

# producebusiness

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INDUSTRY  
IMPROVEMENT

MARKETING • MERCHANDISING • MANAGEMENT • PROCUREMENT

**AISLE by AISLE**  
Booth  Review  
**STARTS ON  
PAGE 115**



## The Growing Phenomenon Of Community Supported Agriculture



**INSIDE:**

### Introducing FLORAL BUSINESS

THE PUNDIT LOOKS AT DEL MONTE FRESH VS. FDA  
POTATO MERCHANDISING • FALL MERCHANDISING  
NEW YORK APPLES • IDAHO POTATOES • MICHIGAN APPLES  
LEAFY GREENS • GREEN TRANSPORTATION • PISTACHIOS  
PEARS • PERUVIAN ONIONS • SOUTH AFRICAN CITRUS  
REGIONAL PROFILES: TWIN CITIES, PHILADELPHIA AND DETROIT  
**SPECIAL INSERT: FPAA AND NOGALES-AREA SHIPPERS  
PAVE THE WAY TOWARD A BRIGHTER FUTURE**



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**THIS MONTH'S WINNER**



**Heber Zauala**  
**Produce and Floral Director**  
**Best Yet Market**  
**Bethpage, NY**

In 1996, Heber Zauala began his career with Best Yet as an assistant produce manager, climbing the proverbial ladder until he reached his current position of produce and floral department director. "It has been a great ride, and such an interesting learning experience," says Zauala, who is in full control of the produce department and does most of the buying for the chain that is known for its perishables department.

When Zauala emigrated from Honduras, he was looking for a career path to pursue that was similar to his farming background, "and

when I found produce, I knew it would be a perfect fit. I call the store my second home. I love what I do."

Best Yet has 13 stores throughout Long Island and Manhattan. "This time of the year, we work with a lot of local growers in New York state and Long Island," says Zauala. "In another two weeks, we will start with local apples. We have great relationship with growers upstate."

Zauala has been reading **PRODUCE BUSINESS** for many years, but has found it especially helpful recently. "I get many new ideas and new information from it. I definitely use it as tool for my business."  
**pb**

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

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**QUESTIONS FOR THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE**

- 1) Who can you contact at PBH to become an Adopt-A-School Sponsor? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) How many bananas are processed in Thermal Tech ripening rooms on a daily basis? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Name three categories of produce marketed by Wada Farms. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) What family is behind the success of J-C Distributing Inc.? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) What is the Minneapolis contact number for Wholesale Produce? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) What units does T.M. Kovacevich occupy in the new Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market? \_\_\_\_\_

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_  
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Photocopies of this form are acceptable. Please send answers to:  
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## SEPTEMBER 6 - 9, 2011 35TH JOINT TOMATO CONFERENCE

Key tomato industry leaders meet to review the past year and to share projects for the forthcoming campaign.

**Conference Venue:** Ritz Carlton, Naples, FL  
**Conference Management:** Florida Tomato Committee, Maitland, FL  
**Phone:** 407-660-1949 • **Fax:** 407-660-1656  
**Email:** [samantha@floridatomatoes.org](mailto:samantha@floridatomatoes.org)  
**Website:** [www.floridatomatoes.org](http://www.floridatomatoes.org)

## September 18 - 20, 2011 FLORIDA FRUIT & VEGETABLE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONVENTION

**Conference Venue:** Ritz Carlton, Palm Beach, FL  
**Conference Management:** Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association  
**Phone:** 321-214-5200 • **Fax:** 321-214-0210  
**Email:** [information@ffva.com](mailto:information@ffva.com)  
**Website:** [www.ffva.com](http://www.ffva.com)

## September 21-24, 2011 NATURAL PRODUCTS EXPO EAST

**Conference Venue:** Baltimore Convention Center, Baltimore, MD  
**Conference Management:** New Hope Natural Media, Boulder, CO  
**Phone:** 303 939-8440 • **Fax:** 303-939-9559  
**Email:** [info@newhope.com](mailto:info@newhope.com)  
**Website:** [www.newhope.com](http://www.newhope.com)

## September 22 - 24, 2011 SEPC FALL CONFERENCE 2011 2011 ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE

**Conference Venue:** Gaylord Opryland Hotel, Nashville, TN  
**Conference Management:** Southeast Produce Council, Inc., Sun City Center, FL  
**Phone:** 813-633-5556 • **Fax:** 813-653-4479  
**Email:** [info@seproducecouncil.com](mailto:info@seproducecouncil.com)  
**Website:** [www.seproducecouncil.com](http://www.seproducecouncil.com)

## September 28 - 30, 2011 FIRST INTERNATIONAL BERRY CONGRESS OF MEXICO

**Conference Venue:** RIU Hotel, Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico  
**Conference Management:** The National Association of Berries of Mexico (ANEVERRIES) Inc., Jalisco, Mexico  
**Phone:** 52 33 38133643  
**Email:** [blancanelly.partida@aneberries.mx](mailto:blancanelly.partida@aneberries.mx)  
**Website:** [www.aneberries.mx](http://www.aneberries.mx)

## OCTOBER 3-5 2011 WASHINGTON PUBLIC POLICY CONFERENCE

The produce industry's most powerful public policy event.  
**Conference Venue:** Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill, Washington D.C.  
**Conference Management:** United Fresh  
**Phone:** 202-303-3400 • **Fax:** 202-303-3433  
**Email:** [united@unitedfresh.org](mailto:united@unitedfresh.org)  
**Website:** [www.unitedfresh.org](http://www.unitedfresh.org)

## October 8-11, 2011 ANUGA

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

## October 14 - 17, 2011 PMA FRESH SUMMIT 2011

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

## NOVEMBER 3 - 5, 2011 NOGALES PRODUCE CONVENTION 2011

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

## November 6 - 9, 2011 WESTERN GROWERS ANNUAL MEETING 2011

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

## November 7 - 9, 2011 NEW YORK PRODUCE SHOW & CONFERENCE 2011

The New York Produce Show and Conference, presented by Eastern Produce Council and PRODUCE BUSINESS, is the only produce show to be held in New York City  
**Conference Venue:** New York Hilton & Towers, New York, NY  
**Conference Management:** Produce Business, Boca Raton, FL  
**Phone:** 561-994-1118 • **Fax:** 561-994-1610  
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**Website:** [www.newyorkproduceshow.com](http://www.newyorkproduceshow.com)

## November 14 - 15, 2011 AMERICAS FOOD & BEVERAGE 2011

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

## November 16 - 18, 2011 FHC CHINA 2011

The 15th international exhibition for the food, drink, hospitality, foodservice, bakery and retail industries.  
**Conference Venue:** Shanghai New Int'l Expo Centre (SNIEC), Shanghai, China  
**Conference Management:** Oak Overseas, Ltd., Concord, NC  
**Phone:** (704) 837-1980 • **Fax:** (704) 943-0853  
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## GFVGA'S HALL: THROUGH GEORGIA IMMIGRATION BILL, A LESSON FOR THE PRODUCE INDUSTRY (PART II OF II)

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

United Fresh's communications manager Patrick Delaney continues his conversation with Charles Hall, executive director of the LaGrange-based Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, on the immigration and farm labor debate in Georgia.

**United Fresh: Is there any way that a solution can be found in domestic labor?**

**Charles Hall:** I think that 'the out' is a fix to the guest worker law that works; I think that's our industry's long-term solution. We hear a lot of the refrain, "I picked cucumbers as a kid; I had a garden." That's certainly one thing, but can you do it today, in a much bigger garden?

We were at Rep. Jack Kingston's town hall meeting on the bill recently, and we heard from a grower who stood up and made the point that what Washington needs to understand is that foreign workers are going to pick our crops, and it's up to Washington to decide whether they're picking the crops in the United States, or in another country. The bottom line on all this is who's going to be producing our food. Will it be produced in the United States or abroad?

**UF: With the bill in its current form, what is the mindset of your members and of the general agriculture industry in Georgia with regard to farm labor?**

**CH:** I think that it's somewhere between panic and "oh well, what am I going to do?" We will know better how the growers are feeling once we know how much is going into the ground for the fall. We know that a lot of people, at least those that can, are investigating moving to H-2A. I don't know what kind of numbers that's going to create, and whether there's going to be a fallout from there with people not able to get the H-2A workers. If we have too many people going to H-2A, the U.S. Department of

Labor isn't going to be able to handle it. I know that there are a lot of people who are hoping that we'll be able to figure out some kind of guest worker program, and whether that's an H-2A fix, or something new, we don't know.

### THERE'S A BIG MISUNDERSTANDING ON WHAT IT MEANS TO NEED MIGRANT WORKERS AND GUEST WORKERS.

**UF:** How does this issue affect growers with respect to their size?

**CH:** Most of the time, when a migrant crew comes into an area, a smaller grower will have a more difficult time getting migrant workers on their farm than a large grower would, mainly because they have smaller fields and a smaller crop to pick. There's more money out there for the crew on a large grower's 120 acres than there is on a small grower's 20 acres. The problem remains the same, though, if there are no migrants at all. If there aren't any migrants, there aren't any workers. In that sense, this issue affects everyone, regardless of size or of commodity grown. On the domestic side, though, I think that the smaller grower has an advantage over the larger grower in that the smaller grower doesn't have to secure as much labor.

**UF: Where does the Georgia industry go from here?**

**CH:** Two things are happening. One, the GFVGA is commissioning a study on the losses incurred by the state's ag industry as a result of the bill. Second, the bill requires that the Commissioner of Agriculture study what effects the bill has on agriculture specifically, and explore the possibility of a guest worker program operated by the state. What we've done is taken a realistic look at what effect this has had. You start to hear stories from growers and

see the results of surveys, and it's by no means scientific, but we're working with the University of Georgia to develop a survey tool that will provide them with the data they need to analyze what we've had as a crop year. That will confirm whether or not we had a labor shortage, how the growers did in the long run, and so on. That study will finish up by October 1.

**UF: What are the lessons that the rest of the industry can take away from the situation in**

**Georgia?**

**CH:** From our standpoint as an association, we've got to have better communications channels so that we have better intelligence faster, to have a closer sense of what's happening out there. I think that we reacted pretty darn quickly to this, but I think with that, we could've reacted a little quicker.

I think the other thing is that there's a big misunderstanding on what it means to need migrant workers and guest workers. When you start talking about sending all the illegals home, you're also talking about major economic changes. One of the provisions of HB 87 is that the school systems have to verify the residency of the schoolchildren that they're serving. Someone has floated a number of 130,000 illegal children in Georgia schools, and calculated that those children are costing the school system some inordinate sum of money, but what isn't being reported is that if you take those 130,000 students out of the school system (dividing by 25, which is the average size of a classroom), 5,100 schoolteachers will lose their jobs when the students are sent elsewhere. It may save the school system money, but it will cost people their jobs. The impact of how the migrant worker is integrated into society is a part of this whole equation that nobody really understands, and we need to do a better job of getting that story across as an industry.

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# THE NEW KINGS OF SUSTAINABILITY

By James Prevor

President & Editor-in-Chief



**B**ack when the French had kings, they used to say, “*Le Roi est mort. Vive le Roi!*” Translated as “The King is dead. Long live the King,” the phrase symbolized the concept that the kingdom was never without a king. The death of one monarch instantly transferred power to his successor.

The phrase comes to mind because it so perfectly symbolizes the state of sustainability in our industry. Retailers have pulled back or

abandoned sustainability programs altogether, except in those areas where they can see an immediate profit boost. In foodservice, though, sustainability — especially the local aspect of it — is a *cause célèbre* among chefs and young adults, especially college students.

Or, put another way, “Sustainability is dead. Long live sustainability!”

How this situation came about is intriguing and not instantly obvious, even to players deeply involved. Roughly, though, it has worked out this way: In large retail operations, sustainability was very much a top-down marketing initiative. Wal-Mart, which, for a moment, acquired the image as the preeminent retail advocate of sustainability, went into it not because its customers were demanding it, nor because there was any groundswell of support coming from employees; Wal-Mart went into it as a PR move. Executives perceived that Wal-Mart could use sustainability as a kind of invisibility cloak, in which all the bad things Wal-Mart was being accused of could be made to disappear when cloaked behind a sustainability effort.

Noting that sustainability traditionally had separate focuses on the environment, the economic and social spheres, Wal-Mart executives further thought they could pick and choose — only focusing on those aspects of sustainability that would increase the corporation’s bottom line.

Now there was clearly some value here. Sustainability at Wal-Mart, and at most large retailers, became a kind of heightened consciousness in which traditional practices, particularly relating to energy, packaging and logistics, were looked at with an eagle eye to find more efficient ways to proceed.

In the end, though, with the exception of a few small PR efforts, it is difficult to identify even one thing that a major retailer did in service of sustainability that it would not have done if its goal was simply to maximize long-term profits.

Beneficial or not, such efforts are not particularly inspiring, and it would be hard to find even one of Wal-Mart’s many store clerks who would be particularly jazzed about the corporation’s commitment to sustainability.

The consumers who really were focused on sustainability wound up focusing on alternative channels, so we have an explosion of farmer’s markets and CSAs (community supported agriculture.)

In contrast, chefs and college students have served as the yin and yang of sustainability at mainstream foodservice operations. The broader industry has legitimate critiques of these enthusiasms. College students may well be leading more with their hearts than their heads in these efforts, but isn’t that passion almost the definition of the age group?

Chefs may be loath to admit it, but their movement away from organic and toward local can be explained as a rational response to changes in the regulatory environment. Before the Organic Foods Production Act, organic was a “Wild West” with wildly different standards across the country. A restaurateur, who sourced organic and vetted it himself, was giving the consumer a real value that the consumer could not easily recreate on his own. Once the National Organic Standards were established, any consumer could go into a store and purchase certified organic produce, so suddenly the chef’s contribution was not so valuable.

Yet when chefs shifted to local, they had a new way of adding value. In most cases, consumers have little, if any, opportunity to interact with local farms. So when a chef can identify local vendors of quality, he is selecting purveyors of quality produce and

other items that consumers cannot so well do for themselves. That is the definition of value-added.

Because these enthusiasms by students and chefs are so genuine, they are also infectious. It is this love of local and fresh, sustainable and bio-diverse, and artisan-produced food that brought on the media love-fest with virtually every newspaper having someone live as a locavore for a while. It has also led to new restaurant concepts such as farm-to-table restaurants and has tied in with school garden projects — a way of reaching out to even younger consumers.

Nonetheless, enthusiasm may not be enough to carry the day. There are real issues, especially related to food safety, that push growers to consolidate, and local is appealing in part because high diesel prices make it price-competitive with distant growing areas.

But in all human endeavors, enthusiasm, if not a sufficient condition to prevail, is surely a necessary one. If nothing else, a focus on sustainability in foodservice, manifested as a drive for local, is teaching college students to have great consciousness about their food and where it comes from. Reverberating such an attitude through the generations is likely to be the key to getting people to eat less processed and fresher foods; indeed, such a consciousness seems the only force with the power to move half the plate to fresh produce. As they say, “may the force be with us.”

**A focus on sustainability in foodservice, manifested as a drive for local, is teaching college students to have great consciousness about their food and where it comes from.**

*Special Note: If you are interested in exploring these ideas more fully, register for the Ideation Fresh Foodservice Forum being offered as part of the New York Produce Show and Conference, Nov 7-9, 2011. For information, e-mail [foodservice@NYProduceShow.com](mailto:foodservice@NYProduceShow.com) or go to [NYProduceShow.com](http://NYProduceShow.com)*

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# Ten (Plus One) Suggestions For Researchers

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

**F**or the past seven years, PRODUCE BUSINESS has published the Research Perspective/Comments & Analysis pages, a total of 80 columns. When we first began, Bryan Silbermann, president and CEO at the Produce Marketing Association, contributed 52 articles, pertaining to the latest research commissioned by the PMA. Then we opened the doors to professors, research companies and many other organizations.

Typically we respond here to specific research initiatives, but we thought it might be helpful to talk about the general issues that seem to bedevil much of the research done in the trade:

**Perhaps the greatest lesson is to not expect too much from research. The world of tomorrow will not be built from a survey response.**

## 1) There is too much survey research.

An awful lot of research is motivated not by the thirst for knowledge but by the quest for publicity. The media eats up survey results. Publish a survey reporting that consumers are willing to pay up for food safety or pay a premium for organic, and one gets a decent shot of getting a mention in *USA Today*. Unfortunately surveys by themselves tell us only what people choose to say to the surveyor. The interesting questions either require more research – do these assertions correspond

with sales data? – or they require more thinking – why would consumers say this if it is not so?

But more research and more thoughtful analysis both are expensive so they are not often done. So we wind up with survey results being reported as facts when they are really data points in a more comprehensive understanding of the issue at hand. Sometimes more data spreads more smoke than light.

## 2) Qualitative research must always precede quantitative research.

When we survey consumers, whether via telephone or via store or mall intercepts or home or work visits, the industry often makes the mistake of thinking that consumers have the same understanding of industry terms as the industry does. The truth is that a “fresh-cut” produce item or a “prepared food” can mean something very different to a consumer than it does to the trade. Even a seemingly clear item, say a name such as “Idaho potato,” contains within it great ambiguity. To a consumer, is an Idaho potato any type of potato — round, long, red, purple — that is grown in the state of Idaho, or is it any long white russet-type potato regardless of where it is grown? It is only after one understands the way those that are to be surveyed or interviewed use language that one can even begin to draft a good survey questionnaire.

## 3) Survey enough people to have valid information for subgroups.

It can be interesting to know the way the country is going on some issue or other, but most business decisions have to be made on a more local level. In other words, one doesn't just decide to open more stores in general; one has to decide the particular kind of stores to open and where to open them.

The population can be booming in Texas and collapsing in Michigan. The Jewish population can shrink even while

the Muslim population explodes. The numbers for omnivores and vegans can see-saw. Beyond the issue of utility, it is difficult to understand the meaning and importance of a study if one can't figure out the way subgroups are looking. If consumption of grapefruit is sustained at level X because a sub-set of senior citizens is a heavy consumer, the implications for future grapefruit consumption are exactly opposite of what they are if the level of grapefruit consumption is sustained by a youthful interest in grapefruit.

Unfortunately, the focus on the quick boost of an easy headline tends to make the focus of most surveys to be national. Doing larger projects raises expenses and allows for greater understanding but costs a lot more. We need it to happen more as well.

## 4) Double check with real world interfaces.

The great advantage that the industry has in doing research is that it has access to data that outsiders do not. This could be loyalty card data, UPC data, shipment and receiving data. It is a shame that the industry often does precisely the same survey that someone without access to any data would do. The richest studies double check survey results against actual sales data.

## 5) Do trials and turn our stores into laboratories testing success.

Very often, studies try to winnow out how people would behave in various situations by trying to look at studies of things that have already happened and winnow out what consumers did in some situation or another. This is fine, of course, and often useful. However, the real job of our VPs of produce can be helping to make dreams come true – dreams of the industry for greater consumption and dreams of individuals who have products and services to promote.

There is only one real way to know

what will be the effect on sales of sampling mangos – that is to sample mangos and keep track of the results.

## 6) Test market.

Commodity promotion boards are often heavily pressured to produce immediate results. Consequently, they often spend their money on large scale national programs. In many cases, the money would be better spent on small test markets determining what actually works before rolling out a national program. What mix of TV, radio, print, outdoor advertising, online marketing, social media and in-store promotion is optimal to boost sales? One can't test enough variables nationally, but this is exactly what test markets are for.

## 7) Distinguish between the attributes of your promotion and the value of promotion itself.

Years ago, the 5-a-Day campaign had convinced some stores to jazz it up with a 5-a-Day promotion. As sales improved in these stores, the stores issued press releases saying that this proved that promoting 5-a-Day was an effective tool to boost sales. Perhaps. But it was just as likely that the test proved that promotion boosts sales.

In other words, if the retailer did exactly the same thing, but instead of 5-a-Day, those signs, aprons, etc., had said "Support your Farmer," perhaps the results would have been the same. We don't know because there was no control group. A study such as this would have required a Group A control with only normal promotion, a Group B control with promotion of an alternate slogan, and Group C would have been the 5-a-Day campaign.

## 8) Sustain the study long enough to know if the results are long-term.

It is one thing to boost sales of garlic for a week. That might be a useful trick if one wants to make an end-of-quarter number, but that is an entirely different matter than increasing total purchases of garlic. A promotion that only shifts sales around is a

far less valuable promotion to retailers and the industry than a promotion that actually persuades consumers to buy more.

Studies need to be sustained over long periods to see how the sales curve is affected long after the promotion is over.

## 9) Think of the whole department, indeed the whole store.

Often commodity promotion groups do studies that claim to show that promotion of their crops increases sales or profits, but actually shows nothing of the sort. If your study points out that your commodity typically gets two feet of display in the back of the department and your study finds that with a 20-foot display at the front of the department, sales and profits will boom, one really will generate a yawn from most retailers. After all, that prime slot in front with the 20-foot table is already selling something that has been selected for that spot.

The research obligation is to show that switching that prime space to your commodity will produce higher sales or profits; in other words, that your item should go there rather than the current selection.

In fact, even this is a little simplistic. After all, different items have secondary effects. That table devoted to Iceberg might be less profitable in and of itself than a table devoted to something else. If, however, the Iceberg table drives purchases of tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, mushrooms, croutons, salad dressings etc., it might still be the most profitable option.

If you get a really enlightened chain, they might value a study that shows that if the table is filled with high-value raspberries, the berries will attract to the store a client who spends big bucks on seafood, prepared items in the deli and expensive balsamic vinegars, olive oils and fine wine.

It is complicated and expensive to do these studies, but they are all the way to add value to an association with your group or company.

## 10) Consumption vs. sales.

Sometimes we focus on sales statistics

but, particularly, with new items, careful study needs to be done to verify consumption. Otherwise the sales are not likely to be sustained. It is true that a wag once said that Arm & Hammer was the greatest marketer in the world, having persuaded consumers that it was good thing to buy their product, put it in your refrigerator for a month, then throw it out and buy a new one. Yet even this is a form of consumption in which the product is being used for its intended purpose of, in this case, odor control.

In contrast, children might demand collard greens if the package has enough cartoon characters – but how many times will parents buy collard greens if the children don't eat them?

In foodservice and especially school cafeterias, one can mandate vegetables be served with a meal, but one can't mandate that children eat them. This may go on for a surprisingly long time, but building a business model on selling items that consumers won't eat is a fragile foundation for a business.

## One Bonus Thought: The answer you get depends on the questions you ask.

The hard part of research is not collecting answers; it is understanding the questions. With the recent resignation of Steve Jobs, it is important to know that no studies or surveys told him that we all needed to have a graphical user interface on our computer, or that we needed small devices to listen to music while jogging and that we needed to buy that music online.

No surveys told him we needed little pads with which to read magazines. Survey results, most research in fact, is about incremental improvements to the existing world. The great genius of people like Jobs is hearing questions that nobody ever asks. So, perhaps the greatest lesson is to not expect too much from research. The world of tomorrow will not be built from a survey response. If we relied on research of this nature, we wouldn't have iPads. We would have better carrier pigeons.

