry types. However, consumers are still price-conscious, especially when pricing is significantly higher than the conventional fruit.”

Take advantage of the sales opportunity organic berries present, advises Driscoll's Ronan. “They should be a part of a berry patch display.”

4. Packaging — Bigger Is Better

Some consumers like to super-size their berry purchases. Randy Bohaty, produce director for B&R Stores, a 15-unit chain headquartered in Lincoln, NE, details, “Once a year, we do a full-flat sale on 11 pounds of fresh strawberries. It's at the peak of the season, typically in March or April. Customers watch for this sale and buy them to share with friends or freeze them. Beyond this, we do push larger pack sizes on berries, for example, 18-oz. blueberries when the volume is there.”

Berry pack sizes have definitely become larger. For example, 1-lb. clamshells represent

81 percent of strawberry sales, 12-oz. containers are 35 percent of all blueberries sold, and 6-oz. containers represent 81 percent and 78 percent of raspberries and blackberries, respectively, according to Fresh Look Marketing data.

For strawberries, Beach Street's Hilton says, “One-pound clamshells are the best-seller, but we're seeing more two- and four-pounders. Larger pack sizes are a great way to maximize labor at store level, especially in high demand times, and sell more volume at an overall higher ring.”

The USHBC's Villata says, “For blueberries, the 4.4-oz. pack is a dinosaur. Pints have become much more attractive and some of the club stores carry 18-oz., 2-lb. and even 2¼-lb. packs in peak season.”

One size doesn't fit all, reminds Family Tree Farm's Goforth. “Price-per-unit is a deciding factor for many retailers as to what size berry packs they offer at different times of the year.”

Convenience is driving future packaging developments in the berry category. In February, Naturipe Farms introduced its Berry Quicks, a 3-count pack of 1.5-oz. ready-to-eat blueberries in rigid, heat-sealed film packaging with a shelf-life of 28 days. Naturipe's Roberts asserts, “It's an ideal product to merchandise as a lunch box snack.”

5. Cold Chain Rules

The mantra for merchandising berries is, “cold chain rules.” Small or temporary rises in temperature contribute to condensation on the berries,” explains Giumarra's Reilly. “Fruit should be displayed in a chilled environment to ensure shelf-life is not shortened.”

Vince Lopes, vice president of sales for the Dole Berry Co. LLC, in Monterey, CA, adds, “When berries are priced and merchandised for velocity, it is not always necessary to keep them under refrigeration in the store, providing that product turns are sufficient. Location and time of year also play a role, though, if transit temperatures are inappropriate, then

refrigerated displays are just an unnecessary afterthought and really won't matter much."

"Properly handled high quality berries are a point of differentiation for a produce department," says Sunnyridge's Mixon.

6. Build Great Berry Displays

All berries are grouped together in a destination 'berry patch' display at B&R Stores. "Customers looking for one variety will find all the berries, and hopefully, they will trade up and also buy more," says Bohaty. "This display will migrate between the front and middle of the department depending on season, availability and whether or not berries are on promotion."

Similarly, at Acme Markets, "When berries are on promotion, we'll feature them on a refrigerated front table or end-cap," details Schneider. "Off-season, they're all displayed together in an 8-ft. refrigerated case."

"The importance of the 'patch' can't be overstated," says Driscoll's Ronan. "Having all four berries in one display will maximize consumer engagement. In terms of product mix, there's no set rule. It's a dynamic element that is dependent on the individual store, shopper demographics and berry availability through the season."

Make sure to give berries enough space. Strawberry average weekly dollar sales increase in proportion to expanded display space, while other commodities may experience declining sales, says CSC's Christian. "Therefore, display all package sizes, segments and specialty items together to increase sales on all berry segments."

"Some retailers have built very eye-catching displays," says Sunnyridge's Mixon. "For example, I've seen creative signage and ceiling danglers calling out 'fresh' and 'peak of the season' that really draws customers in."

Family Tree Farm's Goforth suggests building secondary displays of berries in high traffic areas. "Berries are an impulse buy," he says. "Remind customers with 30 to 40 clamshells of blueberries in front of the cornflakes or up by the cash register."

7. Offer Creative Usage Suggestions

"Berries are cross-merchandised in the produce department with chocolate dips and crepes," says B&R Store's Bohaty, "as well as cakes from the bakery."

According to Acme's Schneider, "The key to effectively cross-merchandising berries is to be sure the tie-in items are subtle enough to spur impulse purchases, but not so much that they overpower and compete with the berries themselves."

"Berries are also sold outside the depart-

ment," adds Bohaty. "We'll put them in the bakery or in the dairy aisle next to the yogurt."

California Giant's Jewell reveals, "We encourage our retail partners to create berry promotions throughout the store so consumers see fresh berries on the salad bar, on the fresh-cut display, in the bakery and in the deli."

"Merchandise fresh strawberries next to granola and nuts for a healthful theme," suggests Christian.

The Plant City-based Florida Strawberry Growers Association (FSGA) offers recipe tear-

off pads featuring a photo of a strawberry spinach salad on the front and the recipe on the back. Sue Harrell, director of marketing, says, "This recipe can be used to cross-merchandise strawberries and salad greens in the produce department."

"Most meals can be transformed from ordinary to something special by resourcefully incorporating berries," says Giumarra's Reilly. "Don't forget drink recipes, too. Consumers can add berries to smoothies, juices, milkshakes and cocktails."

Choose Your Blues

If you're as picky about your blueberries as we are, the choice is simple!

Blueberry Availability			
March	April	May	June

See us at
New England
Produce Council
Show

Family Tree Farms
GROWER • PACKER • SHIPPER

Bringing You the Most Flavorful Fruit in the World

www.familytreefarms.com TOLL FREE 1-866-FLAVOR 1

White Peaches and Nectarines; Plumcots, Apriums, Apricots, Conditioned Yellow Peaches and Nectarines; Plums, Cherries and Blueberries

8. Promote Year-Round

Berries are featured in a variety of price promotions at Acme Supermarkets. “For example,” says Schneider, “We’ll bundle 6-oz. blackberries and blueberries in a mix-and-match ad. We like to throw raspberries in there too, if there’s a favorable market. During peak availability in the winter we’ll run pints of blueberries on the front cover at 2-for-\$5. In the summer, we’ll promote the local New Jersey blueberries at 2-for-\$5 or even at \$1.99 on a BOGO ad. There are a lot of variations.

You can’t force an ad if something just isn’t available, but barring weather problems we do try to have some kind of berry in the ad every week.”

Beach Street’s Hilton contends, “A well planned strawberry ad will bring customers into your stores and increase overall dollar volume. Fifty-two percent of heavy strawberry consumers will switch stores just to shop a strawberry ad. Forty-nine percent of heavy users put strawberries on their shopping lists in advance. Sixty percent of all strawberry pur-

chases are on an impulse.”

Jewell adds, “Berry patch ads, or ads that feature more than one berry type, show greater returns over featuring just one variety of berry in the ad.”

Acme’s Schneider also runs theme promotions. “I call it theatrical selling,” he says. “Last summer we had Donio (Frank Donio Inc., in Hammonton, NJ) in store with their Top Crop label blueberries. One of their folks dressed up like a blueberry and another in bib-overalls. They handed out berries for sampling, theme bags and other POS information. The customers loved it.”

There are many great times to promote berries throughout the year in varied volumes, says Giumarra VBM’s Reilly. “Generally, promotions focus on three areas: the peak production period, the locally grown (domestic) season and the start of the Northern/Southern Hemisphere season.”

“With strawberries, there are times throughout the year that are ‘automatic’ promotion times based on consumer demand like Easter, Mother’s Day and Memorial Day,” explains California Giant’s Jewell. “In recent years, due to increased availability on a year-round basis, Valentine’s Day has been added to that list as well.”

Locally grown is a theme marketers and retailers alike are tapping into for berry promotions. Tim Wetherbee, sales manager for Diamond Blueberry Inc., in Hammonton, NJ, acknowledges, “The locally grown hook is huge for us. Retailers in our area love to have the local berries, especially for the Fourth of July.”

“Likewise,” says Driscoll’s Ronan, “we continue to work on regional and local programs.”

The 2010-2011 season is the fourth that the Santiago-based Chilean Blueberry Committee has voluntarily committed \$250,000 for promotional efforts to increase sales of blueberries in North America. Tom Tjerandsen, Sonoma, CA-based spokesperson for the Chilean Fresh Fruit Association, says, “The effort has paid off with a 20 to 30 percent increase of blueberry sales in the winter.”

This spring, the USHBC will launch its North American branding program based on a ‘Little Blue Dynamo’ theme. Villata details, “The campaign is aimed at women ages 25 to 40, which is a younger demographic than our core consumer, women age 45 and older. This service mark will appear on packs of both fresh and frozen blueberries in April and it will be backed by publicity and promotional activity, a web-based recipe contest and a social media campaign.”

pb

When it comes to **developing** our **packaging systems**, we think inside, above, below, around, through, between and **outside the box.**



SAMBRAILO®
PACKAGING

Watsonville, CA | 800-563-4467 | www.Sambrailo.com

Total packaging systems that make \$ense!



PHOTO ABOVE COURTESY OF CIRULI BROS. LLC.



Greenhouse vegetables, such as tomatoes, peppers and eggplants are popular items in Mexico.

Looking Down The Road At Mexican Import Routes

While Nogales is still the largest port of entry, rapid growth of Mexican greenhouses south of the Texas border and improved highways have opened the door for more produce reaching East Coast buyers via Texas. **BY K.O. MORGAN**

Increased produce trade between the United States and Mexico has many growers, importers and distributors on both sides of the border looking at the challenges facing their industry and how new routes could be a cost-effective solution to getting fruits and vegetables from Mexico into U.S. retail stores and on to American tables.

“Both Nogales and South Texas play key roles in the future of Mexican produce imports,” explains Lance Jungmeyer, president of Fresh Produce Association of the Americas (FPAA), located in Nogales, AZ. “Nogales has the longer history and more established distributors. But South Texas has become a more viable route in recent years, especially as Florida has struggled to supply the East Coast after weather-related crop failures. Because of this, some Nogales companies are crossing loads through Texas, as well.”

“Probably 90 percent of Mexican fruits and vegetables come through Nogales and Texas,” reports John McClung, president of the Mission-based Texas Produce Association (TPA).

“And by that, I mean fresh produce, not processed. However, there is a shift that has been accelerating for the past two years, of produce moving away from importing through Arizona and coming through Texas instead.”

“Historically, Nogales has been the busiest port of entry for Mexican fresh produce crossings into the United States,” notes Chris Ciruli, chief operations officer at Ciruli Bros. LLC, located in Tubac, AZ. “During the winter months, Mexico supplies the United States with more than 7 billion pounds of fresh produce, and roughly 4 billion pounds of that crosses through Nogales every year.”

Shining A Light On Texas

While Nogales has been the dominate entry point in the past, many see Texas, in particular McAllen, Texas, as an emerging entry point of choice for Mexican exporters and U.S. importers alike. “Mexico is now the fastest growing producer of greenhouse product,” reveals Ciruli, “so we expect to see increased crossings through both the Nogales and Texas

borders over the next several years.”

“This is the first year that we’ve decided to go through Texas for our imports heading to the Eastern United States,” says Alberto Maldonado, general manager at Melones Internacional/Plain Jane, located in Nogales, AZ. “This increase is probably due to the growth of greenhouses that are increasing just over the border from McAllen. This is especially true of tomatoes being grown in greenhouses just around the corner from McAllen in Mexico.”

“We have known for years that Texas would continue to emerge as a shipping point for West Mexican produce,” adds Ciruli. “Aside from our two facilities in Nogales, Ciruli Brothers also owns and operates a facility in Donna, Texas, which has been running for about ten years. Every year, we ship more produce from there. You definitely see savings in freight, especially when shipping from Mexico’s southernmost states, like Chiapas and Oaxaca.”

In fact, improved highways have made Texas a more attractive alternative for many Mexican produce exporters located in Mexico’s

WANT TO GO?

The America Trades Produce Conference will be co-hosted by the Fresh Produce Association of the Americas and the Texas Produce Association, and will address the growing produce trade between the United States and Mexico and how that will affect the future of import routes into the United States.

The conference promises a long list of featured speakers from Mexican and U.S. groups who will discuss the challenges of keeping pace with the expanding produce trade between the two countries, the benefits of accessible trade entry points and routes in Nogales, AZ, and McAllen, TX, and their visions for increased cooperation between these two giants in the international produce trade community.

The conference is scheduled for March 30 - April 1, 2011 in McAllen, Texas. For more information, see www.americatradesproduce.com. **pb**

southern states. "If you're a Mexican exporter and you're moving produce east of Chicago, it costs about \$1,000-1,500 per truck to do it," details TPA's McClung. "So it hasn't been worth it for Mexican exporters in the past to import through Texas because the infrastructure in Mexico is such that they have two extensive mountain ranges that have made travel time longer and thus costlier," he explains. "But now they've opened up or will open up new routes that, coupled with improved highways in Mexico, are shifting some import routes through Texas instead, cutting out many hours of travel time from what was previously the norm."