## TRANSITIONS

### DUDA FARM FRESH FOODS OVIEDO, FL

**Nichole Towell** was recently promoted to director of marketing. With 11 years at Duda Farm Fresh Foods, Nichole recently led the company's consumer marketing efforts through digital and social media marketing. She also serves on the United Fresh Leadership Alumni Board, is on the planning committee for the PMA FIT Fresh Perspective event and is an avid supporter and member of the Produce for Better Health Foundation Marketing Committee.



### ASSOCIATED POTATO GROWERS GRAND FORKS, ND

Associated Potato Growers is pleased to add **Jim LeQuire** to its staff. Originally from Grafton, ND, Jim brings 38 years of produce industry experience, where he worked with the Mike Layton Company, and more recently, Central Produce in West Fargo, ND. APG is among the Red River Valley's largest shippers of red potatoes.



### GROWERS EXPRESS SALINAS, CA

**Jennifer Fancher** was recently hired as director of marketing for Growers Express. An experienced account and project manager, Fancher has an extensive background in both marketing and product sales analysis. Before Growers Express, Fancher was a category manager for Driscoll's, where she increased category sales through campaign analysis, planning and strategy implementation.



### COPPER PENNY MARKETING WHITEFISH BAY, WI

**Melinda Goodman**, a 15-year veteran of the produce industry, recently opened Copper Penny Marketing, a marketing and consulting company specializing in fresh produce and food. Goodman will offer clients a variety of services including brand management, new package development, promotional planning and public relations. She previously worked for Golden Sun Marketing, where she was the director of marketing.



### PHILADELPHIA WHOLESALE PRODUCE MARKET PHILADELPHIA, PA

**Tad Thompson** has been named the business development manager of the Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market. Mr. Thompson has primarily worked for *The Produce News* since 2002, and has been the Canada manager for *The Produce News* since February. After graduating in journalism from Kansas State University, Mr. Thompson entered the produce industry in 1977 as The Packer's Eastern editor.



### CENTER FOR PRODUCE SAFETY DINUBA, CA

**Steve Patricio** will assume the position of chairman of the Center For Produce Safety, which provides research the produce industry can use to prevent food-borne illnesses. He is currently president and CEO of Westside Produce, a major shipper of fresh California and Arizona melons, and has served as chairman of the Food Safety Committee of the California Cantaloupe Advisory Board since its inception in 1990.



## NEW PRODUCTS

### RENAISSANCE UNVEILS NEXT GENERATION CHEF ESSENTIALS LINE

Rancho Cordova, CA-based Renaissance Food Group is launching the next generation of its Chef Essentials product line. New features will include innovative packaging, enhanced consumer messaging, QR technology with videos and recipes, as well as the introduction of new product offerings. The company worked with family chefs and consumers to review all components of the Chef Essentials line.



### FIRST ERP SOFTWARE COMPANY TO CREATE CHECKOUT APP

Produce Pro Software, Woodridge, IL, plans to launch its custom smart phone application at PMA Fresh Summit in Atlanta, Georgia. This is the first smart phone application in the perishable industry to be made by an ERP software company for its users' customers. Produce Pro's Checkout App will allow its users' customers to place orders on their smart phones.



### NEW 'SALAD SMARTS' PROGRAMS EDUCATE CONSUMERS

Salinas, CA-based Tanimura & Antle is running a Fall 2011 product promotion titled "Salad Smarts" to support two healthy eating school initiatives: Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools and Freggie's Children's Programs. During this 3-month promotion, Tanimura & Antle will promote each cause through various communication efforts including new high impact packaging, in-store graphic materials, print and online trade and a promotional website.



### HOUSE FOODS ADDS SUPER FIRM TOFU VARIETIES TO LINEUP

Garden Grove, CA-based House Foods America have expanded its non-GMO product line with new Super Firm Tofu and Super Firm Cubed Tofu available in Premium and Organic varieties. The new House Foods Super Firm product family will come in unique orange packaging to set it apart from the other firmness levels. House Foods' Tofu Steak in Grilled and Garlic & Pepper varieties will be repackaged and introduced as part of the Organic and Premium Super Firm line.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### ARGENTINEAN BLUEBERRY ROUTE TAKES FLIGHT IN SEPTEMBER

The Buenos Aires-based Argentinean Blueberry Committee (ABC) projects its association members will begin shipping fall blueberries to the United States by air in September. Direct-flown to stores via the newly launched "blueberry route," Argentina's blueberries are the first off-season product to reach the U.S. market, extending the fresh season from fall into winter. The Argentinean Blueberry Committee established new standards of quality and safety and expanded Argentinean exports globally.



### CHRISTOPHER RANCH FORECASTS EXCEPTIONAL 2011 HARVEST

Christopher Ranch LLC, Gilroy, CA, projects Monviso Heirloom Garlic supply as "outstanding" for this year and into 2012. With product and plant safety a top priority at Christopher Ranch, food-service customers can serve Monviso Heirloom Garlic with confidence. Packed in 5-lb., eco-friendly, resealable bags, a tear-off "hood" and zip-lock closure reduce the risk of contamination. Christopher Ranch also date-codes each bag, so operators can monitor usage and rotate product.



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**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**GROWING STRONGER COMMUNITIES**

San Diego, CA-based Organics Unlimited has declared September as GROW Month. With promotions that will boost sales, as well as offer an opportunity for retailers and their customers to get involved in improving farm laborers' lives in Mexico, this month-long celebration is timed with back-to-school for both U.S. and Mexican children. GROW Month programs for retailers include a variety of display materials, publicity support, online and social media support and the opportunity for demos or participation in market events.



**DOLE AND CLINTON KELLY TEAM UP IN SEARCH OF STYLISH SALADS**

Monterey, CA-based Dole Fresh Vegetables christens the next phase of its "Find Your Inspiration" salad campaign this week with one of America's most famous fashion commentators conducting a nationwide search for the most stylish salad. Clinton Kelly, star of TLC's "What Not to Wear" and the new ABC daytime show, "The Chew," becomes the second of three celebrity artists enlisted by Dole to inspire consumers to new heights of in-kitchen creativity.



**ROYAL ROSE RADICCHIO ANNOUNCES SALADS FOR ADULTS**

Royal Rose Radicchio, of Salinas, CA, would like your customers to think beyond the traditional green salad. Think wine-soaked fruit, rum, bourbon, vodka and more. From starter and entrée salads to dessert salads as well, Royal Rose Radicchio is providing recipes for hot entrées and warm and cold salads for adults only.



**PERO FAMILY FARMS LAUNCHES NEW WEB SITE**

Delray Beach, FL-based Pero Family Farms has updated its Web site to promote Pero's staple produce items as well as many of its new lines, such as SteamyCuts®, Fresh-Wrap®, and new whole packaged produce items like the 2-lb. Mini Sweets. The look, style and feel are designed to be as colorful as the produce department itself and provides for a more compelling, dynamic experience.



**DULCICH'S FLAME GRAPES SET FOR RECORD-BREAKING CROP**

Delano, CA-based Dulcich & Sons' Pretty Lady Flames table grapes are currently being packed and shipped. California's climate has been perfect, and sets the stage for a record-breaking crop, in both quality and volume. Again this year, Dulcich will be featuring its popular Hobgoblin Grape Program in October, which features fun and eye-catching freestanding bins, "grab-n-go" colander bags and shelf danglers.



**MANN PACKING PARTNERS WITH KIKKOMAN**

Salinas, CA-based Mann Packing is partnering with Kikkoman on a cross-promotion this fall for family meals when kids head back to school. Through September 30, shoppers will receive an instant redeemable coupon for \$1-off any Kikkoman product with the purchase of select Mann's fresh-cut vegetable products. This is the first time the two companies have partnered on a cross-promotion.



**EVERGREEN LINE BOOSTS REFRIGERATED FLEET**

Syracuse, NY-based Evergreen Line has ordered 4,000 PrimeLINE® refrigeration units from Carrier Transicold. Evergreen Line has tripled its initial investment in a unit that leads the industry in energy efficiency. Carrier Transicold's PrimeLINE units complement the company's environmental goals by reducing ship-board power generation needs and related emissions, which, in turn, decrease the environmental impact of refrigerated container shipping.



**DEL MONTE FRESH PRODUCE GREENHOUSES OPEN IN GUATEMALA**

Del Monte Fresh Produce, Coral Gables, FL, recently finished phase one of its new greenhouse project in Jalapa, Guatemala, and is now producing and shipping premium beefsteak tomatoes and tomatoes on-the-vine to North America. This included construction of 16 hydroponic greenhouses, a packing plant and other supporting facilities. Del Monte has been able to permanently employ 257 people from the area for various operational activities and that number is expected to double as more facilities are built.



**FPAA'S 43RD CONVENTION AND GOLF TOURNAMENT**

The Fresh Produce Association of the Americas (FPAA) is putting the final touches on its 43rd Produce Convention and Golf Tournament, which will be held November 3 - 5, 2011, at the Tubac Golf Resort & Spa in the organization's home base of Nogales, AZ. Nogales is also home to the largest port of entry for fresh produce from Mexico and to a wide array of companies involved in distributing fresh produce across North America.



**'TOOLBOX' FOCUS OF PROGRAM FOR MAJOR IMPORTER**

Farmer's Best International has committed to expanding its successful trade outreach program with new elements. The key initiative of the Nogales, AZ-based company will be receiver education, which helps build sales and relationships. For the new winter season, Farmer's Best is offering a "toolbox" with specific guidelines and programs to help retailers drive shoppers to produce displays.



**SOUTH AFRICAN SUMMER CITRUS SEASON UNDERWAY**

South Africa's Ambassador to the U.S., the Honorable Ebrahim Rasool (right) and Gerrit van der Merwe, chairman of the Western Cape Citrus Producers Forum (WCCPF), recently hosted members of Congress and their representatives, and other partners in the import business. The purpose of the event was to highlight the importance of South African Summer Citrus and how expanded trade between Africa and the U.S. benefits the regional and broader U.S. economy.



**SGS SHOWCASES DISNEY-BRANDED STONEFRUIT**

SGS, a stonefruit supplier based in Traver, CA, held a seasonal kick-off promotion in all Southern California Albertson's stores, which featured peaches, plums and nectarines in Disney-themed packaging, along with in-store displays featuring Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. SGS will make these Disney-themed packages of peaches, plums and nectarines available throughout the season and can provide customized Disney POS and promotional programs for all retailers upon request.



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# Del Monte Fresh Stands Up To FDA's Bullying Tactics

FROM JIM PREVOR'S PERISHABLE PUNDIT 09.07.2011

Among those of us who have studied the FDA and its actions in relation to food safety, one thing is extraordinarily clear: Whatever the underlying goals of the food safety laws, acknowledging the mostly benign intentions of the top FDA officials in their day-to-day workings at the FDA, the FDA often comes across as a bully and, once having acted, FDA executives feel the enormous priority to avoid any admission of error, regardless of the costs or consequences to others.

The problem is obvious: There are no ready checks on FDA's power. An FDA official shows up and bans imports from a farm or demands a recall and, without going to court, there is no independent body one can ask to review the correctness of FDA's actions. The FDA is judge, jury, prosecutor and executioner all rolled into one.

Generally, produce firms will do anything, no matter how ridiculous, to get the FDA to cooperate. The absurdity comes about because once the FDA has decided to impose an import alert, it generally won't lift it until "corrective action" is taken. Yet, it is often the case that even if the FDA is correct and that farm was the source of a pathogen on produce — and very often, the FDA's evidence for these claims is scanty — thorough inspection of the farm provides not a clue as to what might have gone wrong. As such, there is no known "corrective action" to take.

But the FDA can't accept that and so demands lots of things that it doesn't believe in enough to make a policy. This whole process can easily cause a grower to miss an entire season.

Of course, what tends to stop a bully is the shock he experiences when someone stands up to him. The produce trade associations have generally been taciturn when it comes to the FDA. They also have to work with the FDA so are unwilling to call them out even when they know they are incorrect or abusive.

With individual firms afraid to speak up and the trade associations attempting to avoid conflict, we have a situation in which businesspeople become supplicants

before government, pleading for favors, rather than asserting their rights. It is a situation that debases democracy and republican government.

As such, the produce industry now owes a debt of gratitude to Del Monte Fresh as it has announced that it is not going to simply sit around and be abused. But is going to stand up and fight:

*Del Monte Fresh Produce, N.A., Inc., a subsidiary of Fresh Del Monte Produce Inc. (NYSE:FDP), filed suit on Monday, August 22, 2011 against the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland to seek an injunction that would lift an FDA rule restricting the importation of wholesome fresh cantaloupes into the United States...*

*Del Monte Fresh's claims are based on the FDA's (and several other state health agency officials') erroneous speculation, unsupported by scientific evidence, that cantaloupes previously imported by Del Monte Fresh from a Guatemalan farm and packing facility were contaminated with the pathogen Salmonella. In fact, neither the FDA nor any state health agency in the U.S. has offered evidence or data to support the FDA action.*

*The FDA's actions adversely affect Del Monte Fresh's ability to receive perishable fresh produce for sale to its customers in the U.S., as the import alert threatens the viability of a major import source for cantaloupes. Since significant resources and commitments must be finalized immediately to ensure Guatemalan cantaloupes will be ready for harvest in the near future, Del Monte Fresh is seeking immediate injunctive relief from the court.*

The lawsuit makes for fantastic reading. First, the complaint points out how flimsy the evidence is that Del Monte Fresh even was involved with this matter:

*... these officials reached this conclusion without a sufficient factual basis to support the conclusion. Among other things, on information and belief, these officials reached this conclusion without ever testing any cantaloupes to determine whether*

*they were contaminated with Salmonella.*

*FDA later concluded that cantaloupes imported by Del Monte from PAO's farm in Asuncion Mita, Guatemala (and allegedly contaminated with Salmonella) were the likely source of the illnesses described above. This conclusion was not rationally supported by the evidence available to FDA... In addition, FDA's conclusion was a clear error of judgment. Among other things:*

*All of the microbiological evidence available to FDA supports the conclusion that cantaloupes from PAO's farm in Asuncion Mita were not contaminated with Salmonella....*

*FDA has not adequately accounted for evidence indicating that the illnesses described above were not caused by cantaloupes at all.*

*FDA has not adequately accounted for the possibility that any allegedly contaminated cantaloupes came from sources other than Del Monte.*

*FDA has not adequately accounted for the possibility that any alleged contamination of Del Monte cantaloupes occurred after the cantaloupes left the custody of Del Monte in the domestic commercial supply chain...*

Second, the complaint points out that Del Monte Fresh was pressured by the FDA into declaring a recall:

*Although FDA did not have an adequate factual basis for concluding that Del Monte cantaloupes imported from Asuncion Mita posed a public health risk, FDA nonetheless demanded that Del Monte must either perform a recall of such cantaloupes or suffer the consequences of an FDA consumer advisory questioning the wholesomeness of Del Monte cantaloupes.*

*The recall demanded by FDA was not justified by the underlying evidence or by the purpose of protecting the public health. FDA lacked evidence that Del Monte cantaloupes were contaminated. Furthermore, the recall demanded by FDA related to cantaloupes that were beyond (or within a day of) their shelf life, and the*



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retailer described above confirmed that no cantaloupes from the relevant time period remained in inventory.

Rather than face a general advisory regarding cantaloupes that could potentially affect the entire cantaloupe market, Del Monte acceded to FDA's demands and issued a limited recall on March 22, 2011.

Third, Del Monte Fresh tried to reassure the FDA:

*Del Monte retained third party experts to evaluate PAO's compliance with Good Agricultural Practices in general, and in the exact fields where the allegedly contaminated cantaloupes were harvested, and in its packinghouse handling process. The experts' audit confirmed that PAO's farm and packinghouse operations meet and/or*

*alleged association between Asuncion Mita cantaloupes and the illnesses from Salmonella described above. FDA did not have, and never has had, evidence that cantaloupes from Asuncion Mita caused the Salmonella illnesses described above. In issuing Import Alert #22-03, FDA did not have, and never has had, any evidence of either spot contamination or wide-spread or systemic contamination of Asuncion Mita cantaloupes.*

*Import Alert #22-03 expressly states FDA's conclusion that the source of the contamination is likely one or more of the following: irrigation of fields with water contaminated with sewage; processing produce with Salmonella-contaminated water; poor hygienic practices of workers that harvest and pack the produce; ani-*

*dence that does not support Detention Without Physical Examination.*

Seventh, the complaint points out that the law does not give FDA authority to do what it is doing. This is a long and technical section. Part of the issue is that the law only gives authority to FDA under certain conditions. If it knows of food "manufactured, processed, or packed under unsanitary conditions" or if the food is "adulterated" because it has been "prepared, packed, or held under unsanitary conditions whereby. . . it may have been rendered injurious to health" — but the FDA has no particular basis for believing that Del Monte's cantaloupes meet any of these criteria. In fact, from everything we know about food safety the opposite is true. These are exemplary farms and packinghouses.

Eighth, the complaint points out that FDA abuses its powers to evade its legal responsibilities. Legally, the FDA is required to follow what is called "notice and comment procedures," but it does not do so. It declares that Alerts are actually just guidance to field offices and those don't require evaluation through a notice-and-comments procedure. Of course, these are not "guidance" at all. They are firm rules that require the proper procedure be followed.

The situation is a terrible one, from a public health standpoint. The FDA, by giving no weight to the quality of the operation, reduces incentives to invest in food safety programs. From a public policy standpoint, the arbitrary use of power is bound to be abused.

The FDA's response to all this is basically that though it has no hard evidence, it has epidemiology that indicates that Del Monte Fresh's production was implicated. Just as criminals can be convicted on circumstantial evidence, so, sometimes, food safety decisions are made based on epidemiology. Fair enough, but epidemiology is used by the FDA as a kind of magic incantation as if just saying the word proves the case.

At very least, the FDA should be required to provide contemporaneous transparency so outside epidemiologists can critique its work and point out errors. There need to be PACA-like independent review boards that can assess epidemiological claims. Most of all, the expectation that in some magic way every cause will be found and so corrective action can be taken needs to be abandoned.

Hopefully Del Monte Fresh's actions will get a court to put reins on the agency. The industry owes the company a hat tip just for being willing to try.

## The situation is a terrible one, from a public health standpoint. The FDA, by giving no weight to the quality of the operation, reduces incentives to invest in food safety programs. From a public policy standpoint, the arbitrary use of power is bound to be abused.

*exceed current guidelines required to maintain a high level of food safety and regulatory compliance such that only wholesome food is shipped.*

Fourth, Del Monte Fresh even did a test-and-hold program, although this is very expensive and not likely the best way to achieve food safety:

*In an abundance of caution, Del Monte requested the third-party experts to establish a rigorous pre-importation test-and-hold program for lots of cantaloupes shipped from the Asuncion Mita farm from the time of the limited recall until the end of the growing season. Under the program, samples were taken from packed product before it left the PAO packinghouse and were tested for the presence of Salmonella by an ISO-certified laboratory in Guatemala City. The third party experts concluded that all such samples tested negative for any Salmonella species.*

Fifth, when FDA imposed its "Import Alert," it had no reasonable basis to do so:

*FDA's imposition of Import Alert #22-03 was based entirely on the unsupported*

*mals in close proximity to product or water sources; and/or lack of adequate cleaning and sanitizing of equipment that comes in contact with the product.*

*On information and belief, FDA has no evidence whatsoever that PAO's Asuncion Mita operation has irrigated fields with water contaminated with sewage; processed produce with Salmonella-contaminated water; used workers for harvesting and packaging that have poor hygienic practices; had animals in close proximity to product or water sources; and/or lacked adequate cleaning and sanitizing equipment that comes in contact with product.*

Sixth, after explaining how damaging an import alert can be, the complaint states the real point — that the agency has no basis for its actions:

*FDA's imposition of Import Alert #22-03 is an arbitrary and capricious final agency action. Among other things, this action (1) is not rationally connected to the evidence before FDA; (2) is based upon a clear error of judgment; (3) has not adequately taken into account evi-*



PHOTO COURTESY OF FARMHOUSE DELIVERY



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PHOTO COURTESY OF ANNIE'S ORGANIC

# The Growing Phenomenon Of Community Supported Agriculture

How significant are CSAs and other direct marketing channels to the produce industry, and do they pose a threat to retail produce sales?

CAROL M. BAREUTHER, RD

**T**he anticipation of picking up a box full of fresh local or organic produce each week has blossomed both the popularity and the number of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operations across the nation. According to the USDA's Census of Agriculture, there were 12,549 farms in the United States that participated in a CSA program in 2007 — the most recent data available. *Local Harvest*, the leading online informational resource for the Buy Local movement, reports 4,428 CSA farms in its database as of August 1, up 267 percent from 1,661 in 2007.

Miguel I. Gómez, assistant professor at Cornell University's Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, in Ithaca, NY, whose research focuses on supply chain and marketing of specialty crops, says, "CSAs and other direct marketing channels like farmer's markets represent a very small percentage of total expenditures by consumers

on fruits and vegetables. While I don't see farmer's markets purchases growing in the future, I do foresee CSAs growing. The reason is that CSAs don't require a retail space. They have a much more flexible distribution system, and as a result, can more easily connect the grower with the consumer."

Many see CSAs and similar "subscription" operations such as buying clubs and home produce delivery services as a boon to the overall produce industry as they collectively sell thousands of pounds of fresh produce each week. Consider that the CSA program at Underwood Family Farms, in Moorpark, CA, distributes over 300 small and large boxes of produce weekly to its members in Ventura County. Annie's Organic Buying Club, in Sarasota, FL, delivers a full tractor-trailer load quantity of produce to its 1,500 members throughout Florida each week, while Green B.E.A.N. (Biodynamic. Education. Agriculture. Nutrition.) Delivery, a home delivery service for organic produce and natural groceries that

serves communities in Cincinnati, Columbus, and Dayton, OH, as well as Indianapolis, IN, sells 125,000 pounds of produce weekly to its 10,000 customers.

## CSAs Versus Supermarkets

Can CSAs potentially take a bite out of retail produce sales? Jeff Fairchild, director of produce at New Seasons Market, a 10-store chain based in Portland, OR, believes so, "but then again, so can any business that sells fresh produce, like a farmer's market or the supermarket down the street."

Bryan Silbermann, president and CEO of the Produce Marketing Association (PMA), in Newark, DE, who joined a CSA this summer for the hands-on experience, agrees. "When I get four zucchini in my CSA box, that represents a lost sale at the supermarket for that week."

To size up the competition, it's important to look at the advantages and disadvantages that CSAs and similar operations offer to customers.

One benefit is freshness, says Suzannah

Underwood, project manager at Underwood Family Farm. “We are able to harvest our produce and deliver it to the customer the next day. Many times, the produce available in stores is from outside the county, state or even country. The further away the item, the more time it has spent traveling to get to the stores. The produce loses its freshness and flavor.”

CSAs also offer a direct connection to the food source. Silbermann sums it up this way: “There’s definitely a ‘feel good’ aspect of knowing where your food comes from and supporting your local farmer.”

Another plus is access to produce not traditionally available. John Freeland, vice president of Green B.E.A.N. Delivery LLC, based in Cincinnati, OH, asserts, “If your supermarket isn’t connected to a local farmer’s tomato, you won’t be able to buy that tomato.”

Similarly, Carolyn Boyle, owner of New Roots Organics, an organic produce home delivery service based in Seattle, WA, says, “We source from really small farms. As a result, we’ll get hand-harvested Heirloom potatoes, really fat sugar snap peas and sweet juicy salad turnips — items you don’t really see at the supermarket.”

CSAs give customers the opportunity to try new items, which can be an advantage, says Underwood. “These items might be part of their box. They don’t want to waste them, so they try them and find they like them.”

Freeland agrees. “It’s easy to pass up going

## Are CSAs Just For The Affluent?

There’s an image that CSAs, buying clubs and home produce delivery services are only for the affluent customer. Jurrien Swarts, co-owner of Holton Farms, in Westminster, VT, says in some respects this is true. “Someone living paycheck to paycheck can’t shell out the \$500 to \$1,000 up front that many CSAs require.”

On the other hand, the weekly price for a box of local or organic produce can indeed be affordable. Costs span from less than \$20 for a small box with seven or eight items from a CSA to \$45 for a 20- to 35-lb. box of produce from a buying club.

John Freeland, vice president of Green B.E.A.N. Delivery, based in Cincinnati, OH, says, “Our service is \$35 per week, or \$5 per day, which is cheaper than a fast food meal. Many customers tell us that shopping online takes away the possibility of impulse purchases and this helps them stay on budget.”

Some CSAs are actively working on ways to serve low-income families, such as accepting Food Stamps and WIC vouchers. Others are coming up with more creative solutions. Holton Farms’ Swarts says, “We do a farmer’s market in the Chelsea housing project in New York City. Our plan was to put together a \$20 grab box of produce. However, the weather delayed our harvest this year and increased our costs so we had to just price our produce by the pound. We’re hoping to do the grab box idea next season.”

pb

out to buy fresh produce and order a pizza instead. But when the produce is already in your refrigerator, it’s much more convenient. For example, we’ll whip up a stir-fry at the end of the week with all the bits of vegetables we have left over.”

Ease of meal planning is another benefit of a CSA or buying club, says Annie Malka, founder of Annie’s Organic Buying Club. “We put together theme boxes to make it easy. For example, it might be an Asian, Italian, Hispanic

or red-white-and-blue summer grilling box for the Fourth of July. Everything in the box goes together.”

Elizabeth Winslow, co-founder of Farmhouse Delivery, an all-local food delivery service based in Austin, TX, agrees. “I think of myself as a curator,” she says. “We pick the best produce available locally that week and that gives customers a place to start to go find a recipe. It’s not starting at zero like in the supermarket, where everything is available and you have to try to figure out what you want in order to plan your meals.”

Winslow, who is also a professional chef, offers recipes to her customers along with the produce. “We have an ongoing and constant conversation with our customers via recipes on our Web site blog, Facebook, Twitter, e-mail and cooking classes.”

Despite the lengthy list of benefits, there are a few disadvantages to CSAs. One is the ability to get just what you want and the quantity you need, says Cornell’s Gonzalez. “With the CSA box, I would get too much of one thing and too little of another. I still ended up buying about 80 percent of my produce at the grocery store.”

“Convenience and selection,” says New Season’s Fairchild, “are a definite advantage of the supermarket’s produce department. You can get a lot of repetition in your CSA box depending on what’s in season. In our area, most of the CSAs are all vegetables. You won’t see peaches or pears or apples in the boxes.”

In addition, many CSAs only operate seasonally. Maria Brous, director of media and community relations at Publix Super Markets,



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A sampling of organic produce items from Annie’s Organics buying club.



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based in Lakeland, FL, says, "Our stores offer a wide variety of fresh, high quality, nutritious produce year-round at a great value to customers. Our greatest challenge may be how to communicate clearly the improvements the industry has made."

### Business Models Galore

In its truest form, a CSA starts when a farmer offers a number of shares of his or her agricultural production to members of the public. A share consists of a box of what's produced on the farm each week throughout the farming season. This is picked up by the shareholder or member at the farm or a specified location. Today, there are still CSAs that operate this way. However, this successful prototype has morphed into a number of different business models.

Simcha Weinstein, director of marketing for Albert's Organics, in Bridgeport, NJ, explains, "There is a similar thread of local purchasing and community cooperation amongst them, but they are definitely different. However, it's not uncommon to find a shopper who belongs to a CSA, and also belongs to a buying club, and perhaps, on occasion goes to the farmer's

**"CSAs and other direct marketing channels like farmer's markets represent a very small percentage of total expenditures by consumers on fruits and vegetables. While I don't see farmer's markets purchases growing in the future, I do foresee CSAs growing. The reason is that CSAs don't require a retail space. They have a much more flexible distribution system, and as a result, can more easily connect the grower with the consumer."**

— Miguel I. Gómez  
Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics  
and Management, Cornell University

market. In the end, it's about local and community purchasing and consumers wanting more control over their products and the costs of their products."

Three major ways in which CSAs, buying

clubs and home produce delivery services differ are how produce is sourced, the selection available, and how delivery takes place. True CSAs, such as Underwood Family Farms and Holton Farms, in Westminster, VT, sell only what they grow. Jurrien Swarts, co-owner of Holton Farms, describes, "Our CSA started in 2009 and it grew out of a corporate wellness program where our family's 240-acre farm supplied produce to 35 of my co-workers in the financial district on Wall Street from June to October. It's grown quickly to 1,240 members, but it's been tough as a new farm. For example, we went from five or six crops to over 100 different crops in order to provide variety to our customers."

Farmhouse Delivery started as a way to sell produce grown on Winslow's partner's farm. Today, she sources from a number of farms that average 10 to 20 acres in size. "Everything comes from less than 200 miles away, except for apples from northern Texas and citrus, mangos and avocados from McAllen," Winslow explains. "Summer is the most difficult, especially August and September. That's when the variety dwindles to okra and eggplant and a little greenhouse-grown lettuce. But, it's not our

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**Kings Super Markets now has CSA programs running in six stores during the summer and fall seasons.**

business model to go further to source. If we did, where would we stop? The Southwest? The U.S.? The world? Sticking close to home just makes everyone appreciate the seasons more.”

“Some growers who work the farmer’s markets may purchase additional product outside of what they grow in order to have a

more full range of product to offer,” says Albert’s Organics Weinstein. “If they go this route, it’s crucial that they make clear exactly what they grow, and what it is that may come from Florida or California, etc. This has been an ongoing issue at farmer’s markets. It’s presumed that everything is local and grown

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“CSA pick-ups take place in the parking lots of three New Seasons Markets. The challenge has been that we don’t have large parking lots in those stores, and the CSAs tend to be busiest when the stores are also busy. The idea though, since the CSAs have limited selection, is that customers will stop in-store to get the rest of what they need.”

— Jeff Fairchild  
New Seasons Market

by the person behind the counter, and this may not necessarily be true at all. Similarly, there are issues of claiming product is organic when it’s not.”

New Roots Organic’s Boyle gets help in sourcing from wholesalers and goes further afield. “Our produce primarily comes from Washington, Oregon and California. We always buy seasonally, so you will not find melons or corn, for instance, in our bins in the winter. Throughout the year, we make it a priority to include locally grown produce first, and then, when needed to make our bins balanced and complete, we include citrus, avocados and fresh greens from California and sometimes Mexico. We will always identify where the product is grown.”

Annie’s Organic’s Malka goes beyond Florida to source over 500 organic fruits and vegetables for her members. “We work with a large national distributor based here in Florida,” she says. “In reality, most of our produce comes from California, as the Florida season is pretty much limited to November through April. We even go out of the country and source product from organic farmers we know in Mexico. After all, organic is a global, not just a local, effort.”

Similarly, Green B.E.A.N.’s Freeland sources year-round locally, regionally and then nationally. “Yes, we do offer bananas, too because our members want them. Our overall goal is to remain commercially viable and competitive with supermarkets.”

As for selection, true CSAs will offer what’s being harvested at that time without any choice. For example, the first week in August, the small-sized box from Underwood Family Farms was filled with raspberries, corn, green

leaf lettuce, red chard, a Cherokee tomato, French Morning melon and Blue Lake green beans. Conversely, the first week of December, this same small box contained purple kale, red leaf lettuce, fennel, spaghetti squash, leeks, radishes, artichokes, celery and Napa cabbage.

Conversely, selection and customization is the hallmark of many buying clubs and home delivery services. “For example,” says Malka, “we send out a questionnaire to our members to assess their preferences. Then, if they like

strawberries, we’ll include strawberries every week that they’re available. If they’re not that fond of Brussels sprouts, then even if they’re available, we might only put them in twice per year.”

Green B.E.A.N. Delivery hosts a sophisticated online ordering site that allows members to customize their bin the weekend before delivery by selecting from a list of some 40 seasonal fruits and vegetables and add *a la carte* produce items as well. Members can also add in a variety of grocery items such as meats

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and cheeses sourced from local farms. Freeland says, "We took the basic CSA model and challenged ourselves to make it broader and better. That's because customers want options and choices."

Some CSAs and buying clubs also allow members a variety of other options. These include seasonal or annual memberships, choice of size in the box or bin they receive, split shares with other families, and the ability to put an order on hold for a week or two due to vacation.

Delivery is yet another option. Some specify a particular pick-up location while others, like Green B.E.A.N. Delivery, provide home-delivery. "We deliver right to their doorstep," says Freeland. "It makes fresh foods affordable, accessible and eliminates all excuses to not eat healthfully."

#### What Can Retailers Do?

"The best approach for a retailer is not to try to compete with CSAs," advises Albert's Organics Weinstein, "but rather to endorse

"Everything comes from less than 200 miles away, except for apples from northern Texas and citrus, mangos and avocados from McAllen. Summer is the most difficult, especially August and September. That's when the variety dwindles to okra and eggplant and a little greenhouse-grown lettuce. But, it's not our business model to go further to source. If we did, where would we stop?...Sticking close to home just makes everyone appreciate the seasons more."

— Elizabeth Winslow  
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them. Even if during certain times of the year, store produce sales dip a bit because of local product, endorsing and encouraging the local movement in your community — particularly at a time when it doesn't benefit your own sales — can go a long way in showing your overall support for local farming. Also, keep in mind that most CSA's don't supply the entire produce needs of an individual. They will definitely need to supplement their purchases from the farm, and they are far more likely to make those purchases from a store that is CSA-friendly."

"Thanks to a CSA, those produce needs at the store might be more," says Samantha Cabaluna, director of communications for Earthbound Farm, in San Juan Bautista, CA. "For example, if I didn't usually buy parsnips or chard and I got them in my CSA box, figured out what to do with them, and enjoyed them, then I'd be tempted to buy more if they weren't in my box the next time. I think CSAs can expand shoppers' horizons, and in the end, lift everybody's boat."

Mike O'Brien, vice president of produce for Schnucks Market, headquartered in St. Louis, MO, agrees. "As an advocate of increasing the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, I believe that making produce more accessible will grow consumption, and as consumption grows, if I do my job properly, my share will grow."

Beyond this, there are specific ways retailers can mimic the appeal of CSAs in-store:

**Promote Local:** "The more a retailer embraces and supports organic and locally

grown foods and provides this opportunity to their community, the better they will do. After all, that's exactly what people are looking for when they shop CSAs," explains Weinstein.

PMA's Silbermann agrees. "Smart retailers are focusing on local farmers at the same time as CSAs. For example, some are having farmers pull their trucks right up to the front of the store to unload so that customers can see the fresh product arrive, while others are building farm stands in-store or setting up truck sales in their parking lots."

**Think Outside the CSA Box:** "The beauty of a CSA is the surprise in not knowing what you'll get in the box," says Silbermann. "Retailers can work with local farmers to offer a weekly 'mystery' box, then proactively use their online presence and other social media tools to link to recipes and menus. Adventure, excitement, local and community — this hits all of these buttons."

**Be the CSA Supply Source:** Supermarkets should consider becoming a supply source for a CSA in order to add more diversity to the box, suggests Cornell's Gomez. "I think there's a certain segment of customer that's a hard-core locavore. But there's another — and I don't know the size — that doesn't want to

sacrifice assortment. The supermarket can use its marketing resources to promote the CSA, and in turn, get community recognition and win some of the CSAs loyal customers."

**Start Your Own CSA:** If you can't beat them, join them. Mark Luchak, director of produce and floral at Rice Epicurean Markets, a 5-store chain based in Houston, TX, says, "I'd like to get us started if the right opportunity comes along. The best case would be to partner with a local farm or group of farmers. We already offer home-delivery."

"CSA pick-ups take place in the parking lots of three New Seasons Markets," shares Fairchild. "The challenge has been that we don't have large parking lots in those stores, and the CSAs tend to be busiest when the stores are also busy. The idea though, since the CSAs have limited selection, is that customers will stop in-store to get the rest of what they need."

Kings Super Markets, a 25-store chain based in Parsippany, NJ, started its own chain-based CSA in the summer of 2010. Customer-members will sign-in, pay a \$25-per-week fee, and then shop a produce display where burlap bags affixed with signage listing how many of each product a customer can choose. Non CSA-customers can buy the same

produce priced by the pound. CSA members enjoy a \$5 savings over the per-piece price.

The 8-week pilot program proved so successful that Paul Kneeland, director of produce and floral, expanded it on a couple of fronts this past summer. "We expanded the program to six stores instead of one," he says. "In addition, we're looking at extending the CSA into the fall, running it for four weeks in October after a break at Labor Day. The reason is that there are two peaks in supply in our area. The summer harvest is when there's the largest selection. And then in the fall, Heirloom apples, cranberries, hard squash and local tomatoes are available. There are a lot more organics available in the fall, too, and more customers who are back from summer vacations."

Kneeland sources a mix of conventional and organic produce from farms in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania, where the chain has stores. "It's an easier concept for customers to identify with," he says, "than a day's drive, or a 300-mile radius. Each fruit or vegetable is identified with the specific farm's name."

"CSA's aren't a fad," adds Kneeland, "They're definitely here to stay. That's why we decided to get into the game, stay connected and be competitive." **pb**

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Attendees at PMA's Fresh Summit have the chance to see a wide gamut of fresh produce items from Mexico and enjoy some Mexican flavors in unique presentations. More than 130 quality suppliers from Mexico will be on hand at the Mexico Pavilion at PMA's Fresh Summit Exposition in Atlanta, GA, located on Booths #1735, 1821, 1831, 1917, 1925, 1931, 2015, 2031, 2115, 2117, 2123, 2135, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2234, 2235.

Outstanding products from Mexico on display in the booth will include asparagus, berries, cactus leaves, coconuts, cucumbers, eggplant, grapes, guavas, mangos, papayas, peppers, pineapples plantains, and tomatoes, as well as many more. The Pavilion provides a convenient way for buyers to tour Mexico's best offering.

This year's pavilion will showcase authentic Mexican food prepared by one of Mexico's most celebrated celebrity chefs. Additionally, a Mixologist will amaze attendees by preparing delectable drinks made from Mexico's fruit and vegetable bounty.

Representatives from Mexico's leading trade programs will be on hand to inform buyers about the support they can receive from both industry and government. Of increasing interest are the Commercial Trade Missions organized by the Ministry of Agriculture of Mexico (SAGARPA) with the objective of improving and building business with Mexican suppliers.

Increase your business' profitability and success with products from Mexico – make sure the Mexico Pavilion is on your "must see" list for the PMA expo.

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

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## Q&A ABOUT MEXICO'S TRADE MISSIONS

with Hector Cortes, Agricultural Attache, Embassy of Mexico, Washington D.C.



The Agricultural Office at the Embassy of Mexico offers TRADE MISSIONS to help buyers 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.

### **Q** WHAT BENEFITS DOES A MISSION OFFER?

**A** With good preparation and follow-up, missions can be great door openers, and participants benefit in many ways including obtaining contracts, finding personal contacts for future follow-up, signing partnerships and cooperative agreements, finding future business development opportunities, getting hands on and up-to-date market information and research, assessing overseas opportunities and potential demand, initiating new vendor relationships, and learning about the culture, customs, business and operating environments.

### **Q** HOW MANY MISSIONS HAVE YOU DONE AND TO WHAT AREAS?

**A** We've organized close to 20 missions in the last five years. Throughout these missions, buyers have learned about Mexican Agriculture, Mexican methods and technologies of production, and Mexican practices put in place to assure the quality and safety of products. Past participants have included companies such as COSTCO, Kroger, Albertson, Safeway, Supervalu, Hy-Vee, Minyards, Pathmark, Fiesta, Rhee Bros Inc, Associated Wholesale Grocers (AWG), Hardie's, Gigante USA, Save A Lot, Leever's, Unified Western Grocers, Bogopa, Bueler's Food Stores and Kehe Food Distributors, as well as many others.

### **Q** WHAT RESULTS HAVE YOU SEEN COME OUT OF THOSE MISSIONS?

**A** Positive effects of missions include higher

sales revenues, lower procurement costs and better sourcing. We've also seen a benefit in education, cultural and international business savvy, business preparedness, professional development, goodwill and relationship building. Additionally, mission participants have developed close friendships among themselves resulting in a useful, professional network.

### **Q** WHAT IS A TYPICAL MISSION LIKE?

**A** Missions usually last from four to seven days, and consist of a multiple elements encompassing education, field-tours, and networking. Our constructive programs including briefings on the business environment and products, one-on-one business meetings, growing area tours, packing houses visits, official receptions and dinners, cultural events and some sightseeing.

### **Q** HOW TAILORED ARE THEY TO SPECIFIC NEEDS?

**A** We pride ourselves on being able to offer a very specific program and ensure each participant's objectives for the trip are met. The briefings and one-on-one meetings are prearranged and customized to match each individual delegate's business interests. We have three different types of Missions:

**1.** Customized Mission: This is when a particular buyer or company is interested in specific products or suppliers. They can request custom organization of a trip designed just for their specific needs.

**2.** Mission Linked to Tradeshow: These are organized for those interested in attending a specific Mexican trade show. A good example is the ANTAD show, held in Guadalajara in March. We assisted buyers with their arrangements to participate in the show, as well as organizing outside meetings and trips with suppliers, supermarkets and other points of interest. Visits to production

areas in adjoining states, for example Colima and Nayarit, were combined with the trip. Other shows that have traditionally linked missions with them include Expo Agro Sinaloa, Agro Baja and Expo Agroalimentaria.

**3.** Supplier Visits: These are specialized group trips to visit specific production areas and commodities of interest, as well as other useful venues like packing facilities or processing plants. Itineraries are planned according to the groups wishes and interests.

### **Q** WHAT SUPPORT DOES A MISSION GIVE?

**A** Most of our participants cite the greatest support benefit from a trade mission is that of the logistics and itinerary planning we provide. Through SAGARPA-organized missions, many buyers are able to meet with suppliers that may be difficult to contact because of language barriers, time, lack of knowledge about the regions, or other challenges. Our missions provide an easy and effective way for buyers to make visits specific to their interests and needs. The expertise of SAGARPA's personnel also allow for visits to areas, suppliers or points of interest that may be new or not well known outside of Mexico. A SAGARPA staff person accompanies the mission at all times and is helpful in providing additional information as well as translation assistance. Mission participants can also receive reimbursement for up to 70% of the hotel and travel costs.

### **Q** HOW TO I JOIN A MISSION?

**A** Anyone attending PMA's Fresh Summit can look for me or another staff person at the Mexico Pavilion in Booth # 1925. I'd be happy to outline our upcoming missions and talk to them about their specific needs. Otherwise, they can also contact me at SAGARPA'S Washington, D.C. office.





PHOTO AT RIGHT COURTESY OF CONCORD FOODS



A variety of gourds and pumpkins, as well as football-themed display shippers, are good bets for fall displays.

# Fall Fever Hits Produce Departments

Merchandising fall produce entices customers and increases sales. **BY BARBARA ROBISON**

**F**all is an ideal time to visit a retail produce department. The abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables beckons consumers and retailers to leave summer behind and embrace the colors, aromas and flavors now available. As temperatures cool and trees provide a panorama of color, consumer appetites increase. Suppliers and retailers are ready, displaying a wide variety of apples, pears, grapes, cranberries, squashes, potatoes, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, root vegetables, salad greens and more.

Whatever the special fall occasion or the particular promotion might be, the retail produce department should always look inviting. The Mustard Seed Market and Café, a two-store retail operation in Akron, OH, dresses the department up with beautiful, bright, colorful mums. "It says, 'welcome' to our customers, and they love it. Later in the fall, we will use decorative cabbage and kale, with the wonderful purple and green shades making the department a spot to visit," details produce manager Vicki Smith. We get lots of compliments. Plus, it gives shoppers an idea for decorating their own homes. We call our department 'Nature's Acres' and we dress it up to call

our customers' attention to nature's abundance."

## Back-To-School Kicks Off Fall Promotions

Back-to-school programs are probably some of the first promotions on the docket for the fall months. Tanimura & Antle Inc., in Salinas, CA, is promoting its Artisan lettuce this fall with a Salad Smarts program, supporting two healthy eating school initiatives: Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools and Freggie's Children's Programs. The company will back each program through various communication efforts during a three-month period. Included is the use of new high impact packaging, in-store graphic materials, print and online trade support and a promotional Web site, featuring the company's Artisan lettuce.

Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools is a public health campaign to provide salad bars to schools across the country in order to increase children's consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables at school lunch. The health campaign highlights First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! Initiative to end childhood obesity. It is anticipated that through exposure to more fresh fruits and vegetables at

school, parents will purchase more nutritious foods in their retail markets.

Freggie's Children's Programs, designed by the Ottawa, Ontario-based Canadian Produce Marketing Association (CPMA), focuses on teaching kids the importance of eating fruits and vegetables in a fun and engaging manner.

"Our intention is to raise the visibility of the two initiatives," says Rick Antle, Tanimura & Antle's president and CEO. "We also want to educate consumers on how they can become involved in teaching their children how to make healthier choices."

The company will make a monetary donation to the United Fresh Foundation, a not-for-profit affiliate organization of the United Fresh Produce Association, based Washington, D.C., and to CPMA in support of the two initiatives at the conclusion of their promotion on October 31.

Hillers Markets, an eight-store chain headquartered in Southfield, MI, does special promotions during the back-to-school period. Small apples and Del Monte's kid-size fruits are emphasized, according to Fabrizio Casini, director of produce operations. Back-to-school promotions of small-size pears, sold by the



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This Fall Tanimura & Antle will be partnering with 3 organizations that support a critical issue—**healthy lunches in schools**. Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools, which supports First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! initiative, the School Nutrition Association and CPMA's Freggie™ Children's Programs.

Contributions will be made to each program and consumers will be encouraged to get involved.



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Leverage back to school marketing

Salad Smarts runs August 1-October 31



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\*The founding partners of the Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools program are: United Fresh Produce Association Foundation, National Fruit and Vegetable Alliance, and the Food Family Farming Foundation.

each, in totes or cello bags, can help build the pear category.