Jerry Wagner, director of sales and marketing at Farmer's Best International LLC, located in Rio Rico, AZ, says that his company has shipped through McAllen for over 23 years. "But recently, we have been utilizing that option for a larger percentage of our volume and we anticipate that this trend will continue," he says.

Different Cities, Different Advantages

FPAA's Jungmeyer sees Texas and Arizona as equal entry point partners and believes that trend will continue. "We see about 45 percent of Mexican produce imports coming through Nogales, 45 percent coming through Texas, and the rest coming through New Mexico and California. We don't expect these percentages to change in the near future."

However, Jungmeyer does see points of entry divided up depending on the contents of the freight. "Nogales has a strong role to play as a consolidation point, as a place where mixed loads can be assembled to include items as varied as tomatoes, bell peppers, squash, mangos, watermelons, cucumbers and more," he explains. "South Texas, on the other hand, has been more associated with shipping straight loads, instead of mixed loads. You can think of Nogales as a terminal market of sorts, except it's in the middle of the supply chain. For buyers who don't want a full load of any item, Nogales is optimal because of the freight savings and versatility created by putting together mixed loads," he adds.

"Nogales and McAllen will continue to be the primary entry points because of location and ease of access to both East and West coasts," states Ciruli of Ciruli Bros. "But as shippers look for freight savings, we expect more crossings to go through Texas; however, the expansion and modernization of the Nogales port should also help expedite crossings through the Nogales port of entry going forward."

The increase of imports of Mexican produce is also married to its year-round availability. When U.S. crops are damaged due to weather, or are unavailable because of varying growing seasons, Mexico's temperate climate has helped fill the void in U.S. produce departments. "Ideally, Market Basket's philosophy is to buy entirely from the United States," says Mike Maguire, director of produce at Market

Basket Produce, located in Tewksbury, MA. "However, that is not always possible because obviously there are certain times when produce is not available or the weather is uncooperative, such as Florida's major freeze this year, and then we have to step out of the country and buy from Mexico."

"Twenty-five years ago, domestic produce dominated the U.S. produce market," reports TPA's McClung. "But today, 60 percent of produce is from Mexico."

Dividing The Routes

The increase in Mexican produce imports has driven the demand for improved import routes, with Texas serving retailers on the Eastern side of the United States and Arizona delivering to stores on the western side of the country. "Logistically, there are Mexican growers closer to McAllen than the traditional import route of Nogales," states Maguire. "So it makes sense that if you're on the east side of the country, you would get your produce through McAllen."

"For obvious logistical reasons, Western Mexico produce will most naturally go through Nogales and Eastern Mexican produce through Texas," says Jungmeyer.

"We see that more and more with the stores that we supply," agrees Trish Johnson, produce buyer and inspector for Supervalu Inc., headquartered in Eden Prairie, MN. "Here in the west, we get our produce through Nogales. But Texas import routes are beneficial for our stores in the east because shipping through



Produce grown south of the border is meticulously checked before entering the United States.

“The further south a shipment originates in Mexico, the more accessible both the Nogales and Texas ports of entry become. In other words, once you go below the mountain range that separates Mexico’s Northwest region from the south, the easier it becomes to ship through either the Nogales or the Texas ports. But, all things considered, shipping routes into the United States will be dictated by customer demand for product, whether it is in the East or West coasts.”

— Chris Ciruli, Ciruli Bros. LLC

Texas is more affordable, more cost-effective and the produce arrives fresher.”

“The further south a shipment originates in Mexico, the more accessible both the Nogales and Texas ports of entry become,” says Ciruli of Ciruli Brothers. “In other words, once you go below the mountain range that separates Mexico’s Northwest region from the south, the easier it becomes to ship through either the Nogales or the Texas ports. But, all things considered, shipping routes into the United States will be dictated by customer demand for product, whether it is in the East or West coasts,” he adds.

For some Mexican exporters and Western U.S. importers, location does not necessarily dictate shipping routes used. “Distributors who want to service the West Coast are more likely to import through Nogales, but we see that many Nogales shippers have expanded their spheres of influence to the East Coast. Some Nogales distributors have developed quite the following in East Coast markets such as Boston and New York City,” states Jungmeyer of the FPAA.

“Many retailers on the East Coast of the

United States have trucks coming from California carrying Mexican produce coming in through Nogales, and that will continue because you’ve got to get equipment to haul this produce from Texas to the Eastern U.S. and Canada,” explains Maldonado of Melones Internacional/Plain Jane. “Nogales has been in the produce business for a long time and is established to handle this, whereas Texas is not — at least not yet. For our company, we’re going through both entry points, but McAllen is a small deal for us, whereas we’ll continue importing a large volume of our produce through Nogales,” he adds.

Improving Trade Relations

While there is no doubt that trade relations with Mexican growers and exporters are good, some see areas that can be improved that will be beneficial for all concerned. “Distributors will look for trusted shipper programs, such as those with C-TPAT certification from U.S. Customs, which allows for expedited crossings,” states Jungmeyer. “Companies that have proven to have a secure supply chain will benefit greatly from the reduction in red tape.”

C-TPAT, or Custom Trade Partnership Against Terrorism, is a joint effort between the U.S. government and businesses that import goods into the United States. “Similarly, from the food safety angle, we expect that the Food Safety Modernization Act will result in a trusted shipper program, which allows companies that demonstrate a certain level of food safety standardization to be able to import their produce with fewer microbial and pesticide-residue inspections at the border. The new food safety law also may allow the FDA to harmonize food safety standards with Mexico, which would mean a greater reliance by FDA on SENASICA (the FDA counterpart in Mexico) to perform routine audits and testing. This frees up FDA resources for other tasks that are essential to food safety reform,” he adds.

Personal safety is also an issue as Mexico grapples with its high crime rate and drug cartels. However, McClung of the TPA does not see crime as an issue that affects the volume of produce imports coming into the United States from Mexico. “Both Mexican and U.S. growers and importers are cautious, but have also learned to minimize risk,” he says. “It will take years for Mexico to control its crime, but hopefully it will one day be under control.”

The future of Mexican produce imports and the expansion of import routes will be discussed at the America Trades Produce Conference in McAllen in March (see Side Note on page 132). “The America Trades Produce Conference will highlight both South Texas and Nogales as key ports of entry,” explains Jungmeyer, who, along with McClung, is hosting the event. “There will be a port tour in McAllen, which will give attendees a behind-the-scenes look at how produce actually makes it across the border. We also are offering tours of shipper warehouses and cold storage logistics facilities. In addition, the conference will have representatives of U.S. Customs and Border Protection from both Texas and Arizona, so attendees will get a glimpse of how commerce is conducted at both ports.”

“The conference has an excellent agenda of new speakers and we will be tightly focused on trade between the two countries and the future of export/import routes,” adds McClung. “We’ve never done it before, but it is a cooperative venture between Mexico and the United States. If you’re involved in the Mexican produce trade in any capacity, you need to be at this conference. The line up of speakers and topics that we have arranged is just too good to miss!”

pb



Questions For Pallet Providers

COMPILED BY JENNIFER KRAMER



Derek Hannum
Director of Marketing
Chep USA
Orlando, FL



Hillary Femal
Director of Marketing
IFCO Systems
Houston, TX



Vance Seagle
President and CEO
Airdex International Inc.
Henderson, NV



Gary Sharon, Vice President
Molded Products Group
Litco International Inc.
Vienna, OH



Bob Moore
CEO
iGPS Co. LLC
Orlando, FL

What's new when it comes to pallets and the produce industry overall?

AIRDEX: Outside of new materials and RFID, there's hardly been anything really new in pallets for produce in several decades until the Airdex Pallet. Everything about our pallets has been specifically designed to maximize safety and efficiency (ultra lightweight and safe, clean construction) and minimize wear-and-tear on cargo (shock-absorbent, thermal-insulating, no fumigation), especially sensitive products like produce.

Airdex pallets' special features preserve produce quality and extend shelf-life, which is crucial in delivering more attractive produce with greater consumer appeal that brings a better price. In short, if it looks and tastes

better longer, it retains its value. Communicating the value of technologically improved pallet products in a commodity-driven market, where "price" and not "bottom-line outcome/cost" has become the main focus of the customer, continues to present a major challenge for all creative, forward-thinking solutions suppliers in the pallet business, just as it does with superior product in the produce industry. There continues to be that ever-present resistance to change, even when change is clearly for the better. What also needs to change is the way we look at "price" vs. "profit."

CHEP: There have been several recent innovations in pallet design and construction all intended to create a more durable platform that protects the unit load while traveling through the produce and other supply chains. The latest pallets are also developed to accommodate the sophisticated product handling systems many suppliers and buyers in the food distribution business are installing to increase productivity, and to be as environmentally friendly as possible.

A recent announcement by a major wholesale club requires inbound shipments from all suppliers be on four-way entry block-style pallets. This elimination of stringer pallets should have the effect of raising the quality level of all pallets in circulation, particularly if other retailers and distributors follow suit. It should also result in reduced product damage and increased warehouse productivity.

IFCO: The pallet itself is largely unchanged, but the processes and systems required to successfully deliver the platform are continuously changing. As our produce customers face increasing scrutiny and potential regulation, we must be able to ensure their pallet supply remains stable, allowing them to run their business. Specific issues include potential (and probable) termination of the existing bilateral ISPM-15 exemption for wood packaging shipments between the United States and Canada. The official comment period surrounding the USDA rule-making ended January 31st, but every

indication is that the termination of the exemption will take place, independent of concerns and feedback from industry.

In addition, as everyone in the industry is aware, food safety continues to be a critical issue. As far as pallets (and other packaging) are concerned, as the potential increases for additional regulation, by way of the Food Modernization Act or implementation of the Sanitary Food Transportation Act, it will be important that our industry retains its impeccable track record and formalize its procedures to help our customers stay compliant.

IGPS: Companies in the produce industry always have been conscious of providing quality product to retailers and consumers. However, the concerns about produce safety have been heightened in recent years by public concerns of pathogens in the food supply and increasing legislative and reg-

ulatory action. That has moved the industry toward ensuring product quality and safety at all levels — particularly in regard to selecting shipping platforms that reduce and eliminate any potential risks to their products.

LITCO: The new restrictions on wood packaging material shipping between Canada and the United States, proposed by APHIS, will phase in beginning in 2011 with full implementation in place by summer of 2012.

ISPM 15 regulations require that wood packaging material be heat-

treated to kill insects or larvae that could infest native woodlands. If adopted, the proposal will have a significant impact on produce shipments on pallets. Wood packaging materials will have to meet ISPM-15 regulations for heat treatment before crossing borders.



BLUE HAS NEVER BEEN SO SOLID.

A trusted business partner means confidence in your decision making. With decades of supply chain experience and an unmatched dedication to innovation and continuous improvement, CHEP is your problem-solving partner. Learn how we can help. Every day.

chep.com/trustedchoice



THE TRUSTED CHOICE.



AIRDEX



CHEP

What should produce suppliers and buyers expect from these changes?

AIRDEX: At Airdex, our mission is to transmute our product's added value into a new level of value creation (profit) for our pallet customers in the produce industry, thereby modifying thinking from "price" to bottom-line "profit" for produce growers/buyers/shippers.

Let's face it, keeping more in your bottom line is what matters if you want to grow and prosper your business. Illustrating and quantifying these value creations and making them visible so improvements and outcomes can be measured and evaluated by pallet users has been lacking. Toward this

end, Airdex is introducing monthly Value Performance Reports, a new concept in providing actual operational data on financial savings, CO2 emission reductions, product and human safety, etc., for our customers. Now, everyone in a business operation can share the visible and quantifiable outcomes month-by-month of their smart decision to use Airdex pallets within their supply chain and weigh for themselves the benefits of changing "from price to profit."

CHEP: As a start, if they currently aren't using true four-way entry block-style pallets, produce suppliers should consider replacing their shipping platforms to take advantage of the many benefits of these pallets. These include improved dock and warehouse efficiency, reduced product damage

and even increased worker safety. For buyers, this is a great time to collaborate with your trading partners to improve the supply chain by encouraging the use of pallets that enhance productivity and keep products, shoppers and workers safe.

IFCO: The impact of the ISPM-15 regulatory change will be that wood packaging material (pallets, crates, dunnage, etc.) transported between the United States and Canada will need to be treated and stamped, consistent

with ISPM-15 requirements. The timeline for the change has not been formalized, but we anticipate a phased-in notification and enforcement schedule, similar to the international rollout of years past.

IGPS: An increased use of pallets and shipping platforms that eliminate the risk inherent with older forms of shipping — moving more toward plastic pallets. Additionally, many will move toward platforms where they can

track and trace shipments more easily to address any concerns before they reach the market.

LITCO: For those who export into Canada, they will be required to purchase pallets that meet the new ISPM-15 restrictions. Pallets may not be readily available at a price and quality level comparable to what they have been paying in the past.

They can also expect the chance that their loads may be delayed or even quarantined at the border if there is doubt that the pallets have not been

treated properly.

Experience with shipping to other countries that have adopted ISPM-15 has proven that the largest increase in costs often comes from the time and expense associated with the efforts to have shipments released if pallets do not meet the ISPM-15 standards.

What is the most important feature that your company's pallets offer to the trade?