Back-to-school also means back-to-work for many families after summer vacations. The produce department can become the destination point for many brown baggers this fall. Ready Pac Produce Inc., headquartered in Irwindale, CA, has one solution for those employees who want to bring their lunch to work: the Ready Pac Bistro bowl salad. “We have eight varieties to choose from, all of which have chef-inspired recipes and fewer than 300

calories per bowl,” reports Tristan Kieva, the company’s director of marketing. “The lettuce and toppings are kept fresh with our proprietary ‘single seal’ technology, and each bowl includes a fork. The salads make lunch a special occasion, even when eating at the office.”

According to Scott Olson, director of produce and floral, Southern division for Berkeley, CA-based Grocery Outlet Inc., “We are excited about the fall season and want to promote the many seasonal items available in the fall. However, Mother Nature dictates to us

when our fall promotional season really begins. If temperatures soar and there are good supplies of melons and soft fruit, we will continue to feature them. As soon as the temperatures cool off and we feel customers are more interested in cooking, then we move in with the fall produce items,” he explains. “We do see increased banana sales during the back-to-school period, and they continue through the fall months.”

When the new crop of apples arrives, Grocery Outlet provides a big promotional boost with advertising and added display space. “Due to store size, the number of SKUs we handle is more limited, but we double the number of apple SKUs during the fall,” adds Olson.

### Grapes Star In Fall Merchandising

“In the grape category there are more varieties than we’ve ever had before,” notes John Pandol, director of special projects for Pandol Brothers Inc., in Delano, CA. “With the many new varieties, especially red seedless, retailers have an opportunity to offer more than one variety of the same color. The new red varieties can be merchandised with crimson seedless, either using a bag and a clamshell, or bags with different PLUs. This offers the retailer a chance to run a value red/premium red grape at different price points; a sweet red and a Muscat flavored red, or a sweet red and a tart red. There is much discussion about flavor characteristics, yet grapes are merchandised strictly by visual characteristics,” he adds.

The company will be showcasing the Sweet Celebration variety in bags and clamshells with prominent variety lettering, which is ideal for the value/premium approach. It will also be experimenting with some High Pellucidity (high clarity) grape bags (HPGB) with a retail partner, in cooperation with a film manufacturer. It plans to expand the trial if the feedback is positive.

### Plentiful Pears Are A Fall Favorite

All eleven varieties of USA Pears will be plentiful in the fall, according to Kevin Moffit, president and CEO of the Milwaukie, OR-based Pear Bureau Northwest (PBN). The pear varieties include red and green Barlett, Stark Crimson, red and green Anjou, Bosc, Comice, Concorde, Seckel, Forelle and Taylor’s Gold. Organic pears will also be promoted during the fall.

PBN will be conducting pear sampling in coordination with retailers nationwide, which is a proven tactic to help boost pear sales. Through sampling, the consumer is exposed to different pear varieties, while also being educated about

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pear ripening and usage in recipes. To help drive impulse sales, a series of fun and educational in-store radio spots are available. The spots will be live at participating retailers nationwide from mid-September to mid-February.

"We will launch a new consumer advertising campaign this fall, designed to engage and educate consumers about pear ripening and usage through recipes," reveals Moffit. "Ads will appear in magazines and online, including use of publications like *Cooking Light* and Martha Stewart's *Whole Living* magazines. POS materials will be made available to retailers. In addition, an integrated public relations program will support the campaign with ongoing media outreach, social media promotion, consumer events and a consumer sweepstakes."

### Cranberries A Must For Fall Menus

Cranberries are a popular fall fruit that can be tied in with many other produce items. The Cranberry Network LLC, in Wisconsin Rapids, WI, a cranberry marketing company, believes in promotion through performance. "Our special promotion this year is to provide a pack-to-order supply of fresh cranberries starting about the 20th of September," states Blake Johnston, a principal in the company.

"We will assist our customers with maintaining a steady supply to just meet demand through that period so what is on the shelf is fresh. This appears to be the best way to move cranberries before the holiday season. We believe the key to increasing overall profit in a cranberry program is to keep top quality, fresh cranberries on the shelf from late September until Christmas. Three months of seeing great cranberries every week will turn holiday consumers into habitual consumers."

Cranberries and sweet potatoes will receive support at retail with a joint promotion between Johnston, a supplier of retail food products, and Ocean Spray Cranberries Inc., based in Lakeville-Middleboro, MA, a marketer of fresh cranberries and cranberry products. The promotion will offer a \$1-off instant in-store redeemable coupon with the purchase of Concord Foods Cranberry Bread Mix or Sweet Potato Casserole Mix. Coupons will be available on cases and shippers of Concord Foods Cranberry Bread Mix and Sweet Potato Casserole Mix from September 1 to December 31. Special displays, featuring a promotional header card and tear-off recipe pads, will be available.

Grocery Outlet not only likes to sell cran-

berries, but persimmons and pomegranates also take the main stage during the fall, according to the market's Olson.

### Fall Brings New Interest In Potatoes And Other Vegetables

According to Lee Anne Oxford, director of marketing for L & M Companies Inc., based in Raleigh, NC, "Potatoes, onions and sweet potatoes are all good fall items for promotion. We will be running promotions on sweet potatoes and traditional fall vegetables for Thanksgiving. Don't forget Veteran's Day, November 11th," she adds. "Special discounts, like BOGOs for veterans, can be an effective retail fall promotion," she adds.

Potatoes, with all the shapes, sizes and colors available, can provide a distinctive purchase center in the market. This is especially true when you add sweet potatoes and a selection of onions. Many cooler weather dishes include potatoes and onions, and today's media is continually introducing consumers to new varieties and new preparation ideas.

"The company will work with customers to promote our orange yam-type sweet potatoes during the coming months," states George Wooten, president of Wayne E. Bailey Produce

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Source: Claim calculation based in part on data reported by Nielsen through its SCANTRACK Service for the Packaged Salad Category for the 52-week period ending 11/11/11 for the Total U.S. market

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Co., in Chadbourn, NC. To assist retailers, we have a new merchandiser shipper, with the freestanding display unit attached directly to the sweet potato case. The display unit goes directly to the store, where it can be easily used. Then, the sweet potatoes can be replenished with regular case orders,”

Recently, the company also has been marketing a 1½-lb. microwavable bag of U.S. #1 petite sweet potatoes. The skin remains on the potatoes, which have been triple-washed. Microwaving takes approximately eight to 10 minutes. “We have been working with three retailers on this new product. Results have been good, and down the road we are considering options, such as adding a separate seasoning mix to the package,” adds Wooten.

When cooking weather returns, Grocery Outlet doubles its sale of potatoes, offering more varieties. The field bins that held summer items are filled with potatoes, onions and the foods of fall. “I especially like to increase the promotion of mushrooms. We move them to the bottom shelf where they get greater exposure and better holding power during the fall months,” says Olson.

### Produce Merchandising Opportunities In October

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and provides excellent opportunities for retail produce promotions. A variety of produce items can be tied in with healthy eating for cancer prevention. Mooney Farms, the Chico, CA-based marketer of sun dried tomatoes, is a big supporter of the special month. “Our products are packed with lycopene, a proven antioxidant that is associated with a reduced risk of certain conditions, including cancer,” reports Mary Ellen Mooney, general partner and director of sales and marketing. “A portion of our sales during the month of October will be donated to the Susan G. Komen Foundation for breast cancer research and support.”

There are a number of other promotional opportunities in October, with Halloween being especially popular. Displays of pumpkins, gourds, hay bales, corn stalks and the variety of squashes all add to the attractiveness of the produce department. Decorative gourds can be a real children’s draw. Easy pumpkin and squash recipes are appealing to consumers, especially when accompanied by a demonstration. “Some of our stores hold a Pumpkin Patch Produce Event in October,” comments Grocery Outlet’s Olson. “I have four to six tents per region and the stores can pre-book them for parking lot pumpkin sales. They’ve been successful and often bring in new customers who see the tents

as they are driving by the store.”

“Caramel apples are a classic Halloween treat! To increase apple sales during the holiday we suggest that retailers display Concord Foods Caramel Apple Wraps and Microwave Caramel Apple Kits, using our Halloween themed shipper display,” recommends the company’s vice president of sales and marketing Charles Olins.

PBN has been running a Halloween promotion for several years tying in trick-or-treat safety tips, such as, “Be pre-PEARed,”

“Travel in PEARs,” and “Ask your PEARents for permission.” Halloween themed POS materials are available.

### Fall Cross Promotion Ideas Abound

Cross-promotions can be another effective way to move more produce. The California Walnut Commission will be partnering with Concord Foods on a tie-in, running from October 1 to December 31st. A range of delicious recipes has been developed, using California Walnuts and Chiquita Banana Bread

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Mix. Recipes will be available on a special Web site and with in-store displays of the bread mix. The recipe event will be heavily promoted through social media, advertising and in-store displays. Each display will contain a promotional header card and tear-off recipe pads with walnut recipes. To promote the recipes and walnut sales, produce retailers are encouraged to create displays of walnuts, bananas and the bread mix.

Mooney of Mooney Farms reminds retailers, "Our new extra moist sun dried tomatoes are available in four varieties: halves, julienne-cut, Italian basil and zesty pepper. They are perfect for a variety of fall dishes, including soups, stews and salads. Cross-merchandising these items with a fall staple like potatoes creates a new twist on a regular traditional baked potato. Our clip strips and new six-pack trays are the perfect size to cross-merchandise virtually anywhere in the produce department," she adds.

Effective pear cross-promotions include pear and peanut butter for school lunches and pear and cheese for Halloween parties and Thanksgiving affairs. A recent loyalty card study conducted by PBN and West Dundee, IL-based Perishables Group showed that pear consumers often also purchase yogurt, cereal and packaged salads, all of which have great potential for cross-promotions. Peanuts promoted with beer make an effective cross promotion for Hiller's Markets, according to Casini.

### Fall Fever For Locally Grown Produce

Some markets find promoting locally grown cabbage and other fall fruits and vegetables draws their customers into the produce department. The use of posters that highlight local growers has been very successful in some regions. L & M is also planning promotional efforts of locally grown items for foodservice customers in several of their distribution areas.

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The world's largest potato display (left) was built for the Idaho Potato Commission's Annual Retail Potato Lover's Month Retail Display Contest.

# Ten Ways To Sell More Spuds

Giving character and sex appeal to potatoes is among the ways to increase rings at the cash register. **BY CAROL M. BAREUTHER, RD**

**W**hat's for dinner? Potatoes! Nearly 80 percent of in-home potato consumption is at dinner, according to the National Eating Trends: 2010 Potato Consumption Trends, a study conducted by the Chicago, IL-based market research firm, The NPD Group. Potatoes grace the breakfast, lunch and snack plate, too, making them one of America's favorite vegetables, forecast by the USDA's Economic Research Service to reach a per-capita consumption of 109.9 pounds this year.

Potatoes are also a staple in the produce department. According to the Chicago, IL-based Perishables Group's FreshFacts powered by AC Nielsen, potatoes contributed 4.8 percent of total produce dollar sales for the 52-week period ending May 21, 2011.

"The selling challenge moving forward is to take a mundane starch, give it character and make it sexy, so consumers will buy," asserts Jeff Fairchild, director of produce at New Seasons Market, a 10-store chain based in Portland, OR. "That's one reason why selection sells."

Here's 10 additional ways retailers can keep potatoes at the top of consumers' minds and increase the department's bottom lines.

## 1. Base The Category Around Russets

"Russets are king of the potato category," says Randy Shell, vice president of marketing for RPE Inc., in Bancroft, WI. "They account for the greatest percentage of volume sold."

Russets represented 65.4 percent of pounds and 54.6 percent of dollars sold in the potato category for the 52-week period ending May 21, 2011, according to the Perishables Group. Price is one reason Russets sell so well. Ted Kreis, marketing and communications director for the Northern Plains Potato Growers Association (NPPGA) in East Grand Forks, MN, says, "The volume that is produced keeps Russets priced lower than reds and whites."

Russets' average retail per-pound price throughout the United States was 51-cents, compared to 56-cents for whites, 86-cents for reds and 94-cents for yellows during the 52-week ending May 21, 2011, according to the Perishables Group.

Preparation is another explanation for russet's popularity. Ralph Schwartz, director of value-added marketing and category management for Potandon Produce LLC, in Idaho Falls, ID, says, "Russet sales — though they have been declining with the expansion of different types of potatoes available — remain in the forefront because consumers can

prepare them by their favorite methods: baked, mashed, boiled and fried."

At retail, Ryan Bybee, sales manager for GPOD of Idaho, in Shelley, ID, reports, "The Russet Burbank is the most popular variety."

This marks the second season MountainKing Potatoes, in Houston, TX, offers its Rocky Mountain-grown twist on a traditional russet. John Pope, vice president of sales and marketing, describes, "The King Rustics have the look and versatility of a Russet combined with a flavorful yellow flesh. They sell for about 20 percent more than regular Russets. Retailers have had success running ads for two 5-lb. bags for \$6."

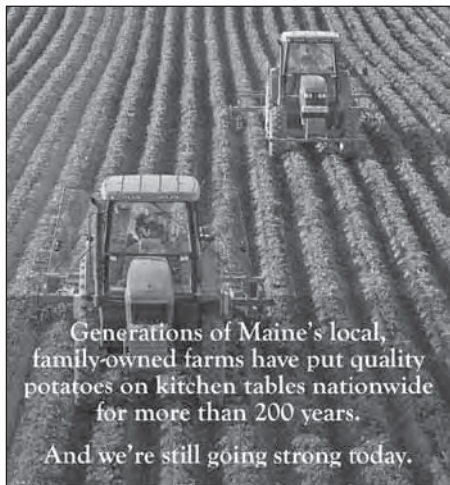
## 2. Add Reds, Whites And Yellows

Regional preferences drive potato sales, contends Kreis. "While Russets dominate much of the West, red-skinned potatoes do well in the Upper Midwest, Florida and the Northeast and white potatoes are popular in the Mid-Atlantic States," he details. "Yellow-fleshed potatoes are also gaining in popularity in many places."

Red-skinned potatoes represented 21.5 percent of potato category dollar sales, up 1.3 percent over the year prior; whites 10.9 percent, down 3.9 percent; and yellow-fleshed







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we are seeing more growers getting into red, gold and even fingerling offerings.”

A challenge of retailing organic potatoes is price. Seth Pemsler, vice president of retail for the Eagle, ID-based Idaho Potato Commission, says, “A 5-lb. bag of organic Russets can sell for \$3.99 or \$4.99, compared to \$1.99 for conventional.”

### 5. Carry ‘The Right’ Packaging

Bags represent 85 percent of potato volume sold at retail and 74.6 percent of dollars. Bulk or loose sales make up 14.4 percent of volume and 24.2 of dollars, with tray packs rounding out the remainder with 0.6 percent of volume and 1.2 percent of sales dollars, for the 52-week period ending May 21, 2011, according to the Perishables Group. The variety in potato packaging runs the gamut from different size bags to what type of information is on pack.

As for size, Kings Super Markets no longer carries 10-lb. bags, reveals Kneeland. “That was popular in the past, but now we’re even looking at downsizing from 5-lb. to 4-lb. bags. This isn’t just due to price point, but large-size packs offer too much product for some customers.”

Price is a determinant for some shopper’s preference for 5-lb., notes Pemsler. “Even though a 10-lb. bag is cheaper per pound, it’s still a larger total dollar sale than a 5-pounder.”

Paul Dolan, general manager of Associated Potato Growers Inc., in Grand Forks, ND, says, “There’s a trend for small potatoes to be packed in 3-lb. bags and creamer size in 1½-pounders.”

Education is why New Seasons Market’s Fairchild switched from selling fingerlings in bulk to bag. “The bag is a great platform to deliver information about the product and usage,” he says.

More retailers, including large chains such as Albertsons and Kroger, have switched to combo bags with poly on the front and mesh on the back. The poly side, especially, provides an ideal surface for providing information to shoppers. Kendra Mills, marketing director for the Prince Edward Island Potato Board, in Charlottetown, PEI, reports, “We see a general trend for nutrition, usage information and recipes on pack.”

### 6. Entice Consumers To Buy Into Variety

“Potatoes may not follow in the footsteps of the apple category where a number of different products are concerned,” says Fairchild, “but I do think we’ll see a broader selection. For example, we carry three to four types of fingerlings and blue and purple potatoes as well as Russets, reds, whites and yellows. That’s eight to 10 varieties in all, and more than

in the past, but not the 30 varieties of apples we have in-store in the fall.”

Bushwick’s Gray knows, “A bigger selection of potatoes stops customers in their tracks and entices them to buy.”

RPE’s Shell says, “Consumers who purchase more varieties for different uses are purchasing more potatoes more frequently. This creates a lift in category sales and total basket sales.”

How many SKUs are optimal? It all depends on the type of retail store. “There are limited-assortment stores that may carry a basic assortment of Russets, reds, yellows and one or two specialty items,” says Shell, “and then there are retailers that have a broad assortment of all items and may carry 25 to 30 SKUs. You need to cater to your specific customer base. One size does not fit all.”

### 7. Build An A-Peeling Display

According to Shell, “The elements of a best-selling potato display are a great selection of fresh potatoes merchandised together in a destination category. There should be multiple sizes and varieties offered for many different usages. Merchandize to attract both impulse and planned purchases and be creative with your signage.”

“Potatoes are displayed together on Euro tables at Kings,” says Kneeland. “We always try to highlight specialty varieties such as fingerlings. They lend a certain distinction to the display and add incremental sales, rather than compete with other SKUs in the category, such as Russets for sales.”

Southwind Farm’s Lake agrees. “You can’t commoditize fingerlings. Keep them as a specialty, which means either off to the side of the main potato display or in a secondary display next to specialty or baby vegetables.”

Adequate facings, especially of high margin potatoes, are a must to maximize sales, says the IPC’s Pemsler. “Don’t pile the 5-lb. bags of Russets on sale in the front. Shoppers will stop right there and look no further. This could mean a missed sale on a higher-priced potato.”

The optimal size of the main potato display should measure seven to 10 percent of overall produce department footage, recommends the USPB’s Ladhoff. “Allow for a 30 percent carry-over at the end of the day. You don’t want a display so small that you sell out by 6 pm.”

### 8. Teach New Ways To Prepare

Focus group research reveals that consumers love to serve potatoes to their families, says Ladhoff. “However, consumers say they are in a rut when it comes to Russet potatoes and are less confident preparing other

# “Beyond the meat department, try the spice department — rosemary mashed potatoes are a change of pace — or the deli. Cross promote red potatoes with a rotisserie chicken and a bagged salad. Very few other items in the produce department can partner with so many items carried by the retailer.”

— Mac Johnson, Category Partner

types. This is a clear opportunity for retailers to educate their shoppers.”

Kings Super Markets’ Kneeland says, “We use signage, brochures with recipes, and our cooking classes to teach customers about how to cook with potatoes.”

One industry trend is to educate consumers about using the optimal potato variety for the dish they are cooking. The USPB offers a POS illustration titled, *A Different Potato for Everyday of the Week*, which talks about seven different ways to prepare and serve potatoes. Similarly, the Antigo-based Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association (WPVGA), offers a poster for retailers on its Web site called *Pick the Perfect Potato*.

Some retailers are requesting grower/shippers put recipes on-pack and even go one step further to add QR codes that link customer’s via their Smartphones to recipes. “Beyond this,” says RPE’s Shell, “the perpetuation of food blogs creates great opportunities to share ideas about potatoes. Our brand, Tasteful Selections, has a Web site with nearly 100 unique recipes, a store finder to locate our product and a Facebook page with regular postings, including a weekly consumer contest called Simply Amazing Sundays. This interaction with consumers gives us real-time feedback about our products and creates hundreds of brand ambassadors that are far broader reaching and more long-term than a single paid advertisement.”

Cross-merchandising is an ideal way to make recipe connections. At Rice Epicurean Markets, Luchak merchandises toppings like bacon next to potatoes in the produce department, “and we also set up a secondary display of potatoes in the meat department.”

This summer, the USPB worked with a major Northeast retailer on a pilot program that placed a rack holding 1½-lb. bags of two different types of potatoes each month over a three-month period in the meat department. Potatoes used in this study were white, red, yellow, purple, petite and fingerling. The display racks were equipped with header

cards and recipes that changed monthly. “Preliminary results indicate that a small footprint and high impact displays can add several hundred dollars’ worth of incremental sales,” reports Ladhoff.

“Beyond the meat department,” suggests Category Partner’s Johnson, “try the spice department — rosemary mashed potatoes are a change of pace — or the deli. Cross promote red potatoes with a rotisserie chicken and a bagged salad. Very few other items in the produce department can partner with so many items carried by the retailer.

## 9. Tout Potatoes As Not ‘Fattening’

Potatoes have long received a bad rap as ‘fattening.’ Back in 2004, at the height of the resurgence of the popular low-carbohydrate Atkins diet, 34 percent of consumers had a negative attitude toward potatoes, according to the USPB’s Attitudes & Usage survey. This year’s survey shows the percentage has dropped to only 18 percent, or back to where it was prior to Atkins. Shell says, “The USPB has engaged in a high-profile consumer marketing campaign focusing on nutrition that has helped bring consumer attitudes about potatoes up to the levels of pre-low-carb diet issues. Additionally, in 2010, per capita consumption rose for the first time in several years.”

The Potato’s reputation as a healthful food took a hit again this year when a study by Harvard researchers in the June issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine* once again claimed that potatoes are responsible for America’s rising obesity rate. Category Partner’s Johnson responds, “I think it’s unfortunate that the myths and misconceptions about potatoes are being perpetuated. Calories weren’t even included in the [Harvard] analysis, and a myriad of researchers will openly talk about weight gain as a factor of calories in and calories out. It’s not the potato — a medium size potato only has 110 calories and is naturally fat-free — but what it’s topped with. Consumers can keep calories low by using low-fat sour cream or cheese or adding

some salsa. So, good POS telling the real potato story helps defend against these kinds of stories.”

One trend or opportunity that retailers could talk more about is the fact that potatoes are gluten-free, says Tim Feit, the WPVGA’s director of promotions and consumer education. “There are many gluten-free potato recipes available through a variety of sources that can help retailers cater to a growing customer demand for gluten-free food.”

## 10. Don’t Deep Discount To Promote

Short supplies of Russets in the 2010/2011 season drove prices up and promotional opportunities down. The outlook for this season is better, but delayed. The NPPGA’s Kreis explains, “All of the storage states are along the northern tier of the country, and all experienced a later and cooler spring than normal, which delayed planting and plant development. Even the summer crop that is shipped from the field directly to market was harvested later in many cases. The result will be a one- to three-week delay in abundant supplies hitting the market in September.”

As for volume, the industry has planted 6 percent more acres this year than last, reports Category Partner’s Johnson. “The caveat here is that a lot of those acres are due to increased processor demand, so fresh acres are about equal to last year. If the industry experiences reasonable weather and trend line yields, there will be ample supply at reasonable pricing this fall.”

MountainKing’s Pope agrees. “There should be a good supply of Russets, reds and yellows for promotion through Q1 in 2012.”