AIRDEX: We see four benefits that Airdex pallets deliver above all others: functionality, convenience, dependability and cost-effectiveness, so it's difficult to answer with just one feature. Our pallet was designed specifically to, in the words of James Dyson, the inventor of the Dyson cyclonic vacuum cleaner, "...solve the obvious problems others seemed to ignore!" so Airdex pallets incorporate a number of unique features such as ultra lightweight, thermal insulation, shock-absorbency, sanitary coating, recyclability and optional GPS/GSM tracking to make it the perfect pallet for produce and perishables.

Airdex pallets are so incredibly lightweight; they save enough shipping cost to pay for themselves in a single airfreight journey and deliver above that, a net positive cash return often reaching over 400 percent of the pallet price in some markets.

Produce professionals should stop looking solely at pallet price (commoditizing) and instead, analyze their bottom line value using the Airdex pallet. Only then can they see the true value of the product and the actual cash returned to their bottom line not realized with other pallets.

CHEP: Chep recently opened the doors to our new material-handling simulator in Orlando. The simulator is the world's first testing facility for pallets and customer unit-loads that can measure handling impacts throughout the entire distribution life cycle. The lab features testing machinery that simulates distribution and supply chain conditions to measure pallet damage and performance. We developed the 63,000 square-foot facility to reduce the assessment period and cost for evaluating new shipping platform designs.

Primary benefits of the simulator for Chep include: a reduction in the need for lengthy material-handling field trials; dramatically lower costs from a 90 percent reduction in the number of shipping platforms needed for each test; and enhanced analysis from state-of-the-art measuring equipment. We expect the lab will enable better decision-making for Chep, and ultimately, Chep customers, by allowing quick comparisons of pallet durability and performance improvements against a control group representing current pallet platforms.



IFCO



iGPS



LITCO

IFCO: IFCO's reusable, recycled wood pallets are a cost-effective and reliable shipping platform for the produce industry. But for IFCO, the pallet itself is only one aspect of our offering. Our national footprint and

consistent pallet supply means that our customers can depend on quality, recycled pallets when and where they need them, even if high seasonal volumes challenge other suppliers.

iGPS: iGPS is revolutionizing the world's supply chain by providing manufacturers, suppliers and shippers of unitized loads with the world's first pallet rental service offering all-plastic pallets with embedded RFID tags. Manufactured to exacting standards, iGPS' pallets are edge-rackable,

lightweight, extremely durable, consistent in size, hygienic, and — thanks to embedded RFID tags — fully traceable. iGPS offers the world's only pallet that is food equipment-certified by NSF International, providing growers and processors with added assurance.

LITCO: Litco's Inca pallets are an economical solution for those companies that want to be prepared and implement a solution now. Inca pallets are considered processed wood and free of insects at the time of manufacture. They are an economical solution that is easy to use, hassle-free and exempt from the additional heat-treating and stamping required by ISPM-15. They are available from multi-plant locations in full size and small sizes for use with POP displays.

pallets to move their loads through foreign ports worldwide. Inca pallets are preferred by many customers for domestic shipping as well, for a number of reasons. They are a complement to corporate sustainability programs because they are silver level, Cradle to Cradle Certified — meaning they have been audited and verified that they are made from safe materials and an eco-intelligent design — safe to use and free of mold, TBP, TCP and TCA chemicals. Also, the nestable feature allows the movement and storage of 1,200 Inca pallets, compared to 480 conventional wooden pallet.

For many years, a significant portion of our customers relied on our Inca

producebusiness
 CIRCULATION • MERCHANDISING • MANAGEMENT • PROMOTION

Initiating Industry Improvement

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

For subscription information, please go to producebusiness.com or call us today at 561-994-1118, Ext 109

SPACE SAVING • EXPORT COMPLIANT • SUSTAINABLE

PRODUCE PALLETS

- **SAVES SPACE AND HANDLING** • One third of the handling and storage expense of wooden pallets.
- **EXPORT** • ISPM 15 Heat treating regulations between USA and Canada coming soon. Prepare now!
- **SUSTAINABLE** • Certified Cradle to Cradle® by MBDC.

INCA PRESSWOOD PALLETS

LITCO

330.539.5433
www.litco.com • info@litco.com

As low as **US\$6.75 each**
 (48"x40", Lt. Wt. 7/Ld Lots, FOB origin)



PHOTO ABOVE COURTESY OF SAMBRAILO. PHOTO AT RIGHT COURTESY OF INLINE PLASTICS CORP.



When value-added produce is packed in clamshells, the product's store-level sales improve.

How Will Traceability Initiatives Affect Rigid Packaging?

Rigid packaging, earth-friendly materials and industry-wide automation are becoming the name of the game. **BY JON VANZILE**

In the ever-changing world of produce packaging, the biggest change in the future might be one that consumers never see at all, or only see months or years after it actually happens. The Produce Traceability Initiative (PTI) is scheduled to hit several major milestones this year, including showing human-readable information on cases, providing information on barcodes and reading and storing information on inbound cases. The exact effect this will have on product display and packaging is yet to be seen, but estimates range from dramatic to none. And all of this is happening in the context of a rapidly developing packaging business that is moving ever more steadily into rigid packing, increasingly conservation-minded and relying more and more heavily on automation.

The Great Rigid Packaging Expansion

One of the major stories in produce packaging in the past few years is the rapid adoption of rigid packaging in the United States. Available in any range of shapes and sizes, rigid

packages have moved steadily away from their origins with cherry tomatoes to all sorts of produce. Today, retailers are using rigid packaging for dozens of products, including everything from mixed protein-and-produce offerings, such as salads and snack packs, to cut fruit, herbs, chopped lettuce and whole produce.

And there's reason to think this trend will continue. "It's really shocking," says Roman Forowycz, chief marketing officer for Clear Lam Packaging Inc., in Elk Grove Village, IL. "For many years, people said rigid packaging was dying off, but in the past three years, it's been very aggressive growth." Clear Lam makes both traditional plastic film and rigid plastic packaging.

Rigid packaging is available in several formats, including the domed trays and hinged clamshells. Domed trays are commonly used for value-added products such as vegetable trays or chopped lettuce. Hinged clamshells are commonly used for berries, cherry tomatoes and other fresh, whole produce.

"Our work with consumers consistently tells us that clear, rigid containers are preferred

for most products," reports Herb Knutson, director of marketing at Inline Plastics Corp., Shelton, CT. "The protective nature of rigid packages keeps fruit and produce from being damaged. The clarity of PET material allows the consumer to view the product from all sides before buying."

The growth in rigid packaging is fairly easy to understand, Forowycz notes, when you consider its advantages. "It protects produce, it's easy to merchandise and it stacks better," he explains. "It's a premium product."

It also offers an improved food safety profile, according to Kurt Zuhlke, president and CEO of Kurt Zuhlke & Assoc. Inc., headquartered in Bangor, PA. "From a food safety point of view, clamshells keep everyone's hands off the produce, and the rigid material protects the product," he states.

Jim Scattini, vice president of sales and marketing for Watsonville, CA-based Sambrailo Packaging, agrees, and adds, "Reports reveal that when value-added produce is packed in a clamshell, that product's store-level sales and velocity improve. These results are

“Reports reveal that when value-added produce is packed in a clamshell, that product’s store-level sales and velocity improve. These results are attributed to convenience and a perception of product safety and shelf-life.”

— Jim Scattini, Sambrailo Packaging

attributed to convenience and a perception of product safety and shelf-life.”

This tremendous growth in rigid packaging has occurred despite the fact that rigid packaging is 300 to 400 percent more expensive, points out Forowycz. The cost difference, however, is partially offset by the reduced shrink because of better produce protection.

Additionally, the overall cost of rigid packaging depends on the product and the need. Off-the-shelf packaging is less expensive than custom-made packages, maintains Scattini, so retailers can realize savings on packaging if the product matches an existing shape. “The challenge is that clamshells for value-added products must be very specific — size, weight, count, units per tray and trays per pallet,” he explains. “If such an item is not available off the shelf, then a custom item must be designed. If the sales volume is not there to justify such a capital outlay, the project becomes problematic.”

As far as traceability is concerned, for now Zuhlke isn’t predicting a dramatic effect on the clamshell packages themselves. As long as the PTI is focused on case-level traceability, it will likely not affect individual packages too much. Nevertheless, Zuhlke expects package-level traceability in the near future, possibly as early as a year from now.

Todd Baggett, CEO and director of business development for Redline Solutions in Santa Clara, CA, agrees that traceability probably won’t affect package design very much, at least at first. “The changes I would anticipate would be marketing driven,” he says. “They’ll shift things around so customers can see labels and move around the label. Otherwise, there’s no reason to change the package, other than inclusion of the label.”

Jan Dragotta, vice president of sales and marketing at Applied Data Corp. (ADC), a Tampa, FL-based business that makes scanner and touch-screen technology to help retailers manage inventory better, also believes major changes to produce packaging would be difficult. “I think the industry will respond with a number of innovations,” he says. “This will include increased standardization where practical, but I don’t see one

universal shipping case that would work across all products. The infrastructure to support that would be way too costly.”

Ultimately, Clear Lam’s Forowycz predicts that many more products would continue to move into rigid packaging, but many would not. “It doesn’t apply to every product,” he admits. “I think it will grow for the next several years, but it will level off. For some products, like bulk carrots or broccoli, flexible packaging is quite adequate.”

Outside Of Rigid Packaging

The move to rigid packaging is only one of the major trends currently sweeping produce



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

packaging and food handling, according to experts. Others include environmental concerns and package shape. According to Zuhlke, Zuhlke & Assoc. hears three common requests from retail produce managers: Make the containers clear; make sure the snap tabs will stay shut during shipping and handling; and make the package smaller. Forowycz remarks retailers and shippers are moving away from round packages and toward cubed packages, which stack and ship easier and more efficiently. Produce managers and consumers are also increasingly interested in environmentally friendly packaging.

According to Forowycz, there are two trends developing in environmentally responsible packaging. The first is the movement toward the use of renewable raw materials in the package. Basically, this means the package is made from a non-petroleum-based material that is considered a renewable resource. Increasingly, plastic films are available that are made from renewable resources and can be composted or recycled themselves. The second is developing packages that include recycled content. This is different than products that can be recycled, which is ubiquitous in today's plastics industry. Instead, the movement is

toward products that contain some percentage of recycled material, such as paper or plastic.

Automation And The New Era

In any discussion of food packaging, the question of traceability looms large. At this point, it's impossible to predict if traceability will have any effect on retail-level packaging, but there's plenty of speculation to go around.

In a January 24, 2011, story on traceability, the *Washington Post* remarked that traceability will set off a "small gold rush" of companies seeking to cash in on the initiative. But major players in the industry say this loose characterization doesn't really represent the true impact of traceability. Instead, Andrew Kennedy, president of FoodLogiQ, a Durham, NC-based software company that helps companies manage their food chain, believes traceability is more likely to stimulate a wholesale automation of the produce chain from field to distribution center.

Kennedy, who is on the PTI technology working group, notes the closest analogy to traceability's impact would be the beef traceability experience in the United Kingdom that occurred after the outbreak of BSE (so-called mad-cow disease) in that country. "There was

a rush in 2000 and 2001, but after a certain period of time, the crowd got winnowed down to a few players," he says. "Traceability forces organizations to look hard at their business practices and reorganize how they do those things from a work flow perspective. Some folks are using it as an agent of change."

In the produce industry, this means the possibility of transforming the chaotic and manual produce section of large distribution centers to a much more highly automated, more efficient and better run operation. "What will change is once the information gets standardized, you can create a routine in the industry because the date and lot code will be standardized in the bar code," Kennedy explains.

Whether or not traceability affects retail packaging, Clear Lam's Forowycz sees one possible regulatory change that will affect packaging: A push to regulate food packaging as a food additive. "Large retailers and processors are requiring packaging to be SQF-certified," he reports. "At Clear Lam, we expect to be SQF-certified soon. But we expect that in the area of packaging materials, any time where there's food contact, there will be this requirement in the next few years." **pb**



VISUAL PRODUCE

Personalized Business Management Software for the Produce Industry

• Customizable Software	• Pallet Mapping
• Electronic Data Interchange	• Customer Menus
• Inventory Control	• Contract Prices
• Real-time Commodity Board	• Lot Tracking
• FreshPack Processing	• Route Deliveries
• Grower Accounting	• Sales Order Management
• AR/AP/GL/Payroll	• Brokerage Management
• Symbol RF Barcode Scanners	• Warehouse Management
	• Visual Internet-Online Ordering
	• Traceability

208-388-4555
www.silvercreek.com



Visit us at : CPMA, Montreal Booth #317
 United Show, New Orleans Booth #1616
 PMA Food Service, Monterey Booth #97



dProduce Man Online

Fully integrated online produce software

- Work from the office, home, or road
- No software to install. Simply sign in from any Internet-connection
- Create and print or email orders right from your dProduce Man Online
- Your data is safe and secure. We use the same data-encryption technology as leading banks
- Your data is safe on our redundant servers and is automatically backed up every day.
- 24 / 7 Tech support is included in your monthly fee
- NO long term contract or annual support fees.
- Evaluate dProduce Man Online FREE
- Yes, try it ALL; a full working version! For 30-days FREE

TOO GOOD to be true?
 Let us show you
 Call: 888-776-3626
www.dproduceman.com
 Fax: 650-712-9972

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



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TESTA



Tracking Transportation Loads: Instant Access

Seeking to reduce costs, decrease food safety concerns and ensure on-time deliveries, the produce industry embraces tracking technology. **BY JULIE COOK RAMIREZ**

The rate at which technological advances are changing the way we communicate, socialize, shop and conduct business is increasing at an ever-quicken pace. The exchange of information has become instantaneous, and interacting with another person or company is requiring less of a human touch all the time.