Retailers can use a variety of pricing and promotional strategies. The USPB’s Ladhoff adds, “Some type of price discount gives consumers permission to buy. Since potatoes are a good value, BOGOs (buy-one get-one) or deep discounts will not spur additional sales and can create negative margins. This is epically true during the fourth quarter as potatoes are a popular purchase for the holidays. Shallow discounts will move more volume.”

Kreis advises, “Offer more than one type in an ad to give consumers a choice.”

“Examples could be butter reds and golds or tray packs and fingerlings,” suggest Pope. “Or, a retailer can run a Spud-A-Rama or Potato-Palooza in the fall with many varieties and package types. A great time to do this is the third week of October when the weather cools down and shoppers get refocused on cooking. Promotions such as this entice customers to buy more than one type of potato at a time.” **pb**



PHOTOS COURTESY OF IDAHO POTATO COMMISSION



Two of the winning displays showcased creative merchandising techniques and a wealth of Idaho potatoes.

# Idaho Potato Commission Holds Record-Breaking Contest In 20th Anniversary Year

The annual IPC retail display contest attracts more entries than ever before.

**M**ore retailers than ever before jazzed up their stores in February with spectacular spud displays in an effort to win their share of the \$150,000 in cash and prizes awarded in the 20th Annual Idaho Potato Commission's (IPC) Potato Lover's Month (PLM) retail display contest.

The Contest is the IPC's longest-running promotion and has proven to be more popular than ever before, garnering a record of 2,515 entries, inspiring innovative potato displays from retailers across the country, helping increase Idaho potato sales, and bolstering business in produce departments during a month when produce sales are typically at a lull.

"Produce managers across the country understand better than ever the impact a strong, creative retail promotion can have on their entire department; they know from

first-hand experience that attention-grabbing displays drive sales," said Seth Pemsler, vice president of retail and international for the IPC, in a recent press release. "Even after 20 years, not only are we generating more interest than ever before, the displays are bigger, bolder and even more creative."

Thanks, in part, to the IPC's contest, "We move as much volume in February as we do in December with this promotion," reports Pemsler. "Historically, February was the lowest selling month of the year for potatoes." Clearly, that is no longer the case.

As in years past, the IPC teamed up with Molly McButter and Mrs. Dash Seasonings Blends for creative cross-promotional opportunities. The IPC's Potato Lover's Month POS materials and Idaho potato products (both fresh and dehydrated) were also part of every display. First Place winners received \$1,500 each; second place winners received \$1,000 each; third place winners

received \$750 each; fourth place winners received \$500 each; fifth place winners received \$250 each; and 100 honorable mentions each received \$100. As if all that wasn't enough, this year, every qualified entrant received a Coby Snapp Digital Camcorder, valued at \$99.

Participants submitted their entries online or by mail along with a photo of their display and were required to feature the displays in their store's produce section for at least one week between January 31 and February 25, 2011. The Potato Lover's Month Display Contest Review Committee judged the displays and selected winners based on: use of PLM signage, creativity, incorporation of partner products and the effectiveness of the display in perceived sales increase.

PRODUCE BUSINESS congratulates the following stores on their First Place wins, and has included direct comments from the IPC regarding each winning display.

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LOOK! I NOW HAVE EXTRAORDINARY ELASTICITY!

I HAVE STUPENDOUS STRENGTH!

I HAVE BLAZING SPEED!

BILL SAVILONIS!

KEN TUBMAN!

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AND I'LL RENDER REMARKABLE MARKETING VISION!

AND I HAVE AMAZING VISION!

LARRY WHITESIDE!

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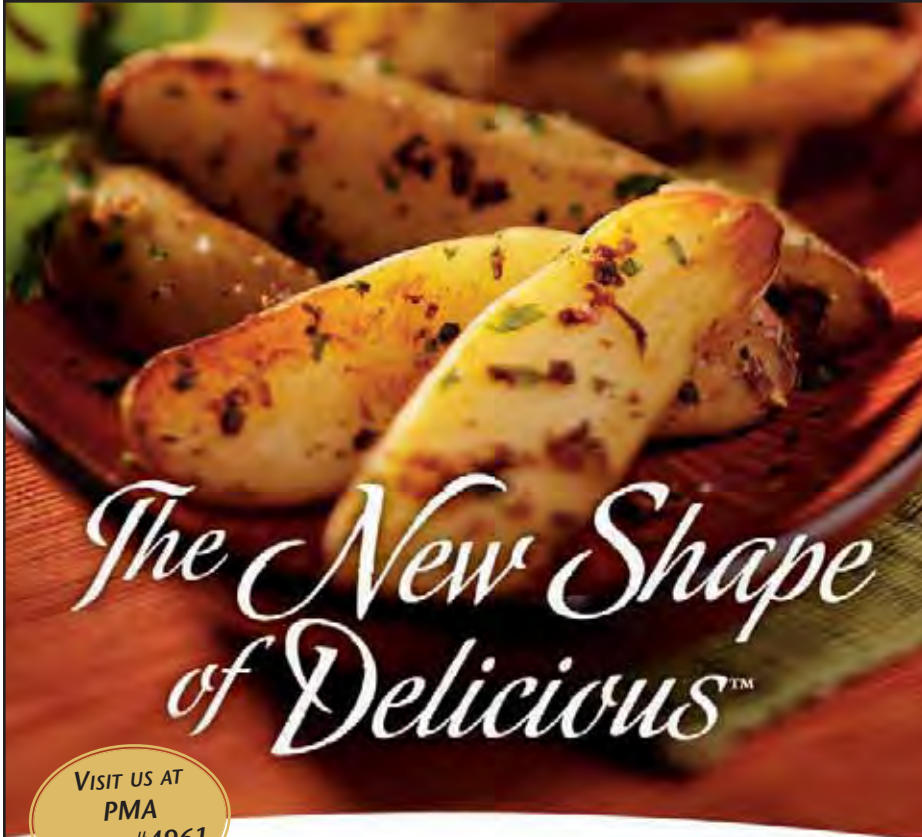
IDAHO POTATO.COM/RETAIL



## 1-5 CASH REGISTERS:

Robert Childers  
Piggly Wiggly #124  
Clover, SC

Winning comments:  
Overall Creativity;  
superb use of signage; consumer  
education through Web site



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[southwindpotatoes.com](http://southwindpotatoes.com)



## 6-9 CASH REGISTERS:

Dean Eide  
Lammer's Food Fest  
Menomonie, WI

Winning comments:  
Incredible effort of building  
display materials; amount of  
product used (in the thousands of  
pounds of Idaho potatoes);  
communication of Idaho messaging

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success



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## 10+ CASH REGISTERS:

Fred Sweany  
Buehler's Fresh Foods  
Wooster, OH

Winning comments:  
Breadth of display; usage of signage;  
superb messaging; support of  
tie-in partners

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## MILITARY EAST:

Anthony Moody  
DECA/SCT/EA  
Scott Air Force Base, IL

Winning comments:  
Overall creativity;  
coordination and attractiveness;  
quantity of product



## MILITARY WEST:

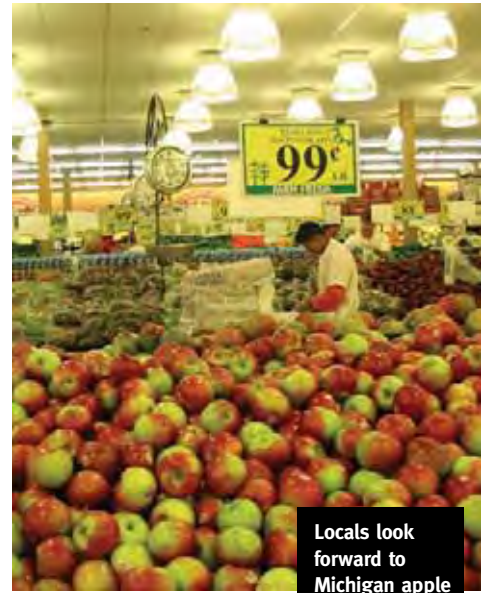
Edmund Keifer  
Kaneohe Bay Commissary  
Kaneohe Bay, HI

Winning comments:  
Exceptional themed creativity; overall  
attractiveness of full display;  
innovative use of Idaho materials





PHOTO AT RIGHT COURTESY OF RIVERIDGE PRODUCE MARKETING INC.



Locals look forward to Michigan apple season and the variety it brings.

# Make Way For Michigan Apples

With the help of ideal weather, Michigan looks to bring a healthy crop of apples to market. **BY JENNIFER LESLIE KRAMER**

**B**oasting an estimated economic impact of \$700 million annually, apples are Michigan's most valuable crop. Thanks to the climate of the Great Lakes and the state's fertile soil, Michigan grows a wide array of apple varieties that retailers and customers alike look forward to each Fall. *PRODUCE BUSINESS* spoke with two prominent growers: Don Armock, president of Riveridge Produce Marketing Inc., in Sparta, MI, and Tom Pletcher, vice president of sales and marketing at BelleHarvest Sales Inc., in Belding, MI. In addition, Denise Donahue, executive director of the DeWitt-based Michigan Apple Committee, discussed this year's crop, along with fan favorites and varieties that are growing in popularity.

**PRODUCE BUSINESS: How has the recent weather affected this year's crops and what is the outlook/projection for the season?**

**Don Armock:** Weather has been near ideal over the entire season and we are going to harvest at a near normal time, which is important this season due to the relatively tight supply of fruit in the market for the start of the fall harvest season. The outlook is for a 28 percent increase in volume compared to our normal size crops. This is not anywhere near a record crop, but represents a "large" crop. We look for a crop that will be balanced in terms of volume and the demand for that volume. The future will see volume increasing for the next several years as new plantings come on stream.

**Denise Donahue:** Michigan has had outstanding weather this year. We had no significant frost instances after blossom time, which is helping most growers keep the crop very clean. Rainfall has been quite regular, and the temperatures quite warm for most of the summer. Nights are cooling down appropriately just now. So, all in all, we're looking at about 40 percent more apples than a "normal" year, and the

apples are sizing up a bit larger than most years also.

**Tom Pletcher:** We are projecting a 25-26 million bushel crop, most of which we anticipate will pack out at a high level, possibly doubling last year's fresh production.

**PRODUCE BUSINESS: What are the most popular varieties and the highest production varieties in the state?**

**Don Armock:** Our most popular varieties are Red Delicious, Gala, Golden Delicious and McIntosh. These are, for the most part, traditional varieties that continue to be popular with consumers. We are growing increasing volumes of Fuji, Gala and Honeycrisp, but the changing of consumer habits is generational.

**Denise Donahue:** Red Delicious continues to be at the top variety in quantity, as it is across the United States, but the Gala is rapidly closing the gap. Premium varieties that growers are planting include Honeycrisp, Jonagold, Braeburn, Fuji and Gala among others.

**Tom Pletcher:** All Michigan varieties have defined areas of popularity, but Gala appears to be the overall winner nationwide. Fortunately, the state has significant acreage devoted to Gala, although Red Delicious is still the variety with the largest production.

**PRODUCE BUSINESS: Are there any new and up-and-coming varieties that are growing in popularity?**

**Don Armock:** Honeycrisp is far and away our biggest and most exciting new variety, and the past six years, it has been our most heavily planted variety. The upper Midwest was an early adapter of Honeycrisp and the demand for it has sparked the imagination of growers, hence the most recent plantings. Jonagold, while not new, has become a revitalized variety that is growing in importance. There are other newer varieties

we are trialing that show promise, but it is too soon to say that they have the potential to capture the interest of the consumer.

**Denise Donahue:** Growers have been investing in their orchards in significant ways over the past few years. They're planting more premium varieties and premium strains of classic varieties. Most of our orchards are also going high-density. High-density brings fruit into the marketplace sooner, improves ripening and color because it's the concept of a "fruiting wall" instead of a big-headed tree.

**Tom Pletcher:** The obvious answer is Honeycrisp, which continues to command a level of demand that far exceeds current supply. Gala, Fuji and Jonagold have all shown a considerable surge in popularity, although in some cases, it is market-specific.

**PRODUCE BUSINESS: What are advantages of Michigan apples due to your location and seasonality when compared with crops from New York, the Northeast and Northwest?**

**Don Armock:** Our often cited close-to-market advantage is a very real benefit that is becoming more important all the time. Locally grown or regionally grown is an important and effective tool for all segments of our customer base, and this is particularly effective in the fall harvest season when major promotions are a significant part of apple merchandising and a competitive tool. We have regional varieties that are unique to the Upper Midwest due to historic and growing condition factors that are important in many markets. We are enjoying the resurgence of Jonagold, have strong acceptance of varieties like Jonathon, McIntosh and Empire in various markets in the central areas of the country.

**Denise Donahue:** Perhaps the biggest trend to affect Michigan apple

sales in recent years is the locally grown movement. We have the capability to provide all the apples consumers want in the Upper Midwest. When we do focus groups and in-store intercept market research, we find that people prefer a locally grown apple, yet they have difficulty identifying it in the retail environment.

In our focus group taste tests, the Michigan Honeycrisp always comes out on top of all the other varieties — including from other regions and countries — being sampled. The Michigan Jonagold comes out right behind it. So we know we have the taste profile consumers are looking for, and we need to help retailers brand it so consumers can identify it in the stores.

**Tom Pletcher:** This season, our harvest windows are well ahead of the Northwest, allowing entry into the marketplace when supplies are exceptionally light and demand is particularly strong. In comparison to the Northeast, Michigan traditionally has much broader production across the spectrum of consumer-driven varieties, which allows us to provide our customers with full manifest shipments of the varieties their shoppers prefer.

The primary advantages that our industry attempts to convey are proximity to Eastern and Midwestern population centers (meaning shorter transit times, significantly reduced freight costs, and ultimately fresher product), and the superior eating quality of our fruit.

**PRODUCE BUSINESS: What are the most useful marketing tools and angles for the Michigan apple crop that make it stand out at retail?**

**Don Armock:** Locally grown, as discussed earlier, is very important in the seven- to eight-state area in the upper Midwest. The Michigan Apple Committee has a number of programs that enhance our

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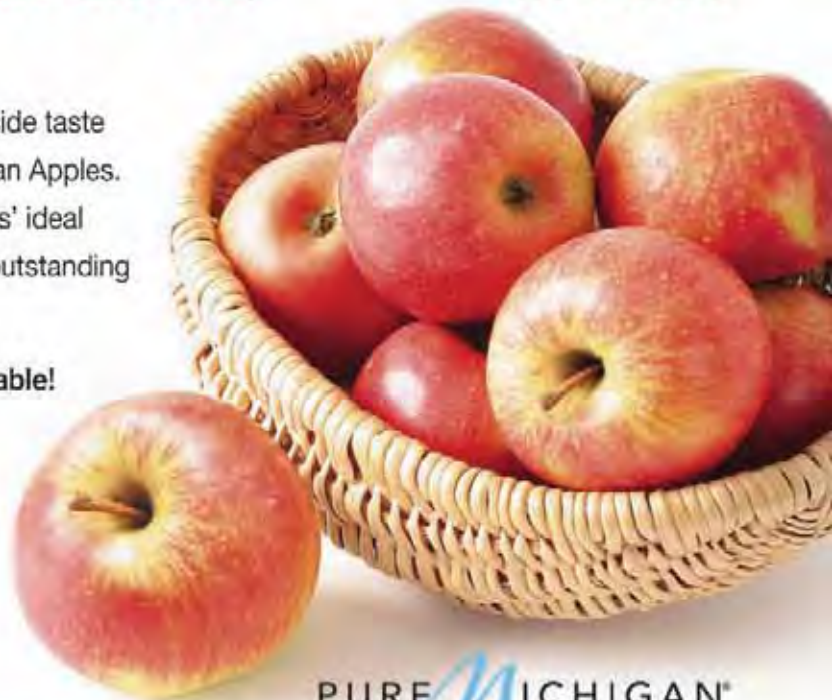
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customers' promotional activities and that are very effective. Many of these programs are customized to fit customers' needs. We touted ourselves as the variety state before that was popular, and this is an important tool that is really effective in the major apple sales season of the fall. Always, our intense flavor is the most effective tool in pleasing the ultimate apple consumer and it is one that is taken for granted, but is the most important reason of all to buy Michigan Apples.

**Denise Donahue:** We developed specially branded cartons for Michigan Honeycrisp and Michigan Jonagold. We're also making specially branded wooden apple bins available to some retailers in the Upper Midwest. This neat merchandising tool brings the farm market feel into the store, and establishes product identity that consumers want.

The other new campaign we've jumped into is Pure Michigan, the state's award-winning tourism program. The rich, deep voice of Michigan native and *Home Improvement* star, Tim Allen, will promote "Pure Michigan Apples" in the Chicago and Metro Detroit markets from September through late October, both in-store and on popular radio stations. The "Pure Michigan Apples" logo will be prominent on the wooden apple bins, and on all of our signage and banners.

Our signs also now feature QR codes so that Smartphone-savvy consumers can learn more about varieties while they're shopping in the produce department.

As always, Michigan Apple Committee merchandisers will work with individual retailers to set up custom promotions of Michigan Apples that work best for that set of stores.


Retailers can also take advantage of our rebates and display contests



PHOTO COURTESY OF RIVERIDGE PRODUCE MARKETING INC.

— we have three of each — set for this fall and winter. The rebates reward retailers up to \$17,000 for the Early Season Rebate (now ongoing), Holiday Baking and Bulk Apples (now ongoing). The display contests reward stores that build great displays around the themes of Locally Grown, Michigan Honeycrisp and Michigan Jonagold. Full details and registration forms are on our Web site, or by calling us.


**Tom Pletcher:** The Michigan Apple Committee has done a nice job developing geographic and market-specific promotions that retailers are taking advantage of in ever-increasing numbers. Specifically, the tie-in with the state sponsored Pure Michigan campaign appears to be gathering major traction. **pb**



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New York's ideal climate works well for producing a wide variety of apples.

# Bite Into An Empire Of New York Apple Sales

Apples come with health benefits and flavor; promoting quality and location through existing tools can boost the health of New York apple sales. **BY TRISHA J. WOOLDRIDGE**

**N**othing says autumn and America like apples, and apples from New York have been an American treat for hundreds of years, with generations of growers able to show off their family trees. As one of the oldest growing regions, the fruit offers a good pedigree of quality, and with a significant population in the Northeast, New York also feeds the locavore trend. Demand already exists for the fruit and is growing, so it's easy for retailers to capitalize on existing tools to push sales of New York state apples even further.

## Quality On Many Levels

If you ask those involved in the New York state apple industry, they'll say part of what drives the demand for their fruit is quality. Not only do people in the Northeast U.S. look for apples out of New York, Kaari Stannard, owner and president of New York Apple Sales Inc., based in Castleton, NY, indicates there is an "increased demand for New York fruit in Texas, the Midwest and the Southeast."

Harold Albinder, president of Milton, NY-

based Hudson River Fruit Distributors in Milton, NY, summarizes, "The taste of New York apples are far superior to any apple grown in the United States."

It's more than just the taste that defines the quality of the fruit. From its excellent location to the proximity of Cornell University and its research to ongoing upgrades in technology and security, the apple industry in New York continues to raise the bar for quality.

"New York is on the global apple belt," according to Brian Nicholson, vice president of Geneva, NY's Red Jacket Orchards Inc. He cites all the major apple growing regions are on the same latitude. "It's an incredible climate with warm sun during the days, cool nights and acidic soil. The apples have a terroir, just like grapes."

Ithaca, NY's Cornell University, one of the best colleges in the world in regards to horticulture, also has an impact on the fruit. Tim Mansfield, director of sales and marketing for Sun Orchard Fruit Co., in Burt, NY, explains that there is a lot of dedication from the University toward apples, and many of the

graduates end up becoming growers. "People have a picture of the grower as someone who grew up on a farm and is self-educated, but that has changed. Growers are very well educated." Even international growers and growers from other regions look to the work done at Cornell, and within the state, to enhance their crops.

Additionally, the New York apple industry, when it has profitable years, reinvests its profits into the product, points out Nicholson. "In the past five years, it's been profitable and beneficial for everyone as millions have been reinvested into packing houses, technology and storage facilities."

New barcoding procedures, for example, can trace apples from "when they are picked, to when they are packed, to when they are shipped," according to Russell Bartolotta, president of Klein's Kill Fruit Farms Corp., in Germantown, NY. Most New York growers, suppliers and packers have been "heavily into food safety for the past six years" and are able to track inventory so they can tell "what orchard each individual fruit comes from."







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**“New York is on the global apple belt. It’s an incredible climate with warm sun during the days, cool nights and acidic soil. The apples have a *terroir*, just like grapes.”**

— Brian Nicholson, Red Jacket Orchards Inc.

Mansfield continues, “A lot of work has been done lately on eatability,” such as working with growers to make sure apples are harvested at the right time and stored at the right conditions. “The industry has standards, and it’s good competition to guarantee the best quality. It raises the bar for everyone. There is a larger variety of items competing in the supermarket. Apples, in order to compete, must have high quality.”

Better refrigeration techniques also ensure a longer shelf-life for the apples. Albinder of Hudson River Fruit says that apples can be kept at 32°F from when they are packed through delivery to stores, which only takes a few days for most markets. “New York is stringent about food safety and traceability. It’s constantly monitored by local growers.”

Jody Pavero, president, owner and CEO of Highland, NY-based Pavero Cold Storage Corp., cites the company has installed all modern refrigeration, modern storage, a new packing line and recently replanted orchards. “We’ve put all things in the 21st century [for tracking and safety]. Everything is in place to provide a consistent high quality package and information to anyone who requests it. We can provide data from blossom to warehouse.” He adds, “I have a nine-year-old daughter, and I want a product safe for her, and safe for every child out there.”

#### **When Quantity Is Also Quality**

With the prime location and the influence of Cornell, New York state also offers an exceptional amount of apple varieties over a long period of time. The state of New York is comprised of three distinct growing regions: the Hudson Valley, the Champlain Valley and Western New York. Each offers slightly different climates and growing conditions, with Hudson Valley apples available two to three weeks before the other regions and Western New York finishing late fall, early winter.

New York is the second largest apple region in the United States, and this year’s conditions are expected to produce 28-30 million bushels of apples, spread across the most popular varieties — and then some. “The more varieties, the more we provide what the customer wants. There’s a taste and color for everybody,” says

Bartolotta.

Red Jacket’s Nicholson adds, “The climate works well for a large variety, including Fuji and Honeycrisp, which are not indigenous to the area.”

#### **The Usual Promotions... And More**

There are already plenty of merchandising tactics and promotions for apples in general. For apples from New York state, the existing plans really need only a little tweaking — and organizations such as New York Apple Sales and the New York Apple Association offer even more help.

**Totes, totes, totes:** The single most recommended plan is to make use of tote bags. New York Apple Sales’ Stannard says they are popular in the Northeast for fall. The totes resemble farm stand apple displays, focusing on the freshness of the product.