The transportation industry is no exception, particularly when it comes to the ability to track loads. For a long time, the only way to find out where a driver was along his intended route was to wait until he called for his daily check-in. Then came the advent of the cell phone and it became much easier to reach drivers anytime, anywhere. But it didn't stop there. With the invention of GPS and other technology, it's now possible to get real-time information. Not only can you see exactly where a truck is at any given time, but also the temperature inside the cargo compartment and other critical data. That's great news for produce distributors, carriers and retailers alike.

"A couple of years ago, if I wanted to know where a driver was on a route, I'd have to page him and then he'd have to stop, get to a phone

and call me," says Len Moskowitz, chief finance officer and vice president of finance for Chicago, IL-based Testa Produce Inc. "Now I can track him. It's a great time-saver."

It's also a great way to keep costs down. If deliveries aren't turning up on time or there's a suspicion that drivers are wasting precious resources, technology can be used to crack the case. Baltimore, RI-based Roadnet Technologies Inc. (formerly UPS Logistics Technologies) offers an entire suite of technological solutions that enable receivers and/or carriers to effectively track their loads and monitor their drivers at any given time. Roadnet's Mobile-Cast phone, for example, provides wireless dispatch and GPS capability, which gives the ability to identify the exact location of vehicles and assess whether drivers are following their assigned routes. That can help reveal wasteful habits that, when remedied, could result in significant cost savings. "If the driver decides he's going to his favorite pizza place for lunch and it's five miles off the route and five miles back, he just drove your vehicle an extra 10 miles," says Cyndi Brandt, vice president of marketing and product management. "There are fuel

costs, there are maintenance costs, there are costs of expendables — oil, tires, brake pads. That was probably a \$35 piece of pizza you just bought this guy."

Testa is currently piloting a program from Roadnet that enables the company to monitor driver behavior and zero in on reckless habits that pose dangers, raise costs and could potentially keep produce from arriving at its destination on time. "If any of our drivers go 20 miles an hour above the posted speed limit, we get an alert so we can call them and ask, 'Why are you going 85 miles an hour? The speed limit is 65,'" says Moskowitz. "Or if a driver gets in an accident, we can download information and check things like seatbelt usage."

For the retailer, tracking is particularly valuable because it helps ensure that loads arrive on time and in shape. Sometimes, it's by no fault of the driver that they run late. Weather conditions could be less than optimal or they could have difficulties finding their destination. That happened in at least one instance for Avenel, NJ-based Foodtown Inc., according to Dean Holmquist, director of produce and floral. "One of our stores called to find out where

the load was because it was late and they did not know what was going on," he recalls. "The supplier was able to track the load and discovered it was sitting right there in the plaza, but the driver was lost."

Although such capabilities were not considered high priority when Foodtown contracted with its current suppliers, Holmquist has come to recognize the immense value of being able to go online and see exactly where the trucks are at any given time. Should Foodtown be seeking new suppliers in the future, such capabilities would definitely be considered of utmost importance, he says.

Courting Safety

Perhaps most importantly, however, such technology provides a very effective way of staying on top of food safety and security — major concerns for retailers, consumers and legislators alike. As more government regulation is put into place to help safeguard the nation's food supply, Moskowitz sees more requirements coming down the pike with regard to the tracking of loads. "With the big push for food safety and more concerns about allergens, customers need to be able to track and find out where their food came from," he says. "If there's a recall on broccoli, for example, customers want to know within 20 minutes if any of their properties got that broccoli. They can't wait two days for us to say, 'Sorry, you got it.'"

At Rutherford, NJ-based Genpro Inc., customers can access information three different ways — via a secure web-based tracking portal, via regularly distributed status reports, or by calling or e-mailing the company, according to Robert Goldstein, president.

In Eden Prairie, MN, C.H. Robinson Worldwide Inc. transmits information via EDI (electronic data interchange) to many of its core clients, either directly into their systems or into their chosen TMS (transportation management system) platform, according to general manager, Bob Biesterfeld. The company also offers its customers the ability to access status updates on their loads via CHRWOnline.com. They can also opt to be alerted to shipment events and run ad-hoc reports to help "monitor the performance of their supply chain." According to Biesterfeld, "These systems provide a clear view into the inner workings of a given shipment, as well as the tools to help evaluate inbound vendors."

Customers of Target Interstate Systems Inc., Bronx, NY, have "the best of both worlds," according to Paul Kazan, president. They can access real-time information 24/7 online, reaping the benefits of instantaneous updates if any

changes take place, such as a load running late, for example. Customers are also notified directly of such situations via e-mail or phone. And any time they have a question, they are free to call and speak with a live person in one of Target's five offices.

Customers of La Canada, CA-based Allen Lund Co. Inc. have the ability to log on and check the status of their loads in real-time. However, Kenny Lund, vice president of support and operations, says few actually utilize that capability. "They won't log onto a site and look at that information," he explains. "They

only want to know the exceptions. They want to know the guy that's broken down. They want to know the guy who's behind schedule. They want to know the guy who's having trouble with the temperatures."

Technology can also help ensure proper temperature control while a load of produce is on the road. "The customer has got to have the ability to know at any given moment exactly where that produce is and whether the temperature is being maintained," says Kazan. "The whole cold chain, the whole traceability, is only as good as the weakest link and there can't be



GENPRO

At Genpro, our focus on exceeding customer expectations distinguishes us from other logistics providers. Our expertise in logistics management and the safe, reliable transport of your freight will guarantee your satisfaction with every load managed.

1.800.243.6770 www.genproinc.com

PREMIER LOGISTICS PROVIDER



**TRANSPORTATION
SPECIALISTS SINCE 1969**



*"Driven to serve one
load at a time"*

Specializing in perishable commodities
Serving U.S. & Canada



NASTC 2009 National Broker of the Year.



800-247-2514

515-981-5115 • Fax: 515-981-0923

P.O. Box 337 • Norwalk, IA 50211

www.dmtb.com

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

producebusiness
MARKETING • MERCHANDISING • MANAGEMENT • PROCUREMENT

**Initiating Industry
Improvement**

For subscription
information,
please go to
producebusiness.com
or call us today at
561-994-1118, Ext 109

any bad links in there. Otherwise, the whole thing falls apart."

C.H. Robinson is currently working with several vendors of in-transit temperature and location GPS software, which would automatically verify and report in-transit temperatures, allowing the company to be "more proactive in spotting and correcting in-transit issues prior to causing damage to product quality," according to Biesterfeld.

GPS and other tracking technology can also help provide a resolution in the case of stolen loads, an increasing problem, according to Lund. However, trucking companies are often hesitant to release such information, he acknowledges. "They have a GPS system, so they can control their trucks and their drivers, but they don't necessarily want anyone else to know that the guy's been parked in Vegas for three days," explains Lund. "They just want to say, 'We're running a little behind, but we're going to make it up.' That's all they want you to know."

Need-To-Know Basis

While Testa utilizes Roadnet's suite of solutions to track its loads, Moskowitz admits the company does not make real-time information on location or temperature available to its customers at this time. He cites concerns over the wrong people accessing such data, tracking the drivers and robbing them.

That may all be changing, however, as the drumbeat for transparency grows louder with each passing day. Increasingly, it's simply part of the price of admission in the transportation logistics business. "When you enter into the perishable market of hauling produce, it's a time-sensitive shipping process," says Goldstein. "You have to have a high level of transparency with regard to where the shipments are located."

Testa's Moskowitz concedes there will probably come a time in the very near future when the company will begin allowing customers to see a certain level of information. "We may give them a window and let them know, for example, 'Your load is on Route 15 and your estimated delivery time is between 9:30 and 11:00,'" he notes.

Expectations vary, however, with regard to what level of information is available and exactly how and when it can be accessed. Larger companies expect every last detail of tracking information to be available 24/7 via the Internet, maintains Fred Plotsky, president of Cool Runnings, headquartered in Kenosha, WI, while "the smaller guys" don't want to be bothered with anything more than a basic e-mail update each morning.

Some receivers don't even want that level of interaction, counters Moskowitz, and some eschew e-mail altogether. Many chefs and small, independent restaurants still prefer to do things "the old-fashioned way," preferring human touch to a system that's heavily dependent on technology, he says.

At the same time, larger accounts and more sophisticated customers are demanding a greater level of technology all the time. Moving forward, they want to be able to access information and interact with their carrier or wholesaler via Smartphones and iPads. "If you are not up on the latest and greatest technology, you are not going to get the best customers," says Kazan of Target Interstate.

Increasingly, produce shippers and retailers are demanding the ability to track and trace produce all the way from the field to the store. Yet there often remains a disconnect between what a customer wants to have and for what they are willing to pay. "I can make the best iPad application out there, but if I'm only going to have five or 10 customers using it, at some point I have to ask myself whether there are cost/benefit justifications," says Moskowitz.

Unfortunately, Lund says, the business of produce transportation is an owner/operator-run industry. The average fleet size of truck lines that handle produce is only about four trucks. The challenge lies in getting them all on the same page. Lund likens it to "herding cats. It's up to third-parties like us to work with the shippers and receivers to come up with a system that allows them to track their shipments on a load-by-load basis."

In the meantime, Lund recommends that receivers with an eye toward tracking capabilities look for transportation providers who have demonstrated stability. Plotsky suggests they first conduct an internal survey to determine what specifically is needed, then interview current and potential carriers to find the best match.

Genpro's Goldstein advises receivers to go through the qualification process, examining a company's track record of service levels, as well as their technical know-how and understanding of produce movement to ensure that they are dealing with an experienced provider that can deliver on their promises. In years to come, he expects that technological advances will further heighten expectations, while delivering efficiencies through tracking abilities and beyond. "There are definitely going to be efficiencies, not just from the tracking, but from the full integrations that are going to be able to be electronically sent into the system." **pb**



What's New In Dallas?

As the Dallas Farmer's Market improves and continues to draw consumers, the area's wholesalers and distributors look to increase business by adding new staff and focusing on core business strategies.

BY SANDY LINDBLAD LEE

Dallas' central location, diverse demographics, and plethora of produce offerings describe the region's unique fit in the produce industry. It is a major point of international and domestic distribution, while its growing ethnic diversity creates a lively cultural center for all ages.

Dallas is the center point and a premier distribution hub for the entire United States for produce coming from all over the world. The geographic and economic benefits that come from the city's distribution efforts have served to attract members of the international business community.

Produce wholesalers here concur that Dallas had held up better than some regions during the economic downturn, yet business has been tougher in recent years. As such, companies have worked to adapt to the changing buying and selling climates, but several long-standing companies have been forced to close their doors.

Those that remain are finding ways to survive the difficult economy. The companies listed alphabetically below are expanding their sales staff and constructing new and big-



The Combs Produce LP staff, includes, from left: Jacqueline Berthiaume, Brad Combs, Geoff Noone, Coach Fincher, Mandy Pruitt, Brett Combs, Sherry Baker and Tim Rogers.

ger operations facilities. Realizing the importance of value-adds to their clients, they are going the extra mile and focusing on food safety and new technological advancements. Finally, they are staying abreast of important industry issues and offering their support to the organic and local community.

BEN E. KEITH CO., FORT WORTH, TX: The company is planning to build a new facility in

Houston, according to Bill Sewell, director of produce, who estimates that more than 200 trucks a week are already being delivered to the area.

Construction of the new facility in the Houston suburb of Missouri City, TX, is planned for later this spring. Sewell says the Houston location is closer to its Louisiana customers, and thus, will offer improved service to that state.



The Ideal Sales Staff includes, from left: Bill Hanson, Pam Dunning, Gary Price, Chris Bailey, Ryan Hall, Susie Lacy and Joe Price.



The staff at Brothers Produce includes, from left: Phillip Biondillo, Guillermo Moya, Bobby Cooper, Justin Longbotham, Jason Ernwert, Jose Monreal, Keith Brumbeloe and Sam Mitton.

BROTHERS PRODUCE INC., FRIENDSWOOD, TX: The company added about 20,000 square feet to its Friendswood facility, according to Jason Erenwert, buyer. With more than 80 percent of its customers in foodservice, Brothers Produce has also added services such as cross-docking and bagging fruit for customers. Twenty-seven trucks are now a part of the delivery system covering the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex.

“We’re also starting to move more into the

high-end side of foodservice,” including more white tablecloth clientele, Erenwert reports.

The Brothers Produce Dallas-area branch was opened in 2003. “We saw a great potential opportunity in this market area,” Erenwert notes. “We expect things to get even better. We’ve got a great team here, with all the experience in the world.”

COMBS PRODUCE CO. LP, DALLAS, TX: Jeff Partridge is now the company’s president CEO,

while Doug Dobbs is the new chief operating officer, reports Brett Combs, senior vice president of sales and marketing.

Partridge had been with Coca Cola for 13 years and more recently “owned his own business before he joined us to help us grow the company to a new level,” Combs notes.

Dobbs moved from California where he was with Dole for nine years. “He has a lot of great produce experience and was brought on to help oversee all operations.”






<p>FOOD SAFETY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PrimusLabs Platinum Supplier • HACCP Compliant • Required Supplier Compliance • 100% Traceability 	<p>SERVICES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specializing in Tomatoes • Single Source • Full-line Specialty • Repacking • Breaks/Splits • Ripening • Private Labeling • Full-line Specialty • Third Party Produce & Logistics Solutions 	<p>Combs Produce has seen five decades of change take place in the fresh produce industry. Through it all, we have continued to search for ways we can progressively evolve our services to meet the changing needs of our customers. While we now operate under a complex set of business practices, we have never lost track of what matters most....Delivering Freshness Daily!</p> <p>DELIVERING TO TEXAS, NEW MEXICO, OKLAHOMA, LOUISIANA, MISSOURI, ARKANSAS AND TENNESSEE.</p>
--	---	--



www.combsproduce.com
(800) 466-6086 • (214) 748-6086


Track your Repack

with a smile.



Automate traceability through your freshcut or repack process

Visit our website for more information



Los Angeles • Chicago • Philadelphia
 www.producepro.com • 630.395.9600
 info@producepro.com

Combs also has a new sales representative in Jacqueline Berthiamue. "She has lot of experience selling to foodservice distributors. She brings a new set of skills we didn't have on our sales staff before," Combs adds.

Another new hire is Greg Lingle. "He manages the distribution fleet in our transportation department," says Combs.

More changes at Combs include a full-scale upgrade of the computer system. "We implemented Produce Pro as our software program. Our entire system has been streamlined," Combs continues. "We now have improved traceability and better and more efficient access to financial data."

The additions to the executive staff and upgrades are part of the long-range plan for continued growth. The major changes began in late 2008 when CIC Partners, a Dallas-based investment firm, invested in the company.

Combs also notes, "We've added a lot of customers this year," in spite of the struggling economy. "Business has been a little tough. People are more price-conscious. We've held up better than some other areas in the country, but it's still been a struggle."

DALLAS DIRECT DISTRIBUTING LLC, CRANDALL, TX: Although it is one of the newer produce companies in Dallas, DDD brings with it a wealth of experience from its veteran salesmen. Dallas Direct Distributing procures produce and coordinates its transportation for the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex and its surrounding area.

The company handles a full line of produce for the region, "also servicing all of the continental 48 states," notes Steve Ford, founder and president. Its customer base encompasses retail and wholesale customers.

In addition to company president, Steve Ford, Lex Miles and Scott Ford — Steve Ford's son — round out the staff.

DALLAS FARMERS MARKET, DALLAS, TX: Massive improvements continue at the downtown market, which remains a draw to locals and visitors alike. Janel Leatherman, market administrator, reports, "This is all a part of a huge resurgence of downtown development, which also involves the addition of a park and an Urban Market, which will include a grocery store, eateries and other retail space," she explains.

FRESHPOINT DALLAS INC., HOUSTON, TX: The company added tomato repacking to its Dallas operations. This program continues to show strong growth, according to Lucian



Many varieties of fresh produce can be found at the Dallas Farmer's Market

LaBarba, president. LaBarba says tomato sales have more than doubled over the first year.

Fresh Point Dallas supplies tomatoes to Sysco distributors in Texas and surrounding states; to FreshPoint locations in Oklahoma City and Texas; and to Yum Brands in the Texas market via area suppliers.

HARDIE'S FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CO. LP, DALLAS, TX: "One of our main initiatives continues to be local, sustainable agricultural support," reports Dave Allen, vice president of sales for Hardie's. "This has involved not only identifying local growers, but supporting them. It involves more support of organic produce and supporting local farmers who are growing organics. We're also doing promotions in cooperation with the Go Texan program."

In general, "We've had a phenomenal response from foodservice directors and other institution suppliers who believe in supporting the local team," Allen adds. "As the wholesale model continues to evolve and change, along with the grower-shipper community we've aligned ourselves with, we are able to provide substantially increasing value to both our suppliers and our customers."

"Food safety is always at the top of our priorities," Allen also emphasizes, as he points out the consistent, exceptional ratings awarded to Hardie's by various independent food safety auditors and customer-affiliated inspectors.

IDEAL SALES INC., DALLAS, CO: The company closed its Colorado shipping operation, Harvest Select, a few months ago, according to company owners. **pb**



*Cabbage, Greens,
Limes, Onion Dry,
Carrots, Cilantro,
Diakon, Methleaf,
Bell Pepper,
Hot Pepper, Eggplant,
Squash & Broccoli*

Cliff, Israel, Pete
Jeff, Dorothy & MaryLou
956.994.1310

McAllen, TX 78502



Shipping Superior
Organic Products
for 27 Years

Rio Star Grapefruit,
Oranges, Meyer Lemons,
Watermelon &

Texas Spring Sweet Onions



956-585-1040
Fax: 956-581-1040

Dennis Holbrook
dennis@stxorganics.com
Garrett Edwards
garrett@stxorganics.com

Mission, Texas

Dried Fruit And Nuts Score Incremental Sales In Produce

With dried fruit and nuts, you can make a hat trick by winning over athletes, spectators and your sales goals without even breaking a sweat. **BY TRISHA J. WOOLDRIDGE**



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNITED SUPERMARKETS

Health concerns are of primary importance to many snackers, making it a prime time for dried fruits and nuts.

Home run! Touch down! Isn't that what you want for your department? Or perhaps you're working on a new game plan with your associates. Sports are such a driving force in our culture that teaming up with just about any sporting event should be an easy score. "The best way to stimulate impulse sales is to attach them to an event," says Andrew Stillman, president and CEO of Ampport/American Importing Co., based in Minneapolis, MN. "It gives people a reason to buy the product. Even if you have an existing display, slap on a sign that ties it to the next big sporting event." He points out that frequently, chips and dip are advertised ahead of a large sporting event, so "don't be afraid to feature dried fruit a week ahead, too. Place the idea in shoppers' minds."

Health Benefits And Sporting Events Make A Perfect Pair

One of the primary selling points to both athletes and spectators is the health benefits of dried fruit and nuts — and consumers span both sides of the sidelines. Athletes, especially, need the energy packed in the naturally

Joe Tamble, vice-president of sales for Kingsburg, CA-based Sun-Maid Growers of California, gives a good summary, "From the occasional walker to the highly-trained marathon runner or from the youth soccer star to the senior yoga student, dried fruits and nuts provide a quick and efficient way to fuel up for their activities. These energy-filled snacks are easy to take to any activity or event to be eaten and shared with others. Spectators of sports can enjoy dried fruits and nuts for the same reasons, in addition to their great taste as a stand-alone snack or as part of a snack recipe."

"Athletes eat figs because they are dense in caloric content, so they are a great way to get energy," says Linda M. Cain, vice president of marketing and sales for Valley Fig Growers of Fresno, CA. "They also have more calcium than milk, more fiber than prunes and more potassium than bananas."

Stephanie Blackwell, owner of Stratford, CT-based Aurora Products Inc., continues, "Dried fruits tend to be high in fiber, antioxidants and a quick energy source. Nuts, such as almonds, contain heart-healthy oils, calcium and magnesium. Nuts are a good source of

fiber, protein, and can actually lower the bad cholesterol in your body."

Health concerns are also important to spectators — whether they be in the bleachers, in the parking lot or in their living rooms. They want to snack on something tasty during the game, and as more people are becoming aware of the negative effects of poor food choices, it's dried fruit and nuts' time to shine. "One of the biggest challenges for people is 'snack time,'" explains Joseph Bunting, produce business manager of United Supermarkets LLC, in Lubbock, TX. "There are so many snack items that are tasty, but lack nutrition. Dried fruits and nuts are a convenient, healthful alternative that are not only good for you, but taste great as well. They are also conveniently packed in re-sealable packages so you can snack now and later."

Marc Seguin, senior director of marketing for Paramount Farms, headquartered in Los Angeles, CA, notes that pistachios are sold in several big sports stadiums across the country. "People feel really good about getting a healthful option," he says. "They don't have to worry about going home and exercising off the guilty calories they would have eaten."

In fact, more and more stadiums are making dried fruit and nuts available for concession. Claire Moyle, marketing and sales associate for Peeled Snacks, based in Brooklyn, NY, adds, “We do sell a lot of products at stadiums, and they are very popular.”

Seguin points out that pistachios are also an interactive snack. “You can do something with your hands, and that promotes mindful eating; we have a visual cue for how much we are eating.”

Besides the health appeal, dried fruit and nuts also offer exceptional convenience, and a way to make a tailgating or at-home party food stand out: two important and marketable points. In regards to convenience, most dried fruit and nuts are in resealable packages and don’t require refrigeration, so they can be taken to any event. For competitors, single-servings can slide even into bike shorts; for attendees, the product comes in individual sizes or larger sizes for sharing; for those watching from home, they only need to open a bag and — if they really want — pour into a bowl. Dried fruit and nuts are the ultimate grab-and-go snack. Many companies, such as Peeled Snacks, are even adding larger, family-sized, products to cater to group convenience.

Lisa Goshgarian, corporate marketing manager for Mariani Packing Co. Inc., headquartered in Vacaville, CA, believes dried fruit is a great addition to mix into burgers, particularly ground turkey. “Remind people that dried fruit is a fun, tasty flavor to add to a variety of dishes,” she says.

“In addition to ‘Good Old Raisins & Peanuts, also known as GORP,’” adds Tamble. “Sun-Maid offers a variety of dried fruits to satisfy any sports fan. Sun-Maid Yogurt Raisins (both vanilla and dark chocolate) are ideal for providing a sweet, nutritious option to balance out the many salty snacks that people typically eat during a game.”

Extend Your Marketing Efforts

Extending the marketing to its fullest extent in the produce department encourages consumers to make impulse purchase and drives incremental sales in the department. Bunting describes several tactics of United Supermarkets. “We run pistachios and peanuts in ads correlating with sporting events such as Super Bowl and March Madness,” he describes. “We usually make the dried fruit a Manager’s Special, and the produce manager can merchandise these items with the nuts that are in the ad. Some of our stores have created a ‘snacking section’ at the front of the produce department. In these sec-

Think Outside The Stadium

Not sure what else you could use to tie sports into dried fruit and nut sales? Here are a few fun sporting events you might not have thought of, but where dried fruit and nuts would be big hits.

- Fantasy League Meet-Ups
- Equine Event Competitions
- Golf Tournaments
- Marathons
- Road Races
- Sculling Matches
- Sled Dog Racing
- Skiing Races
- Local Olympic Tryouts
- High School Spirit Days or Field Days
- Lacrosse Games
- Gymnastics Tournaments

tions, guests can find nut trays, packaged nuts and some dried fruit snacking options for a sporting event such as Super Bowl.”

Usual strategies, such as signage, tear-off recipes and secondary displays, enhanced with ties to sporting events, can be simple and effective. Goshgarian suggests, “Make use of secondary displays for the Super Bowl or any sporting event. Speak directly to the consumer, and show dried fruit in that perspective. If you’ve got a secondary display for sporting events, include dried fruit. If you catch their eye, consumers will look at ingredients and pick up the product.”

Amport’s Stillman adds that including links to articles and studies about the health benefits can take things a step further and be even more successful in sealing the sale.

Cross-promotion is also a good move. Including dried fruit and nuts in general snack displays is one thing, but also consider matching products from the deli or the beer and wine section if your store has them. Valley Fig’s Cain sees a lot of cross-promotion of figs with cheese and prosciutto, as well as wine. Other dried fruits go well with deli meats and ground meats, or even nixed with chocolate, candy or pretzels.

“Sun-Maid’s 6-pack raisins are often cross-merchandised with single-serve juice boxes to provide a convenient and healthful snacking option for kids’ sporting events,” suggests Sun-

Maid’s Tamble.

Sampling, of course, also makes a difference — particularly with impulse products. Moyle of Peeled Snacks even suggests that department managers work with suppliers to offer demos outside of the store, such as at local sporting events. With this kind of sampling, people cannot only taste, but experience, the convenience factor.

Social media is also enhancing the game of merchandising in new ways. “Fans out there are looking to get in touch and stir up creative ways to eat slim, better-for-you foods,” says Goshgarian. The numbers of foodies and bloggers on Twitter, Facebook and other outlets continue to grow. While many brands are growing their online image, so are many stores who will Tweet sales or hints of what to do with highlighted products or offering online-only deals.

Besides using all possible plays in marketing and merchandising, Paramount Farms’ Seguin says that stores also need to expand when they do their promotions. He’s noticed that across the country, pistachio sales do really well from November to January between ad campaigns and the Super Bowl. Stores have large displays and a sizeable amount of product. However, after that, promotions drop and sales follow suit. More priority is put on seasonal fruits, but the dried fruit and nuts are not “out of season.” Continuing with promotions — pairing them with sports year-round, like basketball, soccer, baseball and local teams — can ensure that the products, which have next to no shrink, continually earn for the department.