David McClurg, vice president of marketing for the Fishers, NY-based New York Apple Association, elaborates, “Tote bags are a popular item, and the totes can be anything. The stores just have to decide what margin they want for which fruit.” Stores can also get creative. He describes how some stores take a smaller size apple, such as a 120-count Gala, and use it for a back-to-school or packed lunch special. Another option is to have big bag specials of apples. Having the fruit in the totes, in big bags, and in bulk appeals to a wide variety of consumers who each have different ideas of what they want in apples.

**Demos:** Both Stannard and McClurg suggest demoing the fruit. McClurg says, “Lots of people, in-state and out-of-state, enjoy the taste of Empire apples. The flavor speaks for itself. Consumers like them once they try them.”

Sun Orchards Fruit Company’s Mansfield also cites that demos “have definitely helped sales for 2011.”

**And More:** McClurg shares some new promotions that are available. Stores will be able to order a new type of bulk bin with a false bottom through the New York Apple Association that they can fill with any type of apples, a combination of apples, or a display of totes — whatever works for the store. The display is reusable, too, so stores can repurpose

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**“We’ve put all things in the 21st century [for tracking and safety]. Everything is in place to provide a consistent high quality package and information to anyone who requests it. We can give data from the blossom to the warehouse.”**

— Jody Pavero, Pavero Cold Storage Corp.

them as needed.

Additionally, some of the more popular apple varieties will have QR codes associated with them so consumers with smart phones can scan the code and have varietal information, recipes and other promotions right at their fingertips. Stores can order promotional POS material or include the QR codes in circular advertising.

### Capitalizing On Modern Trends

Some modern trends have also helped boost demand for New York state apples. Being amidst the large population and retail segment of the Northeast U.S., the product can feed the locavore trend of sustainability-aware and fresh-centric consumers who can get fruit within days of it being picked from trees. On top of that, the still-popular healthy eating movement can sell more apples, too.

Because of location, it costs less and uses less fuel when people in the Northeast purchase New York state apples, points out Pavero Cold Storage’s Pavero. “We’re close to so many major markets.”

McClurg suggests that in New York and in the Northeast, the apples are local, so it’s a good bet to utilize “buy local” POS advertising across upstate New York. Toward New York City and New Jersey, note the apples are from an “upstate farm” since “people want to support local and regional systems.”

In the fall, Red Jacket’s Nicholson points out there is not a lot of fruit that fulfills the local quotient. There are a lot of vegetables, such as root vegetables and squash, but not a lot of fresh and local fruit, so apples fill that need.

Recent information on pesticides slapped apples and tree fruits as part of a “Dirty Dozen,” which the New York Apple Association turned around in its release about the “delicious dozen” to remind people about the health benefits of apples. McClurg points out that every New York state apple is under the USDA levels for pesticide use, and reminds people, “Apples are one of the healthiest foods to eat.”

Klein’s Kill Fruit Farm’s Bartolotta agrees, “If people want to eat healthy, apples should

be part of their diet. Even fast food places want more and more fresh-cut apples. They know it’s an important thing.”

### New Apple Products

Besides totes, bulk, and packages, apples may be showing up in more forms, including fresh juice and fresh-cut apple slices. “It’s important to diversify,” says Nicholson, whose

company now has a state-of-the-art fresh juice system that can track each piece of fruit and provide antimicrobial protection to ensure a safe product.

Besides juice, there are more demands for fresh sliced apples from retailers and food service clients. Bartolotta cites that cut apples have been a growth item since 2005, particularly for “apple dippers” and in salads.

It’s not difficult for produce retailers to nudge sales of apples from New York with simple tweaks on existing methods. There are now more tools available, such as displays and QR codes, and modern trends of local and healthy eating demographics that want to purchase the product. A little bit of creativity and effort can make a big difference in an already strong product. **pb**



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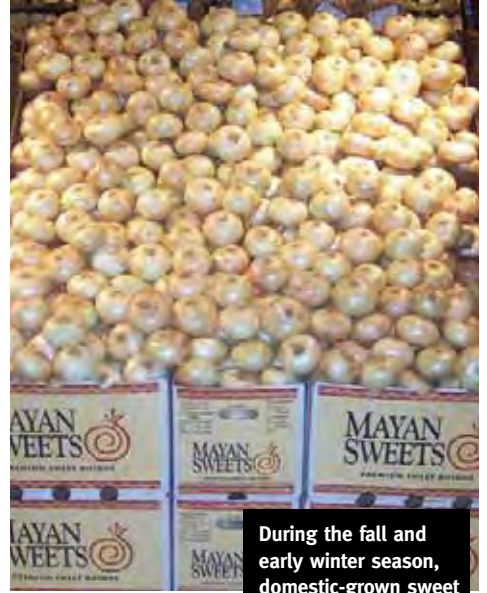
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During the fall and early winter season, domestic-grown sweet onions are in short supply, so shippers turn toward Peru for their crop needs.

# Peruvian Onions Satisfy Sweet Onion Cravings

The counter-seasonal crop availability and sweet, versatile flavor make Peruvian onions a produce department winner. **BY AMY SAWELSON**

**W**ith North American consumers enthusiastically embracing sweet onions, growers, shippers and packers have turned to South America, specifically Peru, as a source of supply. Bounded by the Andes to the East and the Pacific Ocean 20 miles to the West, the southern Peruvian desert region near the city of Ica has the ideal conditions for cultivating sweet onions — minimal rainfall, rich volcanic soil and plenty of snowmelt from the mountains for irrigation. Peruvian Gold sweet onions are from the same seed stock as Vidalias.

## The Appeal Of Sweet Onions

Sweet onions have high water content when compared to more common “storage” or “globe” onions and they are much lower in pyruvic acid, which is responsible for the strong flavor and eye-burning characteristics of storage onions. Though there is no official industry standard, suppliers say, an onion is described as “sweet” when it has at least 6 percent sugar content, with some varieties

recorded as having 15 percent sugar content. Storage onions typically register 3 percent sugar content. The high water content of sweet onions not only gives them their mild yet still distinctively onion flavor, but also makes them more perishable. They are picked and cured for a relatively short time, so they must be continually harvested during the season. Storage or globe onions are harvested in a relatively short time frame, then stored and shipped as needed all year. Sweet onions are grown in various regions of the United States throughout most of the year, but are scarce during the fall and early winter months. This is the time when shippers turn toward Peru as their source of supply.

As for dealing with Peruvian growers, John Shuman, president of Reidsville, GA-based Shuman Produce Inc., and a pioneer in the sweet onion business with the Real Sweet brand says, “Ica is the epicenter for agriculture in Peru. The growing conditions are great, the food safety practices are excellent and the country is very trade-friendly. Overall, it is a good environment for business.”

As for the added costs of shipping sweet onions to the United States, Margret De Bruyn, president of her family’s De Bruyn Produce Co., in Weslaco, TX, explains, “Foreign freight rates are very competitive and make it nearly as cost-effective to bring in sweet onions from Peru as it is to produce them domestically.”

## Sell More Peruvian Sweet Onions

Onions are commonly found in consumers’ pantries, so how can retailers increase volume and create excitement around the arrival of Peruvian sweets in the produce department? According to Brian Kastick, president of Oso Sweet Onion in Charleston, WV, retailers must “separate them from the other onions. By placing them closer to the front of the produce department, they become more prominent and that really sells.”

Many retailers do an excellent job of displaying produce with limited space available and many items to sell. “Considering shelf space is at a premium, a 2-ft. width of shelf space would be optimal, next to red and white onions,” states Richard Pazderski, director of



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sales and marketing for Bland Farms LLC, located in Glennville, GA, in the heart of Vidalia onion country.

Savvy consumers have come to recognize the distinctive flat shape of sweet onions, and even though they can cost up to \$.45 per pound more and yield less than conventional globe onions, they are seen as an affordable gourmet item and therefore are not that price-sensitive. According to Barry Rogers, president and CEO of Sweet Onion Trading Corp., based in Melbourne, FL, "When retailers give more space to display Peruvian onions, they sell more, whatever the price. In three words: Display, display, display. Sweets are popular with Baby Boomers who appreciate the unique mild flavor and versatility," continues Rogers.

Says Marty Kamer, vice president at Greencastle, PA-based Keystone Fruit Marketing Inc., which promotes the Mayan Sweet brand, "Retailers tell us that bigger is better when it comes to displays during a promotion. When they build large end cap displays, especially at the beginning of the Peruvian sweet onion season in September and during Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years and Super Bowl, that's when you see increased volume."

Shuman of Shuman Produce adds, "With any sweet onion, retailers have to support them with a larger, more prominent display. The sweet onion subset is what's driving onion

**“Celebrate Peruvian sweet onions as they arrive. When they come in, alert your customers to the fact that ‘They are here!’ There are a lot of consumers who still require some education on sweet onions — utilize your Web sites, social media, circulars and POS to get them excited about the great flavor and versatility of a sweet onion.”**

— Matt Curry, Curry & Co. Inc.

growth. If the display is undersized, you're not going to grow sales despite advertising, packaging and price."

Matt Curry, president of Curry & Co. Inc., based in Brooks, OR, concurs, "During peak promotion times, we find many retailers will set up a stand alone or island display of sweet onions."

"Stack 'em high and let 'em fly! Bulk sweet Peruvian onions will be profitable to the retailer even if priced aggressively," says Ira Greenstein, president of Direct Source Marketing, located in Mount Kisco, NY.

Retailer Tommy Wilkerson of United Super Markets based in Lubbock, TX, states, "I like to feature 160-250 pounds of sweet onions, and we always try to put them on the end display.

They are a good draw, so we have them prominently displayed most of the year." Since Peruvian onions are available during the fall and winter, it's the perfect opportunity to feature them as an important ingredient in holiday recipes and entertaining.

#### **It's In The Mix — Offer Bags And Bulk**

Virtually every retailer carries bulk and at least one size bag of Peruvian sweet onions. Customers are used to purchasing onions one, two or three at a time, but the popularity of sweet onions and the fact the same onion can appear raw in a salad, as part of a kabob for the barbecue or baked into an onion tart is an opportunity to increase onion sales. Derrell Kelso, president of Onions Etc., in Stockton, CA, recognizes, "When consumers buy onions, they generally buy by the each, not by the pound. If you are merchandising bulk, make sure it is a large jumbo or a colossal," he states.

"If you are selling a small jumbo that is a 70-count in a 40-lb. carton, you will need approximately 23 purchases," Kelso adds. "If you are selling colossal with a 32-count, those same consumers are going to purchase almost twice the volume. You have doubled your onion sales with the same clientele, and since they now have more onions they will purchase more ingredients, meaning your store sales will go up, too."

While bulk sweet onions are still the most popular among consumers, bags in 2-, 3-, 4-, and 5-lb. sizes are a fast-growing category. This is particularly true when the bags feature eye-catching graphics and recipes. On the topic of bulk and packaged onions, Shuman encourages retailers to "stock a variety of RealSweet bags and bulk product to satisfy the needs of their customers. We also provide retailers with colorful RealSweet bins that enhance the visibility of the retail display."

Bags versus bulk is also a factor of today's challenging economy. "It used to be that the 3-lb. bags were the standard, but now people are

#### **Side Note**

### **CROSS MARKETING IS SMART MERCHANDISING**

**A**s a versatile ingredient, Sweet Peruvian onions are a natural for cross-merchandising with other items within the store. One of the best ways to do this is by offering recipe cards featuring sweet onions placed strategically in the produce department. When customers see an appealing recipe for a sweet onion quiche they want to try, they will quite logically head for the dairy case for cream and eggs and the frozen section for tart shells. Craig Bishop, produce buyer for Sprouts Farmers Market LLC, in Phoenix, AZ, also believes in recipe cards as part of his stores' cross-merchandising activities, but Sprouts goes above and beyond the call of duty. "We feature seasonal themes by the registers with items from multiple departments represented."

Derrell Kelso, president of Onions Etc., in Stockton, CA, weighs in: "We cross-merchandise with recipes and photos. When our retailers promote, they see an

increase in incremental sales as high as 20 percent with items included in the ingredient list. We have a shopping list on the back of our bags that helps consumers pick out ingredients that work with sweet onions. These include avocados, radishes, grapefruit, pineapple and basil to name a few."

Says Matt Curry, president of Curry & Co. Inc., based in Brooks, OR, "Sweet onions are so versatile, they can be cross-marketed with a wide range of items from barbecued burgers to fresh salads to soups. Offer a salad suggestion featuring sweet onions and green asparagus from Peru, which are available at the same time."

As director of produce procurement for the Lubbock, TX-based United Supermarkets LLC, Tommy Wilkins likes to see sweet onions merchandised with "fresh pineapple for grilling, as well as with tomatoes, fresh basil and mozzarella — even in the fall." **pb**



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# “We cross-merchandise with recipes and photos. When our retailers promote, they see an increase in incremental sales as high as 20 percent with items included in the ingredient list.”

— Derrell Kelso, Onions Etc.

buying the 2-lb. bags because they seem cheaper. People are very cautious,” observes DeBruyn of DeBruyn Produce Co. She adds a bit ruefully, “Produce demand is down. People are shopping the center of the store.”

Says Curry of Curry & Co., “Sweet onions benefit when featured in a combination of bulk and bagged. The proper mix depends on the demographics of each store. If you have value-conscious customers, you should have bags as a major cornerstone of your sweet onion program. Two-lb. sweet onion bags have become increasingly popular. Most bags today feature recipe suggestions and usage tips that can be valuable to consumers. If your demographic is higher end or you have a gourmet clientele, go for the best and biggest bulk sweet onions available.”

## Adding Value Adds Sales Volume

Packaging with colorful graphics, recipe ideas and QR codes to link to supplier Web sites certainly adds to the value of sweet onions by helping to market them from the bin and sparking creativity in customers. Every RealSweet sweet onion consumer bag from Shuman Produce comes complete with recipes, storage and handling tips and nutritional information printed on the back. A QR code on the bags leads to more recipe suggestions. “Technology has greatly enhanced the consumers’ ability to connect with a product on a personal level, and we’ve used online video to develop that connection,” explains Shuman. “With a scan of our QR code, consumers can learn about the growing, harvesting and packaging process of RealSweet onions from their shopping carts as they stand in front of the product. Through the use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, we leverage the power of the Internet to bring the RealSweet story to consumers. We’re proud to be the first sweet onion grower/shipper to incorporate QR codes on our consumer packaging.”

Sweet Onion Trading Co. has also embraced linking consumers with their Web site via smart phones. Rogers says, “Using their phones, customers can go directly to the recipe page of our Web site and find great ideas using sweet Peruvian onions.”

No supplier Web site is complete without a collection of recipes organized by meal-part. Keystone Fruit goes so far as having an executive chef on staff. Dave Munson, Keystone’s director of culinary development, spends much of his time in stores, educating customers and picking up ideas for new ways to use sweet onions. He sees anything helps time-strapped consumers, such as pre-assembled kabobs, containers of diced sweet onions,

carrots and celery and stir-fry-ready combinations of vegetables, further sets Peruvian sweets apart and commands a premium, all while building volume.

DeBruyn feels that educating the consumers to use the right variety of onion for the right purpose is a valuable service, because it maximizes their produce dollar by guiding them to spend more on sweet onions where it counts and use less expensive storage onions in other applications.

Curry’s approach to adding value to sweet onions is to make their arrival a culinary occasion, “Celebrate Peruvian sweet onions as they arrive,” he suggests. “When they come in, alert your customers to the fact that ‘They are here!’ There are a lot of consumers who still require some education on sweet onions — utilize



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## THE QUALITY OF THE COMING CROP

**B**y most accounts, this year's crop of Peruvian sweet onions should be excellent and plentiful. Marty Kamer, vice president at Greencastle, PA-based Keystone Fruit Marketing Inc., says, "This year's crop looks terrific. They should start arriving in late August with large volume starting in mid-September and we'll be harvesting every week through January."

John Shuman, president of Reidsville, GA-based Shuman Produce Inc., agrees,

"The Peruvian crop looks really good this year with promotable supplies for retailers."

Derrell Kelso, president of Onions Etc., in Stockton, CA, points out, "When Peruvian sweets are on ad at \$.99 - \$1.29 per pound, they cost less than a chocolate bar and are a lot more versatile." That's quite a value considering all the many ways sweet onions enhance consumers' meals and retailers' profits. **pb**

your Web sites, social media, circulars and POS to get them excited about the great flavor and versatility of a sweet onion." The fact that the Peruvian sweets become available just in time for the fall-winter holiday season of parties and home entertaining is a delicious coincidence.

### Right On Trend

"During the past year or so, consumers have spent more time in their kitchens versus their favorite restaurants," recognizes Shuman of Shuman Produce. "As onions are already a

staple item, the dining-in trend has contributed to the growth of the onion category. Sweet onions are the category driver and the fastest growing segment."

Greenstein of Direct Source Marketing also acknowledges today's most consistent trend "of people staying at home. Sweet onions aren't like baby carrots or mesclun. They're a commodity and an important part of everyday home cooking."

Wilkins adds, "Peruvians are an important part of the produce department year-round,

not just in the summer. By having them available, we can keep our customers in sweets all year and maintain the market for this high margin, high volume item."

Thank the Food Network and celebrity cooking shows for getting people into the kitchen and trying out new and old standby recipes. As a result, consumers are more sophisticated about ingredients and the climate is ideal for them to upgrade to sweet onions. Rogers of Sweet Onion Trading Co. observes, "People will sauté several pounds of sweet onions, some mushrooms and garlic, freeze them, and then use them later for a variety of different meals like Mexican, Italian or to top a steak."

Sweet onions are so mild and delicious raw, that Chef Dave Munson of Keystone Fruit marketing says some of his favorite pairings are "with tropicals such as such as papaya, mangos, pineapple and other seasonal fruits." Munson adds that other trends he sees are for simple, rustic dishes often roasted or baked. "Like Grandma used to make, only better," he says.


In keeping with the comfort food trend, Oso's Kastick observes consumers using sweet onions in meatloaf and caramelizing them to top macaroni and cheese. **pb**



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# South African Citrus Exports Fruitful On All Sides

A Q&A with Honorable Ebrahim Rasool, South African Ambassador to the United States, and Gerrit van der Merwe, chairman of the Western Cape Citrus Producers Forum (WCCPF). **CONDUCTED BY JODEAN ROBBINS DUARTE**

South Africa is the world's second largest exporter of citrus, producing 60 percent of all citrus grown in the Southern Hemisphere. *PRODUCE BUSINESS* sat down with Ambassador Rasool and Gerrit van der Merwe to explore a little more behind this burgeoning industry.

**PRODUCE BUSINESS:** *What does the South African citrus industry represent in terms of product in the U.S. market?*

**van der Merwe:** This season, we expect to ship more than 40,000 tons of citrus to the United States with a retail value of around \$150 million. We only export the best quality fruit — 35 percent of our crop — to the U.S. market, which illustrates our commitment to providing U.S. consumers with top quality product. The remainder of what we grow is shipped to other places in the world, such as the Middle East and the Far East, Europe and the UK.

**PB:** *What impact does the citrus export industry have in South Africa?*

**Amb. Rasool:** The industry that serves the U.S. is made up of about 350 growers who support around 60,000 permanent workers and 75,000 temporary workers. These workers in turn support about 300,000 dependents. Our production represents around 56,000 hectares of productive agricultural land. Needless to say, the citrus export industry has great impact on the social well being of the region.

**van der Merwe:** Building this program took a great deal of courage and determination. Eleven years ago, a bunch of farmers from South Africa started shipping 50 tons of citrus to the United States. Over the past 10-plus years, we have grown the program and helped establish a category of summer citrus in the United States. There were many challenges, including logistics and marketing, and we are impacted by the overall global economy and fluctuating exchange rates. However, we stayed committed because we saw what the future could bring. We remain firmly committed to the U.S. marketplace.

**PB:** *Why is South African citrus important to the U.S. produce industry and consumers?*

**Amb. Rasool:** Since South African citrus enters duty-free via the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), it allows U.S. consumers affordable access to some of the best quality fruit. Additionally, it comes in during the off-season for U.S. production and so gives U.S. consumers the option of purchasing great quality citrus all year long. There is growing empirical evidence that 50 percent of what African exporters earn through AGOA returns to the United States. Many African industries that have grown due to AGOA, like the citrus industry, have supported the emergence of an African middle class and spurred demand for U.S. goods and services.

**PB:** *Are your producers and exporters currently facing any challenges?*

**Amb. Rasool:** We are looking at exporting 2.5 million cartons of citrus this season, a phenomenal feat in any circumstance. For us, it is even more phenomenal given the tricky and complex global situation currently presenting difficulties for citrus production around the world. Climate change is affecting growing regions and production yields. Economic turbulence is affecting the feasibility of exports as certain countries see stronger currency against the U.S. dollar. And, the cost of inputs is on the rise. We are in a highly competitive environment and we must maintain our competitive edge while still ensuring our high standards.

**van der Merwe:** Our producers are embracing the challenge. They're continuously implementing new technology and systems and bettering the industry daily. The recent report of 100 percent pest clearance by the USDA of our Clementines bound for the United States is a good example. Our industry represents many thousands of hard working and innovative people all along the supply chain from South Africa and across the ocean to the New Jersey/Philadelphia region and beyond.

**PB:** *What support can U.S. retailers look for from the South African industry?*

**van der Merwe:** We are pleased to support our retail partners and importers in many ways. We have an affinity with U.S. Youth Soccer and sponsor local and national youth soccer programs in order to raise awareness and preference for our products. We also have a wide variety of POS materials and we support in-store demo programs. Among the offerings we have found to be most effective is when our growers visit U.S. retail stores in order to demonstrate the product and talk with consumers. Research shows that people want to know where their food comes from and the opportunity to meet the growers of the fruit from as far away as South Africa has been beneficial.

**Amb. Rasool:** We're looking at creating a sustainable legacy. The country of South Africa represents a melding together of many cultures and languages. Our citrus industry is a great example of what we can achieve by working together. Purchasing South African fruit is not just a great buy from a quality standpoint, but it is an investment in a better world. **pb**



WCCPF chairman, Gerrit van der Merwe (left) and Honorable Ebrahim Rasool (right)



PHOTO ABOVE COURTESY OF JOHNSON REFRIGERATED TRUCK BODIES. PHOTO ON RIGHT COURTESY OF CR ENGLAND



**Johnson Refrigerated Truck Bodies uses cold plates to keep products chilled for up to 10 hours, whereas C.R. England has implemented Liquid Natural Gas in many of its West Coast trucks.**

# Shifting To A Greener Gear

New innovations and alternatives are enabling the transportation industry to become greener in an effort to reduce carbon footprints. **BY LISA WHITE**

**T**rucking and sustainability are akin to oil and water. How can a fuel-guzzling vehicle — and a diesel one at that — be a part of a produce transportation company's green initiative program? Thanks to innovative technology and companies with the fortitude to look backwards instead of forwards, there have been a number of sustainable developments in this segment. "As a large consumer of fossil fuels, we need to do everything we can to reduce our carbon footprint and help the produce shippers we deal with reduce theirs as well," says Gary Bleazard, director of business development at C.R. England, based in Salt Lake City, UT.

As a result, an increasing number of companies in the industry have taken a closer look at sustainability. Many who have implemented new initiatives and programs are discovering cost benefits in terms of fuel costs as well as positive customer feedback.

There are a number of ways that logistics providers and transportation brokers are becoming more sustainable and efficient, while overcoming challenges to reap the benefits of going green.

## Recent Initiatives

Both logistics providers and transportation brokers have employed a number of recent initiatives with the goal of becoming more sustainable and efficient. Three years ago, C.R. England began focusing on fuel-saving strategies, along with other green initiatives. "It's always been our strategy to purchase new trucks and trailers every three years," says Mitch England, director of fuel. "Having a newer fleet helps us save on both maintenance and fuel."

But in 2008, the company implemented a control-testing program for fuel efficient and green products to help determine which initiatives would be most beneficial moving forward. With this program, C.R. England tests a new green device by running two trucks simultaneously, one in front of the other. One truck utilizes the testing device, such as a side skirt or new engine, while the other acts as a control truck without the device. The trucks run for 200 miles and fuel efficiency is monitored and then compared. "This way, we can quickly identify what variables are working, what we want to continue testing and what is not working [before committing to a

product]," England says. As a result of the new testing program, the company purchased new side skirts for its trailers.

C.R. England also implemented Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) engines in its tractors that run between Southern California and Las Vegas. LNG is composed mainly of methane, with small amounts of ethane, propane and heavier hydrocarbons. This odorless, non-toxic and non-corrosive liquid evaporates quickly and leaves no residue if spilled. "One of the biggest challenges with using LNG is purchasing the fuel en route," says Bleazard. "Southern California is leading the charge. As the infrastructure for LNG grows, we'll add more trucks with these engines."

Crowley Maritime Corp., a shipping and logistics company located in Jacksonville, FL, has added a number of enhancements to help reduce emissions and/or raise fuel and engine efficiency to reduce fuel consumption. "Today, about 90 percent of our forklift fleet, which consists of about 18 units, is electric," says Cole Cosgrove, vice president of marine operations for liner services

Crowley also replaced many older Roll-on/Roll-off vessels with modern container

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Launched in 2004 by the EPA, SmartWay is a public/private collaboration between the EPA and the freight transportation industry that helps freight shippers, carriers and logistics companies reduce transportation-related emissions by creating incentives to improve supply chain fuel efficiency.

The program's five components include:

- **Transport Partnership:** freight carriers and shippers commit to benchmark operations, track fuel consumption and improve performance annually
- **Technology Program:** a testing, verification and designation program to help freight companies identify equipment, technologies and strategies that save fuel and lower emissions
- **Finance Program:** competitive grant program that makes investing in fuel-saving equipment easier for freight carriers
- **Vehicles:** program ranks light-duty cars and small trucks, identifying

environmental performers with SmartWay log

- **International Interests:** guidance and resources for countries seeking to develop freight sustainability programs modeled after SmartWay

LMTS, located in Raleigh, NC, is in the process of qualifying for SmartWay certification. "We are fine-tuning programs we already have in place," says Doug Stoiber, vice president of produce transportation operations.

Jacksonville, FL-based Crowley Maritime Corp. has joined the SmartWay Transport Partnership in an effort to increase energy efficiency, while reducing greenhouse gases and air pollution.

Railex, in Riverhead, NY, also is a SmartWay hauler.

"Suppliers that want to be greener can look to SmartWay-certified companies and use those carriers more often," says David Armellini, president of Armellini Express Lines Inc., in Palm City, FL, which has the highest rating in the SmartWay program. **pb**

**"We turn our fleet over about every three years to utilize the most fuel efficient vehicles and always look for new technology."**

— David Armellini, Armellini Express Lines Inc.

Lift-on/Lift-off vessels, which have helped reduce emissions by an estimated 28 percent. Fuel metering systems help achieve economical speed, while injectors provide three percent fuel savings, in addition to reduced opacity and particulate matter in exhaust emissions. In addition, new propellers operate more efficiently to reduce fuel consumption by a minimum of four percent.

Crowley is currently testing several paint manufacturers' foul release coatings on the underwater body of the tugs that are designed to cause marine fouling to wash off due to the motion of the vessel through the water. "A cleaner hull reduces fuel consumption," Cosgrove explains. "We antic-

ipate that these coatings will not need to be reapplied as frequently as existing coatings, thereby reducing reapplication environmental impacts."

In its effort to operate a more sustainable operation, Armellini Express Lines Inc., in Palm City, FL, is utilizing tires with better rolling resistance and side skirts for trailers. "We have realized a better fuel economy with our new side skirts," reports David Armellini, president. "We turn our fleet over about every three years to utilize the most fuel efficient vehicles and always look for new technology."

### Tried-And-True Technologies

In some cases, what's old becomes new

again. Decades ago, dry ice was used to keep perishables at proper temperatures. About 30 years ago, cold plates were employed as a more desirable method. Today, diesel refrigerated units are utilized most often for temperature maintenance, despite not being the greenest option. Approximately one gallon of diesel fuel an hour is required to maintain desired temperatures for perishable produce.

"We utilize cold plates, which the dairy industry has employed, due to the challenges with diesel," says Eduardo Navarro, director of business development for Johnson Refrigerated Truck Bodies, based in Rice Lake, WI. These employ a steel tank with a solution inside that acts as a cold pack. At the end of their route, drivers plug in the systems, which use electric compressors similar to refrigerators that pump in refrigerant and freeze the solution. Plates can keep product cold for eight to 10 hours.

Six years ago, Johnson Refrigerated Truck Bodies developed a system that utilizes cold plates and captures the truck's transmission energy to convert it to regular electricity, which powers the compressor as if it were plugged into a wall. "This allows us to recharge plates as the truck is running and power fans that circulate air and maintain product temperature," Navarro says. "This provides an active system that powers the cold plates so they can be used for longer periods of time."

Rail offers another traditional, greener transportation option for the produce industry. "Our entire business model is based on the utilization of rail," says Paul Esposito, senior vice president of corporate logistics at Railex, based in Riverhead, NY. The company utilizes both short-haul trucks and rail for longer hauls. "The amount of items moved through our system each week saves between 100,000 and 120,000 gallons of diesel fuel."

As part of its most recent green initiative, Railex is looking at incorporating hydrogen fuel cell forklifts into its operations. "We also are creating transcontinental logistics platform so people can convert to rail," Esposito says adds.

CSX Corp., in Jacksonville, FL, also offers a rail transportation service option to produce shippers. "The fact that we can carry a ton of freight on a single gallon of fuel for 500 miles has resonated with customers and policy makers in Washington," says Gary Sease, spokesman. "This demonstrates the benefits of rail in terms of the environment." CSX can calculate carbon savings that produce shippers accrue by shipping freight

by rail as opposed to by truck.

### Overcoming Challenges

Going green is not without its challenges. For example, brokers say it is difficult to convince shippers to change delivery habits based on environmental factors. "Customers realize that if they do certain things, like consolidating loads, they can save money," says Fred Plotsky, president of Cool Runnings, a broker located in Kenosha, WI. "When you're six pallets short and trying to fill a

truck, but the next pick-up is 300 miles away, shippers typically will burn the fuel to get to this location."

As a result, Cool Runnings has upgraded its equipment, purchasing new, cleaner-operating trailers about a year-and-a-half ago. "Customers want you to be green, but they don't take the appropriate steps that will help trucking companies be green," Plotsky says. "These companies don't buy or route properly. It all sounds good, but it's not always realistic to implement these initiatives."

**"We help a lot of carriers fill those empty miles, because the most inefficient truck is the one not carrying anything. This fact is sometimes lost in the mix."**

— Ken Lund, Allen Lund Co.

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This is because the cost of executing some of these programs is prohibitive and typically more than the return on investment. "The biggest challenge in going green is the execution," says C.R. England's England says. "We have such a large fleet that the challenge of testing leaves us with more questions than answers."

Reducing carbon footprints is not always as simple as lowering truck speeds. "You also have to change axle ratios and torque ratios to make sure engine parameters match speed changes [to get the most out of the process]," England says.

The green goal of truck broker Allen Lund Co., in La Canada, CA, is to help carriers be more efficient with their miles and limit deadheading as much as possible. "We help a lot of carriers fill those empty miles, because the most inefficient truck is the one not carrying anything," says Ken Lund, vice president of operations. "This fact is sometimes lost in the mix."

Although the transportation industry is moving more into rail, there are a number of inefficiencies in terms of hauling produce by train. "Produce first has to be brought to the rail head or ramp by truck, loaded onto the train and then retrieved by a truck," Lund says. "With this method, produce is being handled in three different modes. Depending on the distance, this is not always the most efficient method."

Also, rail transport can be tough on produce, which is time-sensitive. Although companies like Armellini Industries regularly experiment with new technology, measuring efficiencies can be difficult. "You need controlled environments in a lot of cases to accomplish this," Armellini says.

### The Biggest Benefits

Despite the difficulties, there are a number





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**“The fact that we can carry a ton of freight on a single gallon of fuel for 500 miles has resonated with customers and policy makers in Washington.”**

— Gary Sease, CSX Corp.,

of successes being seen from green transport technologies. C.R. England has realized approximately a three-and-a-half to five percent fuel savings while using skirts and about one-and-a-half percent fuel savings by utilizing wide base tires. “We started purchasing these tires in earnest last year,” England says.

The company is ramping up this initiative, as these tires have become more affordable. “We also reduced truck speeds as of three years ago,” England says. The company’s trucks are now restricted to speeds of 62 mph with the cruise control and 60 mph on the floor. “This has been a big fuel saver for us, conserving about 1/2-mile per gallon.”

In addition to being both economical and efficient, the cold plate technology employed

by Johnson Refrigerated Truck Bodies saves \$5,000 annually in diesel fuel costs. “Also, while diesel engines need tune ups and continuous maintenance, our electric compressors are practically maintenance-free,” Navarro says.

Initiatives that increase fuel efficiency save money, but also can have a positive effect on business. “We are getting more business from SmartWay partners [see accompanying sidebar on page 71]” Armellini says.

As more transportation companies concentrate on sustainability initiatives, the technology will improve, costs will go down and the environment will reap the benefits. “The biggest benefit for both the transportation and produce industries is reducing carbon footprints,” Esposito says. **pb**



# FPAA And Nogales-area Shippers Pave The Way Toward A Brighter Future

New, expanded port and distribution enhancements will enable greater volume and speedy delivery of Mexican produce.

BY CAROL M. BAREUTHER, RD



**T**he volume and variety of fresh fruits and vegetables found on U.S. and Canadian supermarket produce shelves just wouldn't be as bountiful without imports from Mexico. Nearly 70 percent of all fresh produce shipped to the United States from Mexico during the peak season of January through April passes through the port of Nogales, Arizona. Or, said another way, over 4 billion pounds of fruits and vegetables, or more than one-third of the fresh produce consumed in the United States during the winter, is shipped through Nogales' Mariposa port.

"The economic impact of these imports is \$2.5 billion annually, up from around \$1 billion in 1997," according to Lance Jungmeyer, president of the Fresh Produce Association of the Americas (FPAA). "The Nogales-based FPAA, a non-profit trade group that represents about 110 produce importers and other related companies involved in the growth, harvest, import and distribution of Mexican produce, is actively working on many fronts to keep this bounty flowing.

## New Port On The Horizon

The fresh produce industry in Nogales operates at a unique international crossroad that links growers in Mexico with shippers in Arizona. Over the years, port traffic during the winter has



**“We’ve been spreading the message on Capitol Hill and in the media that trade at the border is hampered by a lack of officers. This, in turn, can hamper the economy of the community, state and even the country. After all, many companies buying the produce rely on just-in-time delivery.”**

— Lance Jungmeyer, Fresh Produce Association of the Americas

grown to over 136,000 trucks arriving at some 70 warehouses with over 200,000 trucks waiting on the U.S. side to pick up the produce for distribution to markets in the United States and Canada. Needless to say, it’s become a bit crowded. Add understaffing of Customs officers to this and the wait times to clear a load of produce have stretched from one to two hours to a new norm of five to six or more hours. Hence, one of the FPAA’s major recent efforts is the successful lobbying to improve and expand the port of entry.

Jaime Chamberlain, president of Nogales,

AZ-based J-C Distributing Inc., and chairman of the board of the FPAA, says, “There is not a bigger or more important project to our community, the state of Arizona and our industry than the port expansion.”

Jon Esformes, operating partner of Palmetto, FL-based Pacific Tomato Growers, which has warehouses in Nogales, agrees. “We’re very excited about the ability to streamline the handling of products from Mexico into the U.S. as imports continue to increase.”

The \$213 million modernization and expansion of the Mariposa Land Port of Entry, paid for

by stimulus funds from the U.S. General Services Administration through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, will more than double the inspection capacity — from four to eight commercial lanes — as well as incorporate state-of-the-art technology. Included in the design are six temperature-controlled inspection sites. The four additional commercial processing lanes will be complete in November of 2011, and the new port is projected to be finished in the spring of 2014.

“As a member of the executive board of directors for the FPAA, we worked in concert with the Port Authority to lobby for the necessary improvements in both design and capacity,” states Matt Mandel, sales/project coordinator for SunFed, in Rio Rico, AZ. “However, the biggest challenge currently is that we have an expanded port of entry with an ever-growing number of commercial shipments, but the number of Customs agents necessary to operate the port efficiently [is stagnant], and their budgeted funds for when the port fully has not come online. In order to have more agents ready for the opening, they would have to be hired and trained now to be ready 18 months from now.”

In recent years, Customs and Border Patrol agents in Nogales, as at other ports, have been assigned to inspect for drug, migrant and similar types of interdiction. The FPAA’s Jungmeyer estimates an additional 400 Customs Border Protection officers are needed to staff the expanded port. “We’ve been spreading the message on Capitol Hill and in the media that trade at the border is hampered by a lack of officers. This, in turn, can hamper the economy of the community, state and even the country. After all, many companies buying the produce rely on just-in-time delivery,” he says.



PHOTO ON RIGHT COURTESY OF SUNFED

Sunfed’s quality control specialist, Gilberto Nunez, inspects a package before shipping.



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Sandra Aguilar, marketing manager for Ciruli Bros. LLC, in Rio Rico, AZ, says, "Having a more efficient port of entry in Nogales will have a tremendous impact on the industry, particularly in the expediting of product inspections and crossings, and in minimizing the turnaround time for FDA holds on certain commodities, which will ultimately help us provide our customers with fresher produce."

According to Jorge Quintero, managing member of Nogales-based Grower Alliance, "We are looking forward to the convenience of knowing there will be fewer 'non-crossing' trucks and better service for our customers since we will be virtually be able to fill all orders without worrying about trucks not crossing."

### Crop Diversity And Updated Infrastructure

The time for a new port facility couldn't be riper, as FPAA members diversify and expand their product lines as well as upgrade infrastructure. Among newer items grown now in Mexico, details Jungmeyer, "are different kinds of tomatoes. There are also more Asian vegetables such as Napa cabbage, bok choy and daikon in response to demand from the growing population of Asian customers in the

United States and especially Canada."

Mexico's harvest season used to run from mid-November to mid-April, says Chuck Thomas, president and owner of Thomas Produce Sales Inc., in Rio Rico, AZ. "Now, it starts in early September and ends in late June for vegetables. Grapes, watermelons and mangos go almost year-round. Growing in different microclimates and the advent of protected agriculture are two reasons."

Today, companies such as SunFed have a presence in all-important growing regions of Mexico, says Mandel. "We have 25 ranches that provide us with an eight-month or longer season on many of our products. This allows redundancy so that there is continuity of production — something that our customers expect and depend on."

Other companies, such as Nogales, AZ-based Al Harrison Co. Distributors, in Nogales, AZ, are diversifying through expansion. "This year, we expanded beyond melon and squash and into tomatoes, cucumbers, bell peppers and zucchini," details president, Brent Harrison. "We did this by taking on a new partner who had the connections and contacts. Many of our primary customers are looking for a one-

stop shop."

Jerry Havel, director of sales and marketing for Fresh Farms, headquartered in Rio Rico, AZ, agrees, and adds, "We've expanded this year into a cucumber operation and we also got into colored and bell peppers. We're a five-year-old company and still in a growth phase, but we've found the more you offer your customers, the better it is for business because it's easier for them to load more than one item at our facility. You don't see a lot of straight loads these days."

It is becoming increasingly clear that cost is no longer the primary differentiator and that companies need to offer more products and services as they relate to providing value to customers, says Michael Castagnetto, sourcing manager for FoodSource, a C.H. Robinson Worldwide Company, based in Monterey, CA. "We are working at providing additional value by expanding our directly imported product line from our network of local and regional growers and by also expanding our repacking services. Additionally, our supply chain expertise enables us to take time and food miles out of the network through product consolidation."

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# Nogales Roots Run Deep In The Produce Industry

**N**ogales boasts a century-old history as a leading port of entry to the U.S. for fresh fruits and vegetables. It was 1905 when the first rail car carried fresh produce from Mexico and crossed the border at Nogales, details Lance Jungmeyer, president of the Nogales, AZ-based, 1944-founded Fresh Produce Association of the Americas (FPAA). “The switch to trucks started in the 40s, and by the 60s, rail had mostly died out. Over the years, we’ve seen an evolution of second and third generation companies that were here 60 and 70 years ago, and new companies that were recently founded.”

George Gotsis, president of the 1950-founded Omega Produce Co. Inc., in Rio Rico, AZ, says, “When we started there were only eight or nine distributors. Now there are over 100. What really jump-started the industry was when Cuba went communist at the end of the 1950s and Mexico started to pick up the slack in terms of supplying the United States with produce.”

It was in 1959 that the father of Jon Esformes, operating partner of Palmetto, FL-based Pacific Tomato Growers, arrived in Nogales and started farming in Mexico. “My father told me back then that

he had to drive 40 miles to send a telex to let his father, my grandfather, know he was fine and what was going on.”

Ciruli Brothers is one company that got its start in Nogales during the 1960s. This happened after Charlie Ciruli, an Italian who immigrated to the United States started a farm in Colorado in the early 1900s, and decided to expand. Charlie’s sudden passing put Charles Jr. at the helm of the operation. He later established Ciruli Brokerage Co. and Amex Distributing Co., which specialized in product from West Mexico. In the tradition of his father, Charles Jr. taught his sons about the produce industry by taking them with him on business trips to visit growing operations. Today, it’s the third generation of Cirulis — Chuck and Chris — who operate the company. The company has flourished over the years by adding growing operations and



PHOTO COURTESY OF FPAA

commodities include peppers (everything from popular green bells to multi-colored baby bells and hot peppers), cucumbers (English, American, minis and pickles), squash (zucchini,

yellow and hard), corn, eggplant, tomatoes (beefsteak, roma, vine ripe) and melons. The company, owned and operated by the Obregon brothers, Alvaro and Enrique, offers load

consolidation that takes the hassle out of buyers running all over town to pick up produce, according to IPR’s Web site.

Diversification also comes in the area of

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extending the product mix.

The roots for J-C Distributing Inc., based in Nogales, AZ, were planted in the early 1970s. Jaime Chamberlain, company president who bought his father out three years ago, recounts, "My father was a produce inspector for a Florida-based company that had an office in Nogales. One day, his paycheck didn't arrive on time. He wanted to wait a day or two and valued the stability of his job, but my mom said they couldn't afford to not receive a check on time. Unbeknownst to him, she left that afternoon, went to the bank and took out a \$1,000 bank loan and came back and told my father he now owned his own company. He started as a broker buying gas-green tomatoes. In 1980, a group of growers asked us to sell their products and the distribution arm of the company was founded."

SunFed was one of the companies founded in the mid-1990s. The company was started by Warren Mizokami and Danny Mandel. The label was originally used by Warren's father, beginning in the 1950s, while the Mizokami family was farming in Colorado. Mizokami eventually moved all of his farming operations to Mexico.

Danny Mandel, chairman of the board, explains, "We started by

focusing on two products that were very difficult to deliver in good condition: green beans and yellow squash. To improve these products, we began to study what was occurring in the post-harvest process. It was an interesting time. Two limiting factors in those days were the cold chain out of Mexico and the absence of specific technology to assist with freshness. In 2000, we began communicating with StePac, an Israeli company that had a film technology, originally developed for use with pharmaceuticals, which they wanted to apply to fresh vegetables to preserve freshness. Freshness became our new mantra, and during the subsequent decade, much was done at SunFed to perfect the application of that technology. Furthermore, the cold chain improved and became more transparent with the development of RFID and GPS technologies, and one technology supported the other."

"The fresh produce industry in Nogales has seen incredible changes in the industry over the years," says Chamberlain. "Most of them have been positive. I think we'll see this continue as future generations — generations that have college degrees in agribusiness and marketing majors from Wharton — take over the reins." **pb**

packaging for improved quality. IPR, for example, also provides a variety of specialty and value-added packaging.

At SunFed, Mandel says, "All of our dry

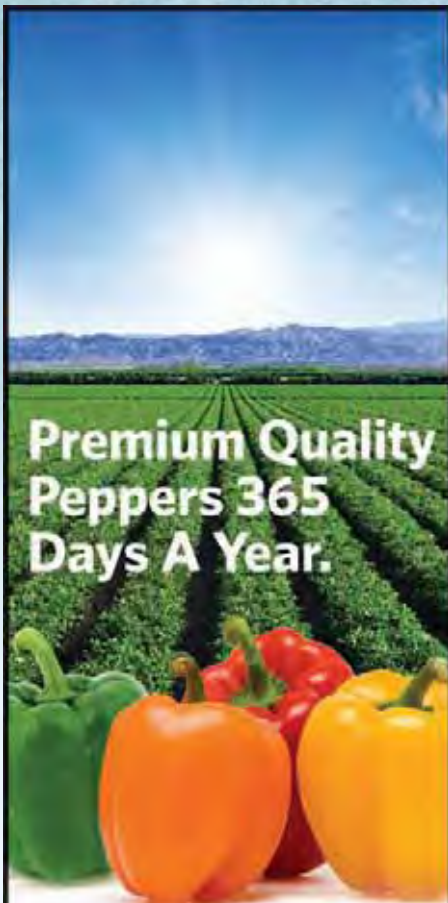
vegetables leave the packing shed surrounded by a modified-atmosphere, modified-humidity liner that provides the product with the perfect atmosphere with the proper humidity to make

'maximum radiant freshness' a reality. With this supporting technology, and proper alignment through the supply chain, you can buy a bell pepper or squash at the store that looks and

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**“We’ve seen a major shift to protected agriculture with our growers, especially for cucumbers, bell peppers and tomatoes. In fact, many of these growers are on a four- to five-year plan to go fully to shadehouses. The benefits are higher yields, better quality and more premium products.”**

— Greg Cardamone, L & M Companies Inc.

feels like it was literally just harvested.”

Improved product quality has also come via enhancements on the growing end. There is a lot more protected agriculture today, everything from shade houses to greenhouses, says George Gotsis, president of Rio Rico, AZ-based Omega Produce Co. Inc. “Sixty percent of what we grow is under a covered operation today and only 40 percent are open-field.”