Think Beyond The Big Leagues

While the Super Bowl, March Madness and the World Series are all instantly recognizable connections that sell product, it’s important that stores also tap into the power of local team spirit and sports enthusiasm. Stillman points out, “Little League and small stands and schools are getting on board” with regularly offering dried fruit and nuts as concessions faster than most major stadiums. Advertising these products in conjunction with major games between high schools and colleges, and even working with schools, will not only sell product, but also show community support.

Another example is when Paramount Farms teamed up with local stores when the Oregon Ducks, University of Oregon’s football team, had made it to the national championships. The company tweaked their “Get cracking!” catchphrase to “Get quacking!” in support of the team. “It resonated for the locals... we were able to connect in a meaningful

“Make use of secondary displays for the Super Bowl, or any sporting event. Speak directly to the consumer, and show dried fruit in that perspective. If you’ve got a secondary display for sporting events, include dried fruit.”

— Lisa Goshgarian, Mariani Packing Co. Inc.

way that wasn’t complicated, and we tied in to the energy in their community,” he explains.

It’s also important to look beyond the more familiar sports, too. Marathons, for example, are excellent events that pair well with dried fruit and nuts, according to Moyle and Aurora Products’ Blackwell. “We’ve seen our nuts in golf carts during sports competitions,” states Blackwell.

Seal The Sponsor Partnership

Produce departments also should realize that they often have support from manufacturers and team up with them to champion the dried fruit and nuts to customers. Most companies have shippers that can be placed anywhere in the department that simply need to

be opened. Blackwell, for example, states that Aurora Products has many promotions offered during the Super Bowl. “We also are distributing free product during the Boston Marathon,” she says.

“Many manufacturers get behind these promotions or will work with the store manager to build eye-catching walls of dried fruit, snacks and nuts,” says Mariani’s Goshgarian. “Retailers don’t have to do it on their own.” Additionally, many manufacturers will partner with certain stores for a special promotion, providing the displays, signage and other marketing materials.

For example, Amport offers football-shaped rigid plastic containers with a larger, multi-person serving. “Party trays with nuts

are big,” says Stillman, who also describes how the company has expanded the flavor options based on feedback. “Nuts are here to stay with flavor. Candy-coated, dark chocolate-coated... we’re going from the basics to expanded flavors to add value and diversity to taste.” For example, one of the newest products adds dried peas coated in wasabi to a salty-sweet trail mix.

Manufacturers also frequently help stores make the most of brand power. Seguin describes, “Paramount Farms is a well known brand on a national scale that people trust. People connect with the advertisements, so with retail partners, there can be cart-stopping displays that connect with TV advertising. It can drive a ton of incremental sales.”

By teaming up with manufacturers and creating a simple but effective game plan, stores can run the field in incremental sales by marketing dried fruit and nuts through sporting events, both major and local. Sports are a cultural driving force, so whether the consumer is an avid athlete or an avid spectator, showing how dried fruit and nuts relates to what they love will score sales and make everyone feel like a winner.

pb

**If you know Tony,
then you know
United Fresh.**

Or you might know others like him. They're leaders who want to make a real difference in the produce industry, and shape their own future in the process. People just like you.

Thousands of industry leaders already know the value of working together through United Fresh. **Are you ready to make a difference?**

United Fresh *Being United
Makes All the Difference™*

www.unitedfresh.org
202-303-3400

Tony DiMare, DiMare Company, Ruskin, Florida

ANNOUNCEMENTS



WORLD FLORAL EXPO
MARCH 8-10 • 2011
www.worldfloralexpo.com

WORLD FLORAL EXPO TAKES PLACE MARCH 8-10
HPP Worldwide, Amsterdam, Netherlands, announces the 2011 World Floral Expo will be held March 8-10 at the Doubletree Miami Mart/Hotel & MACC Exhibition Center, in Miami, FL. The event is promoted as the International Floriculture Trade Fair for U.S. flower buyers.



FAVORITE NEW FLOWERING PLANT AWARDED AT TPIE
Suntory/Sun-Fire Nurseries, Sarasota, FL, was recognized with the Favorite New Flowering Plant award for its Sunvillea Bougainvillea 'Rose' at the Tropical Plant Industry Exhibition (TPIE), January 19-21, in Fort Lauderdale, FL.



CANADIAN-GROWN TULIPS
The Sun Valley Group, Arcata, CA, now has a tulip production location in St. Catherine, Ontario, located just 30 miles from the USA-Canada border. Sun Valley acquired the farm in the Niagara region of Canada as a strategic move to provide a high quality, soil-grown tulip to the East Coast of North America. Tulip production is scheduled through Mother's Day.



INTERNATIONAL FLORICULTURE EXPO SET FOR JUNE 14-17
Diversified Business Communications, Portland, ME, will host the International Floriculture Expo at the Miami Beach Convention Center, June 14-17 in Miami Beach, FL. Previously known as the Super Floral Show, this second-year event designed for mass market buyers will feature floral and foliage products, educational sessions, equipment and giftware.

NEW PRODUCTS



FOR DADS AND GRADS
Eve's Garden Inc., Land O' Lakes, FL, introduces Lucky Bamboo in wood grain vase containers. Promoting the natural look for the easy-care Lucky Bamboo, the wood look of the container makes the plant especially appealing as Father's Day and graduation gifts. Measuring five inches tall with five Lucky Bamboo stalks up to 12 inches tall, the vases are packed 12 per case.



EASY REACH DISPLAY
The Pinery LLC of Escondido, CA, recently developed a POP display that makes it convenient and easy to merchandise the company's decorated Christmas trees. Ten 14-inch living trees arrive packed in a case that forms a freestanding display with minimal effort. Levels can be stacked three high to make an impressive gift-giving center.



PREPARE FOR DECEMBER
Blossom Bucket Inc., North Lawrence, OH, introduces the "Happy Hanukkah" plaque as a part of its seasonal collection. Understated in color and design, the handcrafted resin plaque measures 3 1/2" H x 3 3/4" L.



MINIATURE PINEAPPLE
Deroose Plants Inc., Apopka, FL, now offers a Miniature Pineapple plant in a four-inch pot. The Ananas Mini Me (patent pending) is a charming addition to the grower's line of bromeliads. The plant was introduced in January at the Tropical Plant Industry Exhibition (TPIE) in Fort Lauderdale, FL.

Showcase Blooming Plants As Potted Treasures

After nearly an unbearable winter for too many, floral retailers can boost sales by enticing consumers with long lasting blooming plants. **BY JON VANZILE**



As floral departments face higher costs and reduced supplies of traditional cut flowers, potted blooming plants are a viable alternative.

The cut flower industry is bracing for a long, possibly inventory-challenged spring — but that doesn't mean floral departments have to be without blooms. Growers and industry experts have a simple solution for floral departments facing higher costs and reduced supply in traditional cut flowers: offer plenty of potted blooming plants.

Potted flowers, of course, have a history as gift plants, especially around Easter and Mother's Day, when consumers snap up Easter lilies first, then gifts for Mom. But there are plenty of options beyond these traditional selections that can bring color and increased sales to the spring season.

The Gift Flowers

Potted flowers may be especially popular this year because of the unusual problems affecting the cut flower industry. In the past few years, a weak dollar relative to various South American currencies has forced growers to cut costs and lay off thousands of workers just as U.S. demand weakened because of the soft economy. Many farms have closed. Recent extreme weather problems in South American growing regions have exacerbated the problem.

But blooms in the floral department don't begin and end with cut flowers. Potted blooming plants make it possible to offer color, impulse buys and hold costs down. The spring potted flower trade mistakenly tends to focus on just a few plants such as azaleas, Easter lilies, mums and hydrangeas. But savvy retailers will look to draw in more consumers by offering a broader selection of potted blooms including Calla lilies, begonias and gardenias. This year, growers are reporting especially strong demand for 4½- and 6½-inch hydrangeas, which are available in a wide variety of colors and shades including pink, lavender, white and blue.

The looming question this season, however, is whether or not the big spring holidays will cancel each other out. The scant two weeks between Easter and Mother's Day raises the possibility that demand might soften by Mother's Day, especially among consumers who still have Easter lilies at home. "Traditionally, on Mother's Day, there's more demand than supply," reports Peter Smith, vice president of national sales for White's Nursery & Greenhouses Inc., in Chesapeake, VA. "But for Easter, there's more supply than demand."

This is partly because of consumer preferences: Easter potted plant sales are dominated

by traditional white Easter lilies, and many growers have robust Easter lily programs. Mother's Day, on the other hand, is more fractured. Mums are traditional, but sales of calla lilies, hydrangeas and other flowers are relatively strong, too.

At Bay City Flower Co. in Half Moon Bay, CA, however, Sandee Loeffler-Sidun, director of marketing, sees the compressed holiday schedule as a reason for optimism. "Generally speaking, late Easters are traditionally strong as a result of pent-up demand," she reveals. "Given all the bad weather this winter, it sets the industry up for a very strong Easter. As for Mother's Day, let's face it, nothing expresses 'I love you, Mom' better than flowers."

Create A Floral Gift Shop

The best technique for selling potted flowers sounds familiar: build a lush, full display of colorful plants that is bold and inviting enough to impress all shoppers. Color-blocking is also an effective strategy, with massed groups of plants in the same color used to attract attention. "Color blocking is really popular," acknowledges Sharon Snoei, sales manager at Homestead Growers Niagara Inc., headquartered in Ontario, Canada. "It really catches the eye."

“We are strong believers in the power of signage. Lack of signage is frustrating to a would-be consumer, and this quickly translates into lost sales.”

— Sandee Loeffler-Sidun, Bay City Flower Co.

Smith recommends taking color blocking one step further and coordinating the potted flowers with the cut flowers so the whole display is cohesive. Take it even further by coordinating the sleeves with the pots and the flowers so the entire display is awash in shades of a single tone.

There is plenty of opportunity when it comes to packaging options. Mother’s Day flowers are gift purchases, frequently made at the last minute. Since the purchase isn’t as price-sensitive as buying traditional cut flowers or non-holiday purchases, Smith recommends assembling baskets with several pots of flowers and marketing it as a single gift item. “You can also upgrade and exchange the plastic pot for a ceramic pot,” Smith says. “Then you turn that \$15 plant into a \$30 plant and catch that gift-giving moment.” Profit-minded retailers will become especially creative and capitalize on customers’ willingness to spend more on special gifts.

Homestead Growers, which exclusively grows potted Calla lilies in Ontario and at its Apopka, FL facility, wraps all of its products specifically for the holiday. The company uses wraps coordinated to the flower color featuring flowing lines to emphasize the classic attributes of the Calla. Homestead’s Callas are available in an inspiring array of colors including yellow, pink, white, purple, red, orange and even black.

Highlight Value-Added Feature

The world of difference between cut flowers and potted blooming plants should be highlighted for potential sales. When customers buy potted flowers, not only will they be pleased by a live blooming product that lasts, they will end up with a plant that often can be relocated or coaxed back into bloom. “Any time you see a commercial, you always see Calla lilies because they’re so beautiful,” says Snoei. “But in the commercial they’re always cut flowers. People should know they can have a potted Calla lily, complete with beautiful leaves.” Some varieties of potted Callas have speckled leaves, which many consumers find elegant and even whimsical. Snoei adds, “Even after the long-lasting blooms are gone, consumers can enjoy the potted Calla lily gift as a

foliage plant.”

A Calla lily blooms for three to six weeks under optimal conditions indoors, according to Snoei. After the bloom is gone, the tuber can be dried out, stored and planted again in the spring for another bloom. Depending on the USDA hardiness zone, the Calla lily can even be moved outside and into the main garden.

Begonias and hydrangeas have similar potential for a second act. “We’ve seen a big increase in demand for hydrangeas,” reports Don Dickerson, systems manager for Dickerson’s Greenhouses in Gobles, MI. “They can be for either indoor or outdoor.”

Retailers will want to include meaningful signage and plant care information with the lush floral displays. Bay City offers POS signage for its products and offers a shipping box that doubles as a display box. “We are strong believers in the power of signage,” says Loeffler-Sidun. “Lack of signage is frustrating to a would-be consumer, and this quickly translates into lost sales.” Plant care information is especially important to highlight because it points to a fundamental difference between potted flowers and cut flowers: potted flowers can be kept alive long after the bloom is over.

Some floral retailers concerned about department space question whether it pays to stock simple gardening supplies such as potting soil, fertilizer and pots. Smith of White’s Nursery says most of his accounts draw a distinction between gardening materials and selling potted plants. “When they’re buying an indoor plant, it’s instant gratification,” he says. “It’s an impulse buy. They think, ‘Hey, that’ll look good in the corner.’ They aren’t thinking about repotting, which doesn’t come until later.”

One notable exception, however, would be stores that carry both indoor and outdoor plants, which is increasingly common when it comes to spring offerings. According to Smith, more floral departments are beginning to stock bedding plants and container plants for outdoor use in the spring. “If a retailer is carrying outdoor plants, then yes, potting soils are a natural addition, and fertilizer makes sense as many indoor potted plants require it,” agrees Loeffler-Sidun of Bay City. “Generally speaking, however, the intent of indoor blooming

plants is for interior home décor.”

The trend in the potted plant industry has also been away from do-it-yourself floral departments. In past years, it wasn’t uncommon for a retailer to have a small potting station where they could pot their own plants, choosing their decorative pots and sleeves to match particular themes. Today, many floral centers prefer to offer ready-to-display merchandise that arrives sleeved and potted. “Retailers want something they can pull out of a box,” Smith says. “The most they’ll do is place the plastic pot into a decorative ceramic container, so retailers might consider having a little display of decorative pots.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF WHITE'S NURSERY & GREENHOUSES INC.

Finding Your Customers

With two major floral holidays hanging over the spring sales season, it’s tempting to stick with the basics, but according to growers, retailers might be leaving sales on the table. There are definite regional differences and preferences in potted plants, and floral managers who cater to those preferences can increase sales. For example, Smith believes many buyers in New England are “more conservative” and lean toward a muted color palette in their choice of flowers. He contrasts this against buyers in New Orleans, where brighter colors might be more popular.

Additionally, not all holidays are equally celebrated. For example, Sweetest Day, which is observed in the fall, is a particularly Midwestern holiday, with the greatest participation in Ohio. The same can be said for St. Patrick’s Day and Boston, where participation is higher than elsewhere in the country. Discovering these regional preferences is usually a matter of keeping an ear close to the ground and getting to know the customer base. Once retailers do that, they can tailor the floral offerings to match the price point, color choices, holiday preferences and even species preferences of their best customers.

pb

ADAPTING TO THE REALITY OF CONSOLIDATION



My first memory of the trend toward consolidation was in the 1960s when the Kroger Company combined warehousing and transportation for Dayton with the Cincinnati Division. Although order placement was the larger division's responsibility, the smaller divisions continued operating with nearly complete merchandising and operational autonomy.

Since then, more involved consolidation has

become a watch word not only at retail, but also throughout the business community.

Each year brings a higher percentage of volume controlled by fewer and fewer food retailers and wholesalers. By the end of 2010, the 10 largest organizations accounted for just fewer than 70 percent of the \$960 billion estimated volume by the 75 largest operators, with the next 10 in size controlling an additional 13 percent.

Less than 20 percent of volume was attributed to the remaining 55 North American store groups with sales over a billion dollars. Of these, 14 had sales from 4 to 8-plus billion dollars each, accounting for nearly another 10 percent of the volume. In other words, less than half of the store groups control over 90 percent of sales, although the remaining organizations each achieved approximately \$1 to \$4 billion in sales — not exactly chump change. Overall, this data provides guidance for most effectively focusing a seller's marketing efforts.

In the produce industry, the consolidation activity at both the retail and producer level has had a substantial impact on commodity boards. During the 1990s, numbers of growers and shippers began questioning payment of fees to commodity boards, which used the money for promotional purposes they felt didn't proportionally benefit their marketing programs. Eventually, shippers won, and gradually, many boards disbanded incentive programs. As a result, larger and expanding grower/shippers now have their own representatives meeting with retailers to institute flexible promotional and informational programs favorable to the needs of both sellers and the respective retailers.

Although many commodity groups incentive programs have disappeared, some, such as the California Strawberry Commission, maintain a strong presence with approximately two-thirds of the largest 75 retail groups by providing in-depth category management analysis. With the capability to access a company's sales data by store as well as division, they are able to pinpoint the opportunities for improving both sales and profits, a benefit outweighing incentive money payments.

As they naturally have focused on California berries, they also pro-

vide information about other berry varieties, as well as information concerning production from growing areas outside of California. Judging by the growth of the berry category the past five years, this type of program implementation has been extremely beneficial.

In other instances, the change of commodity board focus is still a work in progress. For example, a pear industry task force is recommending the Pear Bureau Northwest and the pear shippers and marketers collaborate more closely when setting up retail promotions to avoid duplication between branded and generic promotions. As these programs are being implemented, the Pacific Northwest pear growers will be balloting to determine continuation of the Fresh Pear Committee, which collects the mandatory assessments.

However, there are still commodity groups that have been slow in adjusting to the reality of size. While shipper/marketers have their own representatives visiting major retailers, some commodity boards' representatives still visit most retailers within a specific geographic area, resulting in duplication of informational presentations, incentive pro-

gram expenditures and inefficiencies of a category manager's time. Not to be overlooked is the extra costs, which eventually funnel back to producers reducing their net return. Likewise, as some have discovered the additional incentive, money is of limited consequence in relation to the overall product cost.

When one begins to examine all the factors involved as both retailers and producers consolidate and data analytics provide more potential benefit, it appears roles are changing for everyone involved for meeting both time, efficiency and contact value. This has been borne out more specifically during the most recent worldwide economic problems. Those organizations adapting to the improved efficient methods are finding the best returns on their investment.

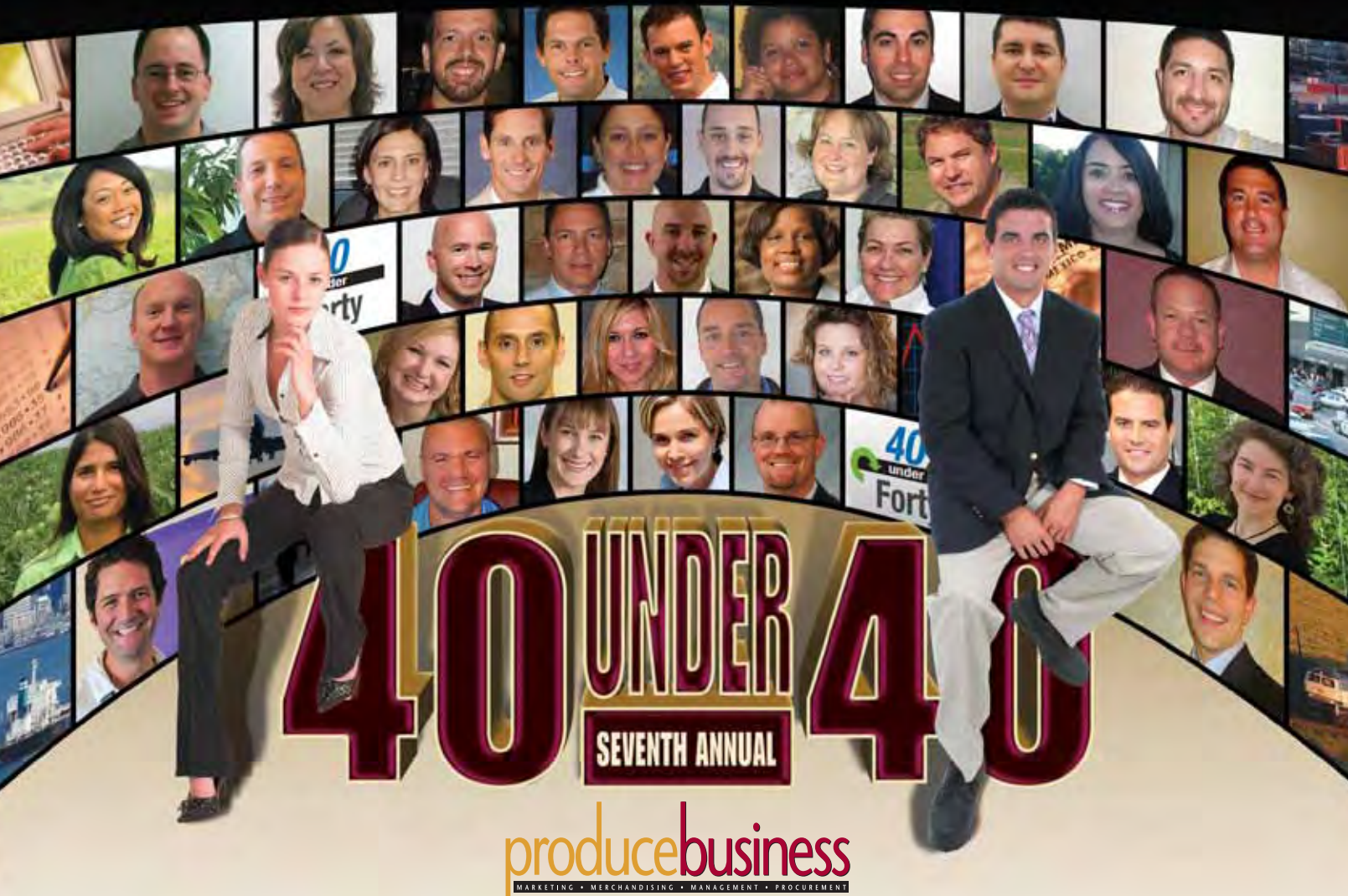
Unquestionably, the first issue is determining how to enhance retailer results. In this time of almost information overload, sales analysis within and of different categories at multiple outlets offers one of the best methods to gain attention and provide incremental value. Secondly, how do regional, highly seasonal producing groups coordinate a year-round marketing effort? The California Strawberry Commission program is a prime example of adjusting to their immediate customers' needs, with fewer personnel utilizing an entirely new and evolving job description.

When everyone is on the same page in this world of consolidation, the percent of total penetration of produce sales for each category may show little change. However, consumers increasing purchases will drive gains for total sales and profits achieved more efficiently by each business segment.

By the end of 2010, the 10 largest organizations accounted for just fewer than 70 percent of the \$960 billion estimated volume by the largest operators, with the next 10 in size controlling an additional 13 percent.

By Dave Diver

Dave Diver is the former vice president of produce at Hannaford, and a regular columnist for PRODUCE BUSINESS.



PRODUCE BUSINESS is accepting nominations for its Seventh Annual 40-Under-Forty Project, which recognizes the produce industry's top young leaders.

Honorees will be selected based on their professional accomplishments, demonstrated leadership and industry/community contributions. To be eligible, nominees must be under the age of 40 as of January 1 (People born after January 1, 1971).

To nominate someone, please fill out this form by April 30, 2011, and fax back to 561-994-1610.

Once nominated, the candidate will receive forms from us to fill out asking for detailed information. A candidate only needs to be nominated one time. Multiple nominations will have no bearing on selection.

ABOUT THE NOMINEE:

First Name _____ Last Name _____
 Approximate Age _____
 Company _____
 Position _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Postal Code _____
 Country _____
 Phone _____ Fax _____
 E-mail _____

In 100 words or less, describe why this person should be nominated:
 (You can use a separate sheet for this)

Nominee's Professional Achievements:

Nominee's Industry/Community/Charitable Activities:

ABOUT THE NOMINATOR:

First Name _____ Last Name _____
 Company _____
 Position _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Postal Code _____
 Country _____
 Phone _____ Fax _____
 E-mail _____

Nominator information is for our use only and will not be shared with candidate or have a bearing on selection.

For more information email: info@producebusiness.com

HOW TO BOOST EUROPEAN FRUIT CONSUMPTION

In Part I of II, Philippe Binard, Secretary General of Freshfel Europe, in Brussels, Belgium, discusses Freshfel's efforts to increase fruit consumption across the continent. Interview conducted by Mira Slott



PB: Freshfel just announced a new program to boost consumption of fresh produce. What motivated this move?

Binard: Consumption remains, at best, stagnating in Europe. Freshfel's newly released *Consumption Monitor* report reveals the level of consumption in most European countries is below the minimum recommended 400 grams of fruits and vegetables daily. Countries, on average, are not reach-

ing that target. Freshfel members, the leading produce sector, recognized a need to be more proactive in stimulating consumption, which is not where it should be, and advancing the reasons for doing so. The first angle is increasing awareness of how produce can help combat a number of chronic diseases, alleviate the obesity epidemic and other societal problems.

The second angle is an image makeover. We've done our homework to better understand consumer perceptions.

PB: What have you learned?

Binard: We've discovered from our internal research that consumers believe fruits and vegetables are too expensive. Produce is one of the cheapest foods when compared to other categories of food and dessert. We want to explain that eating fruits and vegetables is relatively inexpensive.

Too many residues from pesticides are also a point of concern. Another is that produce is losing its nutritional value, which is linked with the desire to eat locally. Whether it's better to eat local or not, the data shows we eat local. At least 65 to 75 percent of fruit production is consumed in the member states, such as France and Spain, where it is grown. The complement is coming from other countries, but the bulk is coming from local consumption.

We can capitalize on issues in the climate debate, pointing out that fruits and vegetables are better than any other category in the mission of producing in sustainable ways. We need to talk about all these assets and rectify false notions.

In terms of food safety, a lot of thought has been made in the sector toward certification and monitoring, and consumers need to know that it's quite safe to eat fruits and vegetables. We also need to highlight all the nutritional benefits.

There are many preconceived ideas in the public and also with decision makers. These won't change in one press release. But increasing the level of communication to put the record right will have impact over time.

PB: Would your recent press release pointing to erroneous claims about fruit content in a wide range of food products be an example of that?

Binard: Yes. Our campaign essentially has three parts. The first element increases awareness of why it's important to boost consumption. The second element addresses misconceptions about produce. The third element in the campaign is based on our new European study, *Where is the Fruit?* It highlights a number of food categories across Europe where products depict fruit on the packaging or in the content they use, whether factual or not.

Our sector is upset that other food categories such as yogurt, chocolate bars or ice cream are using images of fruit on packaging as a marketing element. These large agribusiness companies have huge mar-

keting budgets to promote their product. We wanted to find out whether these packaging claims were true. We looked at 250 product categories in seven countries and found out only 13 percent contained more than 50 percent of fruits and/or vegetables. New EU regulations on nutrition and health claims are currently in negotiations. It targets a mini-

mum requirement of at least 50 percent to make the claim, but the provisions on what qualifies as a fruit and vegetable product and the requisites to make claims on it are still being finalized. We want to continue to have a voice in shaping the legislation because it will add to the image of our sector. Over a certain period of time we want to release stories and news on these various issues.

PB: What is scope of the campaign? What types of media do you plan to incorporate? Will you be integrating promotional and marketing programs, partnering at the retail level, etc.?

Binard: An important component of the campaign was developing a new, information-packed Web site to release to the public and reach influential players in the European environment. It will disseminate facts and activities taken across Europe to increase consumption...interesting data about food safety practices, marketing success stories, research on important issues, and where to find information. We launched the site in conjunction with Fruit Logistica, and will have additional statements about the campaign in the coming weeks.

This is not a highly sophisticated campaign. For consumers, we won't go directly through ads in television, radio or magazines. We want to reach consumers through the media. What we will do is use the network we have, focusing on the European media we have in Brussels, to get our messages out. In the end, maybe there will be a connection with TV, but this is not our focus.

Freshfel's newly released *Consumption Monitor* report reveals the level of consumption in most European countries is below the minimum recommended 400 grams of fresh fruits and vegetables daily.

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
Alpine Fresh	59	305-594-9117	
Apio, Inc.	84-85	800-454-1355	www.apioinc.com
Asociacion Mexicana de Horticultura Protegida A.C.	120		www.amhpac.org
Maurice A. Auerbach, Inc.	86-87	888-AUERPAK	www.auerpak.com
Ayco Farms, Inc.	59	954-788-6800	www.aycofarms.com
Babe Farms, Inc.	34	800-648-6772	www.babefarms.com
Baero North America, Inc.	98-99	314-692-2270	www.baerousa.com
Blue Book Services	13	630-668-3500	www.producebluebook.com
Boncheff Greenhouses	34	416-233-6922	www.boncheffherbs@on.aibn.com
Brooks Tropicals	60-61	800-327-4833	www.brookstropicals.com
Brooks Tropicals	106-107	800-327-4833	www.brookstropicals.com
California Avocado Commission	62-63	800-344-4333	www.californiaavocado.com/retail
Canadian Produce Marketing Association	28	613-226-4187	www.cpm.ca
Capital City Fruit Co., Inc.	48	515-981-5111	
CarbAmericas	59	954-786-0000	www.carbamericas.com
Chelan Fresh Marketing	78-79	509-682-2539	www.chelanfresh.com
Chep USA Inc.	135	800.CHEP.USA	www.chep.com/trustedchoice
Ciruli Brothers	100-101	520-281-9696	www.cirulibrothers.com
Clifford Produce Sales, Inc.	92-93	519-796-2199	www.cliffordproduce.com
Coast To Coast Produce Co.	47	877-836-6295	www.ctcproduce.com
Combs Produce Company	146	800-466-6086	www.combsproduce.com
Community Suffolk, Inc.	48	617-389-5200	
Concord Foods	122	508-580-1700	www.concordfoods.com
Coosemans Retail	34	305-545-5516	www.rockgardenherbs.com
Crowley Maritime Corp.	59	800-CROWLEY	www.customizedbrokers.net
D'Arrigo Bros. Co. of New York	45	800-223-8080	www.darrigony.com
Del Monte Fresh Produce	72-73	800-950-3683	www.freshdelmonte.com
Des Moines Truck Brokers, Inc.	144	800-247-2514	www.dmtb.com
DNE World Fruit Sales	80-81	800-327-6676	www.dneworld.com
Dole Fresh Fruit Company	64-67	818-879-6600	www.dole.com
Dole Fresh Vegetable Co.	2	800-333-5454	www.dole.com/saladkits
Domex Superfresh Growers	54-55	509-966-1814	www.superfreshgrowers.com
dProduce Man Software	140	888-PRODMAN	www.dproduceman.com
Driscoll Strawberry Associates, Inc.	68-71	831-763-5000	www.driscolls.com
Duda Family Farms	76-77	561-804-1477	www.dudafresh.com
Eaton & Eustis Co.	50	617-884-0298	
Family Tree Farms	23	866-FLAVOR-1	www.familytreefarms.com
Family Tree Farms	129	866-FLAVOR-1	www.familytreefarms.com
Florida Department of Agriculture	39	850-488-4303	www.freshfromflorida.com
Fresh Origins, LLC	34	760-736-4072	www.freshorigins.com
Fresh Produce Association of The Americas	7	520-287-2707	www.americatradesproduce.com
General Produce, Inc.	46	800-782-5833	www.generalproduceinc.com
Genpro Transportation Services, Inc.	143	800-243-6770	www.genproinc.com
The Giumarra Companies	126	323-415-8330	www.giumarra.com
Global Organic Specialty Source, Inc.	25	877-952-1198	www.globalorganics.ws
Gourmet Specialty Imports LLC	35	610-345-1113	
Gourmet Trading Company	59	310-216-7575	www.gourmettrading.net
Grimmway Farms	74-75	661-845-9435	www.grimmway.com
Grower Direct	59	209-931-7900	www.growerdirect.net

COMPANY	PAGE #	PHONE	WEBSITE
Harvest Sensations	35	305-591-8173	www.harvestsensations.com
Hollandia Produce	94-95	805-684-8739	www.livegourmet.com
Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Promotion Committee	104-105	208-722-5111	www.bigonions.com
Infinite Herbs & Specialties	34	305-599-9255	www.infiniteherbs.com
J.R. Kelly Company	32	888-344-4392	www.jrkelly.com
J.R. Kelly Company	34	888-344-4392	www.jrkelly.com
Keystone Fruit Marketing, Inc.	116-117	717-597-2112	www.keystonefruit.com
Keystone Fruit Marketing, Inc.	59	717-597-2112	www.keystonefruit.com
L&M Companies, Inc.	41	509-698-3881	www.lmcompanies.com
LGS Specialty Sales, Ltd.	121	800-796-2349	www.lgssales.com
Litco International, Inc.	137	330-539-5433	www.litco.com
Mann Packing Company, Inc.	9	800-884-6266	www.veggiesmadeeasy.com
Mann Packing Company, Inc.	90-91	800-884-6266	www.veggiesmadeeasy.com
Mariani Packing Co.	82-83	707-452-2800	www.mariani.com
Marie's	112-113	972-569-6813	www.maries.com
Mission Produce, Inc.	59	888-549-3421	www.missionpro.com
MIXTEC Group	40	626-440-7077	www.mixtec.net
Monterey Mushrooms	102-103	800-333-MUSH	www.montereymushrooms.com
Muranaka Farm, Inc.	35	805-529-0201	
New England Produce Council	123	781-273-0444	
North Bay Produce	59	231-946-1941	www.northbayproduce.com
North Shore Living Herbs	35	760-397-0400	
Ocean Mist Farms	56-57	831-633-2492	www.oceanmist.com
Peri & Sons Farms	24	775-463-4444	www.perisons.com
The Perishable Specialist, Inc.	59	305-477-9906	www.theperishablespecialist.com
Prime Time	10	760-399-4166	www.primetimeproduce.com
Produce for Better Health Foundation	118	302-235-2329	www.pbhfoundation.org
Produce Pro Software	146	630-395-9600	www.producepro.com
ProducePackaging.com	139	8006448729	www.producepackaging.com
Progressive Marketing Group	59	323-890-8100	
Red Blossom Farms, Inc.	5	805-981-1839	www.redblossom.com
SAGARPA - Embassy of Mexico	42-43	202-728-1727	
Sambraio Packaging	130	800-563-4467	www.sambraio.com
Silver Creek Software	140	208-388-4555	www.silvercreek.com
South Tex Organics, L.C.	147	956-585-1040	
Southern Specialties	59	954-784-6500	www.southernspecialties.com
Southern Specialties	35	954-784-6500	www.southernspecialties.com
Spice World, Inc.	33	800-433-4979	www.spiceworldinc.com
Sunlight Intl. Sales/ Jakov P Dulcich & Sons	88-89	661-792-6360	www.dulcich.com
SunnyRidge Farm, Inc.	128	800-725-8856	www.sunnyridge.com
SunPacific Marketing	96-97	213-612-9957	www.ripeandeasykiwi.com
Sweet Onion Trading Company	24	800-699-3727	www.sweetoniontrading.com
Tanimura & Antle, Inc.	31	800-772-4542	www.taproduce.com
Trinity Fruit Sales	114-115	559-433-3777	www.trinityfruit.com
Turbana Banana Corp	108-109	305-445-1442	www.turbana.com
United States Potato Board	110-111	303873-2312	
United Fresh Produce Association	150	202-303-3400	www.unitedfresh.org
United Fresh Produce Association	26	202-303-3400	www.unitedfresh.org
Val Verde Vegetable Co., Inc.	147	956-994-1310	
Vidalia Onion Committee	160	912-537-3918	www.vidaliaonion.org
Well-Pict Berries	127	831-722-3871	www.wellpict.com
West Coast Tomato, Inc.	40	941-722-4537	
Kurt Zuhke & Assoc.	139	8006448729	www.producepackaging.com

AN APPLE A DAY...

These photos were snapped at the 1987 International Apple Institute 16th Annual Conference, June 28-30, held at the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, in Grand Rapids, MI. The event, complete with field tours, business sessions, President's reception and closing banquet, was hosted by IAI president, Patrick LeJeune, of Heath & LeJeune, who passed away in 1993.

The name of the organization was changed to the U.S. Apple Association in 1996.



Our thanks to John Rice of Rice Fruit Co. and Nancy Foster of USAA for their assistance in identifying the following individuals and their company affiliations at the time:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) Chuck Tryon, produce director, Supervalu | 5) Odonna Matthews, food consumer advisor, Giant Foods |
| 2) Jim Billington, Farm Credit Administration | 6) Roger Kropf, Kropf Fruit Co. |
| 3) Jack Ferren, retiring IAI Board member, J.P. Sullivan Co; and Patrick LeJeune, president of IAI, Heath & LeJeune | 7) The three men were the IAI officers at the meeting (left to right): John Rice, secretary of IAI; Bernie Swindeman, vice president of IAI, Applewood Orchards; and Patrick LeJeune, president of IAI, Heath & LeJeune |
| 4) Richard "Dick" Moore, retiring IAI Board member | |

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



*Where the subject may be perishable
but the insight isn't.*

What is a Pundit?

Merriam Webster — a person who gives opinions in an authoritative manner usually through the mass media.

What is the Perishable Pundit?

Just ask our readers —

“... providing substance, thought-provoking opinions and, at the very least, waking up many.”

“Excellent commentary on the status of regulators’ positioning on food safety for the produce industry.”

“... bringing some common sense to the E. coli issue of late.”

“... a lively and engaging forum for discussion of issues relevant to the produce industry.”

“... thought-provoking commentary with robust dialog.”

“... keeping the debate going...”

“... kind of an investigative reporter...”

“... extensive coverage leaves no subject without great healthy discussion, and no topic is too sacred.”

“Your courage in stating your opinion and your reaction to criticism is respectful and honest.”

“... focused on the complicated issues relating to food safety in produce.”

“... teaching the industry quite a bit about the power of the internet.”

“... an education for those of us who are still refining our computer skills.”

“... a valuable service.”

“... the most important journalism in the industry, and now we get them every day... you have become the ‘voice’ ...”

“Your analysis of the state of leadership in the produce industry past, present, and future is right on!”

“... a welcome part of the day that stimulates the mind and encourages us to think about and consider a different point of view.”

“... writing with heart and insight...”

“... one of my ‘must-read’ e-mails everyday!”

“Our industry has traditionally not been associated with being ‘deep thinkers’, and you have definitely become our Thought Leader.”

“... a resource that delves deeply into issues impacting our industry. Kudo’s!”

“Keeps us thinking.”

“... spreading your abundant common sense on a daily basis.”

“... most refreshing.”

“The Pundit does, in fact, incite reactions and cause good thinkers to think harder and longer on topics that are current and newsworthy.”

Catch the Perishable Pundit every day. Go to www.perishablepundit.com click on the “Subscribe Today” button and receive a daily copy of Jim Prevor’s Perishable Pundit via e-mail.

AMERICAN FAVORITES

Vince
Gill

Ashton
Shepherd

SWEET VIDALIAS & COUNTRY MUSIC

JOIN VIDALIA'S PEAK SEASON PROMOTION NOW

- ★ Thousands of free song downloads
- ★ First-ever Vidalia jingle contest
- ★ POS with top country artists
- ★ Country-themed packaging
- ★ Artists' favorite Vidalia recipes
- ★ National PR campaign
- ★ Ads in *OK!* & *Country Weekly*
- ★ Viral marketing

VIDALIA
ONIONS



VIDALIAONION.ORG

Ask your supplier about Packaging, POS,
Circular Artwork and Retail Display Contest:
WIN YOUR OWN ULTIMATE NASHVILLE VIP VACATION!