Greg Cardamone, general manager for vegetables at L & M Companies Inc., based in Raleigh, NC, says, “We’ve seen a major shift to protected agriculture with our growers, especially for cucumbers, bell peppers and tomatoes. In fact, many of these growers are on a four- to five-year plan to go fully to shadehouses. The benefits are higher yields, better

quality and more premium products. In addition, in the event of a freeze like last year, crops don’t frost or freeze as fast in a shadehouse as they do in an open field.”

At Grower Alliance, Quintero says the company is working with growers that have shadehouse and greenhouse technology. “It seems that every year more and more growers are moving toward protected infrastructure,” he says. “This creates a more consistent yield, better overall quality and protection against plagues and weather-related harvest issues.” Quintero adds that Grower Alliance started shipping table grapes this past summer and looks forward to shipping more next season.

As for infrastructure improvements, J-C Distributing, for example, increased its

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**The popularity of shadehouses is dramatically increasing as growers realize protected agriculture creates higher yield and consistent quality, while avoiding weather-related harvest issues.**

refrigerated warehouse space two years ago to 92,000-square feet. “With our expansion, we can distribute at least 8 to 10 million boxes of items such as squash, tomatoes, cucumbers, bell peppers and round beans,” says Chamberlain.

Likewise, Pacific Tomato Growers has doubled the size of its warehouse facilities in Nogales from 27,000 to 56,000 square feet. “With the increase,” says Esformes, “we can now handle, if we choose, up to 70 loads a day.”

Adequate warehousing systems play a central role in maintaining and improving the quality and safety of our products, says Ciruli’s Aguilar. “We operate three cold storage facilities between Texas and Arizona, with the biggest facility in Nogales. The building has approximately 80,000 square feet of cold storage space and the facility itself is very efficient with the use of sophisticated software. This software allows us to track every package that comes in and out of the warehouse, down to the location of the cooler that the product was held and the names of the people who moved and/or handled the product. We’ve also recently invested in high-tech video surveillance systems at our Arizona facilities to ensure our building, staff and products are safe.”

### Data Just A Click Away

Computerization and technological advances have improved by leaps and bounds over the past several years, says Al Harrison’s Harrison. “This makes it much easier to work with our growers, customhouse brokers and customers.”

According to Pacific Tomato’s Esformes, “Software upgrades can help make an irrigation system more efficient, or for a small cost invest-

ment, increase packaging capacity by 30 to 40 percent. It’s all about higher efficiency with the same infrastructure at a reasonable cost.

J-C Distributing’s Chamberlain remembers when he carried a pocket full of quarters to call the warehouse from a pay phone. “Today, all my growers have Blackberries. I’ll talk with them six or eight times a day about topics such as crop timing and ad opportunities.”

“Truck manifests are all conveyed electronically,” says Alberto Maldonado, general manager at Apache Produce Imports LLC, in Nogales, AZ. “We’ll have them and so will the customhouse brokers by the time the truck leaves the farm. This helps to expedite clearance at the port.”

Another example of web-based data sharing is the FPAAs work with the FDA on the agency’s new PREDICT risk-based screening system for imports. PREDICT (Predictive Risk-based Evaluation for Dynamic Import Compliance Targeting), which is currently in a pilot stage, will target higher-risk shipments for examination and expedite the clearance of lower-risk cargo as long as accurate and complete data is provided by importers.

### Food Safety And Marketing

Food safety is one of the most important topics, says Leonardo Tarriba, general manager of Farmer’s Best International LLC, located in Rio Rico, AZ. “Our company has had its food safety certification with Primus Labs since 2000. Since then, we’ve hired an independent company that audits our growers for their food safety processes and protocols twice per month. After all, certification doesn’t mean anything unless you practice good food safety every day.”

Pacific Tomato has created a director of food safety position in 1997, says Esformes. “That person reports directly to the COO and CFO.”

Third-party audits are the norm for many growers in Mexico, says Maldonado. “Grocers insist on it.”

FoodSource’s Castagnetto agrees. “We work with growers who maintain comprehensive, risk-based food safety systems at their locations. We work with growers who have identified processes designed to address each operation’s specific food safety needs and help ensure that potential risks are mitigated through all stages of production. These growers’ systems are validated through annual third-party audits and we continuously work to improve them through pursuit of industry initiatives such as GFSI and GAP Harmonization. Furthermore, we strive to remain on the technological forefront by contracting with FoodLogiQ to develop and implement a traceability solution that complies with the Produce Traceability Initiative.”

Traceability is strong in Mexico, adds the FPAAs Jungmeyer. “Most do it, and those who aren’t currently 100 percent traceable have the pieces in place.”

Pacific Tomatoes’ Esformes says, “In less than 24 hours, we can trace a product back to seed purchase. We’ve tied together our payroll and purchasing records to create a closed traceable system.”

The big change on the horizon, says Walter Ram, the Rio Rico, AZ-based vice president of food safety at The Giumarra Companies, “is the Food Safety Modernization Act and what it means for imports.”

Jungmeyer agrees, adding, “We’ve been diligently working with the FDA and its counterparts in Mexico to successfully prepare the produce industry for compliance.”

While food safety is an essential element to doing business for all fruit and vegetable growers, it’s also a potent marketing tool to dispel consumers’ misconceptions about Mexican produce. Ciruli’s Aguilar acknowledges, “We do receive periodic e-mails from customers who want to know more about our growing practices. They usually find us through our Web site, Facebook page or contact information on our product packaging and labels. As a company, we try to address their concerns and provide them with pertinent information about our products in a timely fashion, whether it’s information about the growing region, recipe ideas or more about our growing and handling practices.”

Ultimately, marketing and communications



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**Jorge Quintero, Sr.**  
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**Luis Caballero**  
Mexican Operations, Managing Member



**Jaime Martinez**  
Head accountant & grower relations



**Frank Hernandez II**  
Sales Assistant



**Sandra Betancourt**  
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**“Our company has had its food safety certification with Primus Labs since 2000. Since then, we’ve hired an independent company that audits our growers for their food safety processes and protocols twice per month. After all, certification doesn’t mean anything unless you practice good food safety every day.”**

— Leonardo Tarriba  
Farmer’s Best International LLC.

all come down to listening to the buying community. According to IPR’s general manager, Alvaro “Al” Obrego, “Learning and understanding our customers’ needs will allow IPR to direct all our resources to ensuring we provide the customers with what they want: a quality product with the proper size and color delivered in a timely fashion. This is the only language our customers understand.”

Ultimately, marketing and communications all come down to listening to the buying community. According to IPR’s general manager, Alvaro “Al” Obrego, “Learning and understanding our customers’ needs will allow IPR to direct all our resources to ensuring we provide the customers with what they want: a quality product with the proper size and color delivered in a timely fashion. This is the only language our customers understand.”

### Networking For The Future

The FPAA and its members network with each other as well as with other organizations and associations on a number of issues that benefit the produce industry. Over the past four years these, actions have been more political than promotional.

Chris Ciruli, chief operating officer of Ciruli Bros. and the FPAA’s chairman of the board in 2010, says, “Ten years ago, when the FPAA moved into its new office complex, the goal was to have a place to meet. Today, 150 to 200 meetings are hosted here each year and serve as a conduit to bring U.S. and Mexican companies and government officials together.”

# Fresh Produce Association Of The Americas And Texas Produce Association Team Up

Joint concerns over issues such as food safety, trade topics, port security and more prompted the Fresh Produce Association of the Americas (FPAA) and Mission-based Texas Produce Association (TPA) to join together to host the America Trades Produce conference this past March in McAllen, TX. Panel speakers addressed over 300 attendees on the issues, trends and opportunities in the fresh produce trade between the United States and Mexico. The second annual conference is planned for March 21 to 23, 2012 in Tubac, AZ.

John McClung, president and CEO of the TPA, says, "We realized the time has come for a regional conference that focuses specifically on the issues in our neck of the woods. Our two associations represent around 90 percent of the fresh produce that comes into the United States from Mexico. We don't necessarily compete because we tend to cross different items. For example, we're big in watermelons, onions, cabbage, mangos, limes and avocados, while in Arizona, there are tomatoes, cucumbers, bell peppers and lettuces; however, there is some overlap. Also, the produce that's crossed tends to go to two different places. Most of the produce that comes into Texas is destined for the East Coast and Midwest, while that which comes into Nogales heads West. That's logical considering the cost of diesel."

"The beauty of this conference," says Lance Jungmeyer, president of the Nogales, AZ-based FPAA, "is that it isn't run by one association, so we're able to tap into the brain power of many stakeholders."

Topics that will be addressed in the 2012



Attendees of the 2011 America Trades Produce conference were welcomed by customs officials at the Pharr-Reynosa Port.

conference include the new port in Mariposa; faster transportation of fresh produce across the border; problems companies face in banks financing the construction of warehouse facilities on the U.S. sides of the border; and an update on food safety — an issue that Jungmeyer says will be an ongoing part of the program for the next several years. In addition, like the popular tour of the Pharr-Reynosa Port of Entry in Texas, there is a tour planned of the Mariposa facility.

The presentation and popularity of this event also highlights the fact that many Nogales-based importers and distributors are setting up tandem operations in Texas. Alberto Maldonado, general manager at Apache Produce Co., in Nogales, AZ, says, "Last year, we had a small deal with a grower in Nayarit who has a greenhouse south of Culiacan, to ship tomatoes through McAllen and we'll do the same this year."

L&M Companies rents a 20,000-square-foot warehouse in McAllen, and last year, crossed limes and mangos as well as

bell peppers and cucumbers, says Greg Cardamone, the Raleigh, NC-based general manager for vegetables. "We work with several farmers on Mexico's East Coast. The freight savings and day fresher to get the product to the East Coast of the U.S. makes it a win-win for everyone."

More of Mexico's East Coast growers are looking for distributors for their products, says Leonardo Tarriba, general manager of Farmer's Best International, in Rio Rico, AZ. "We rented a 55,000-square-foot warehouse, and last year, shipped 25 percent of our produce through McAllen including 1 million packages of tomatoes. Our goal is to ship 50 percent of our produce through Texas by 2014."

Ciruli Bros., in Nogales, AZ, has shipped product out of Texas since the late 1990s. "I see this trend continuing," says Chris Ciruli, the company's chief operating officer, "but I don't see that there will be a decrease in Nogales as a result. That's a common misconception. Nogales will continue to grow, especially with the new port facility." **pb**

In this facility and out, there have been strides made in lobbying for food safety education, fresh produce promotion, building better trade relations between Mexico and the United States, and impetus for funding of the new port.

"In addition," says SunFed's Mandel, who sits on the FPAA's board of directors as well as several sub-committees, "last year, the FPAA worked to have the State of Arizona allow higher weight limits in the warehouse area, so trucks could bring in more cargo and work more efficiently and sustainably."

FPAA members are active in the larger produce industry. For example, says Al Harrison's Harrison, "In addition to sitting on the board of the FPAA, I also sit on United Fresh's board and currently am chairman of the National Watermelon Board. It's great to be involved in both local and national programs."

Another example: SunFed is a member of and regularly exhibits at the Canadian Produce Marketing Association, Produce Marketing Association and New York Food Shows as well as attending Fruit Logistica in Berlin,

points out Mandel. "We also support our customers by attending their trade shows throughout the country. These regional meetings provide an additional opportunity to better understand their needs and changes taking place in their marketplace."

Back in Nogales, it isn't just company executives that get a chance to attend work sessions, seminars and networking opportunities, says Ciruli's Aguilar. "It is important to develop our staff so they can grow and transfer learning to others." **pb**



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*Jay Thompson, President and General Manager of Transportation Business Associates will discuss new cutting edge team driver concepts and other trends in produce transportation.*

**Mariposa Reconfiguration: How Construction is Progressing, and How it May Affect Your Business in the Coming Season**

*In this panel discussion, we will hear from JB Manson, Chairman of The Greater Nogales and Santa Cruz County Port Authority, John Halikowski, Director of Arizona Department of Transportation and David Higgerson, Director of Field Operations for U.S. Customs and Border Protection.*

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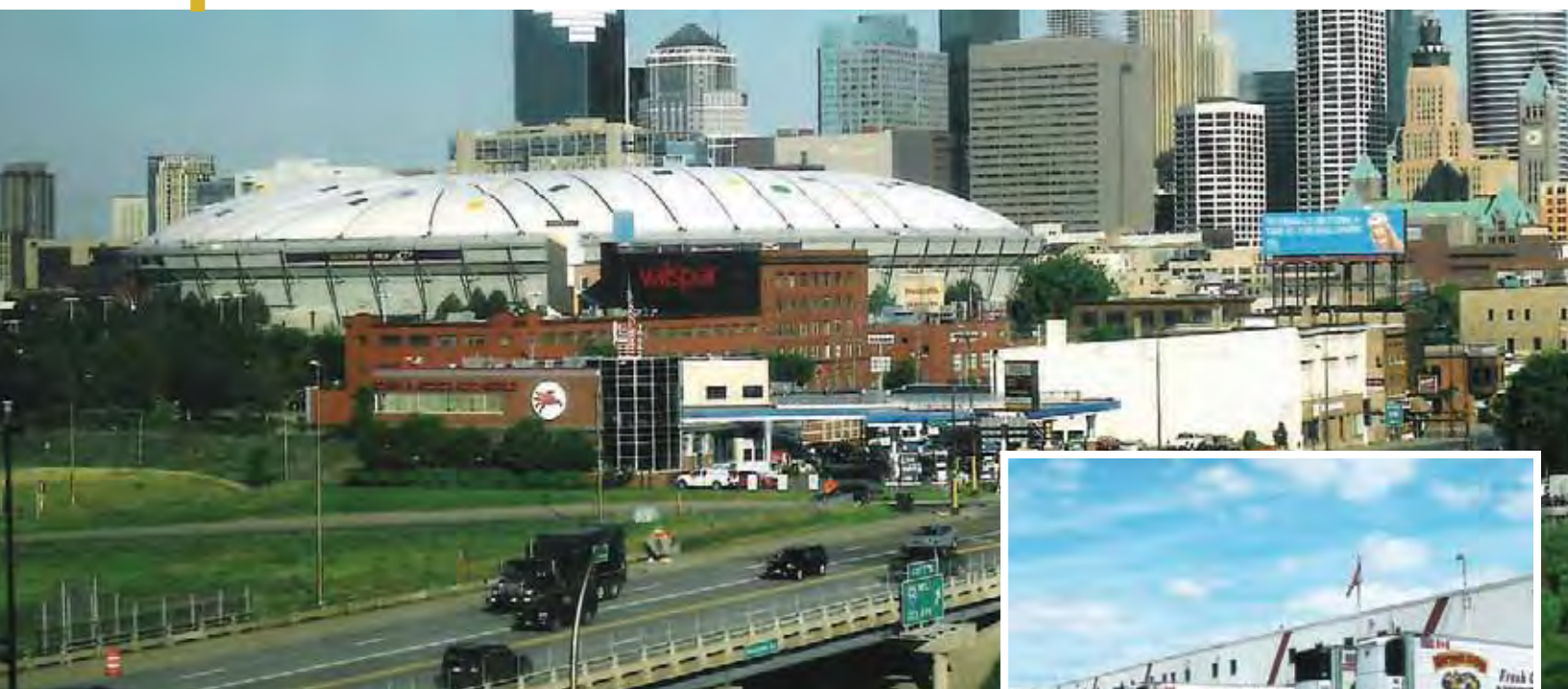
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# The Twin Cities Stay On Top Of Fresh Produce



Minneapolis/St. Paul has a long-standing history of great produce offerings, responding to diverse populations and a brisk business climate. **BY SANDY LINDBLAD LEE**

**T**hrough efforts to maintain and expand their customer bases, produce wholesalers and distributors in the Twin Cities are providing a wider scope of services and expanding their product lines to appeal to specific demographic targets. While adapting to evolving trends at the retail and foodservice sectors in the Minneapolis/St. Paul region, wholesalers emphasize that their centralized location in the Upper Midwest provides the added benefits of transportation cost savings to their customers. While keeping their focus on food safety in the forefront, produce distributors are continuing to answer the ongoing demand for locally grown produce from both the retail and foodservice sectors.

The Twin Cities act as home base for some key national chains, such as Target Corp. and Supervalu Inc., which maintains the market's retail strength. At the same time, the region has well established independent retailers who design each store to fit the demographics and ambiance of the surrounding neighborhoods. In foodservice, Twin Cities produce wholesalers are seeking out new opportunities. This includes the potential to address the highly publicized increasing childhood obesity problem through selling more fresh produce to schools.

## Marketing To Diverse Population Segments

While the Twin Cities' strong Scandinavian influence is still

highly recognizable, the region's diverse demographic profile provides a unique blend of cultures and ethnicity. According to a demographics overview of Minnesota in the *Minnesota Compass*, although the state is still not nearly as racially diverse as the nation, its profile continues to change. About 15 percent of the state's residents are now persons of color, compared to only about 1 percent in 1960. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, between 2000 and 2009, the state's populations of color grew by 38 percent, compared to only 3 percent among whites. Immigrants from 160 countries came to Minnesota during the past decade, according to a report from the University of Minnesota College of Education & Human Development. Immigrants born in Somalia outnumbered all others, followed by those born in India, Ethiopia and Mexico.

More than half of Minnesota's residents live in the seven-county Twin Cities region. It is one of the fastest growing regions in the Midwest and is predicted to continue its rapid growth, adding half a million more residents by 2030. More data from the U.S. Census Bureau shows that age trends are also transforming the state. By 2030, the number of Minnesotans over age 65 is expected to more than double, and older adults will comprise about one-fifth of the state's population.

Several savvy Twin Cities wholesalers are aware of the importance of answering to the growing needs in these various segments. "Hispanic and Latino produce and other grocery items are still



Beth Arel &amp; Pat Coan, The Brings Co.



Phil Brooks, H. Brooks &amp; Co. LLC



Jim &amp; Kevin Hannigan, J &amp; J Distributing Co.

increasing in popularity,” notes Kevin Hannigan, executive vice president of marketing for J & J Distributing Co., in St. Paul. “Ten years ago, avocados were considered exotic. Now, they are totally mainstream.”

J & J offers its retail clients a “full store program,” which includes the all-encompassing service involved with introducing the entire line into retail outlets. Latino products are one of several growing segments in the fresh produce industry, which has necessitated a much larger facility for J & J. “We’ve gone from 20,000 square feet of space in 1997, up to the 108,000 square feet where we operate now,” emphasizes Hannigan. The company’s most recent expansion is still underway, with a 20,000-square-foot salad line being added to the interior of the building.

Brian Hauge, president of Minneapolis-based Wholesale Produce Supply LLC, also recognizes the ongoing popularity of avocados. “They have moved to the third highest spot in our sales this year,” he reports, adding that high market prices have contributed to that statistic. Wholesale Produce also offers an avocado-conditioning program to its customers, and, adds Hauge, “We are ripening an average of over two loads of avocados per week.”

“Our Hispanic business continues to grow,” reports Phillip Brooks, president of H. Brooks & Co. LLC, in New Brighton, MN. With the addition of its onion-packing services last year through the acquisition of onion and rutabaga distributor The Brings Co., formerly based in St. Paul, MN, Brooks now offers more selections of consumer-sized onion packs for both foodservice and retail. White onions are especially popular with the Latino population, but reds and yellows are becoming more in demand from that segment.

Brooks contends the list of Mexican and Latin American grocery and produce items

**“Our local program has a lot broader base, with better access to more areas we can reach quicker with our wide transportation network. Our ability to source product is better since we have delivery trucks throughout the Midwest, and we can haul local product back in a more efficient manner. We have the luxury of bringing back product from smaller growing regions, and it’s easier and more cost-effective for us to procure the products and supply our customers.”** — Brian Hauge, Wholesale Produce Supply LLC

the company carries is “the most comprehensive found under one roof. We offer customized help with merchandising and setup for independent retailers who need help expanding that category,” he adds.

With Wholesale Produce Supply, customized assistance to the Latino population also includes its expertise through a long-time specialization in tomatoes. Since salsa surpassed ketchup as the most popular condiment of American consumers, the WPS tomato supply chain and availability provides important benefits, says Art Quiggle, vice president of wholesale and head tomato buyer. “Because of our vast supply base, we have the ability to react more quickly to procure and deliver the freshest — and the widest selection — of tomato varieties available from local, national and international sources.”

### Locally Grown Popularity Stays Strong

Locally grown fruits and vegetables remain among the hottest categories on the shelves of produce departments in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan region, with various independent retailers and

larger chains displaying signage in produce departments featuring photos and stories about their local growers. Products from Minnesota and nearby Wisconsin and Michigan have consistently flourished in popularity when they peak during the summer and early fall.

“Our local program has a lot broader base, with better access to more areas we can reach quicker with our wide transportation network,” emphasizes Hauge. “Our ability to source product is better since we have delivery trucks throughout the Midwest, and we can haul local product back in a more efficient manner. We have the luxury of bringing back product from smaller growing regions, and it’s easier and more cost-effective for us to procure the products and supply our customers.”

Hauge hastens to add that food safety must be the utmost priority when dealing with locally grown. “We will not jeopardize our food safety program. We will only deal with certified growers. We have continued to work with growers to help them become certified. There’s getting to be a wider separation between those who are certified and





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Brian Hauge, Art Quiggle and Dave Kadlec, Wholesale Produce Supply

those who are not.” For a guaranteed supply chain, we actually contract with specific growers to grow a determined amount for our customers. We’re working with key grower partners to bring them to the next level.”

Added shelf-life of locally grown is also a benefit from Wholesale Produce. “We can literally get the products from field to market in 24 hours or less,” claims Hauge.

Supermarket chain, Festival Foods, headquartered in Vadnais Heights, MN, and operating nine outlets dispersed throughout the Twin Cities region, understands the appeal of locally grown. Offering

a vast array of locally grown produce, while innovatively maintaining its small neighborhood atmosphere, Festival Foods has earned a following through designing each store to fit the demographics and ambiance of the surrounding neighborhood. Rod Borden, director of produce and floral operations, emphasizes that the gravitation toward produce that’s been grown close to home makes locally grown a critical component of the retail operation. Adding even more personal attention to detail, the company assures its customers that its locally grown fruits and vegetables are as safe as the produce that is sourced from

giant, corporate farms. This is due, in part, to the diligence of Festival’s produce wholesaler H. Brooks & Co., notes Borden. “Phillip Brooks is helping many of these farmers get third-party certified through the Food Alliance.” The Midwest Food Alliance (MFA) is based in Minneapolis and is a division of the Portland, OR-based National Food Alliance.

“Americans are buying locally grown like never before,” stresses Brooks. “Consumers want to know where their food was grown, who grew it, and how. People want to know about the heritage and track record of what they are eating.” He notes that his company has “a long history of close relationships with farmers who harvest the most delicious and best produce. These farmers — many who are second and third generation — know their land and their craft.” Sweet corn, peppers, zucchini, and eggplant are some of the more prevalent homegrown choices.

Sources already in place for locally grown product for J & J Distributing include a wide base of local organic growers, since the company has specialized in organics for several years. “We have a strong local program as well as a good local organic

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program. It's the best of both worlds for our customers," stresses president and CEO, Jim Hannigan. "Even our caramel apple growers are all local."

### Foodservice Sector

Although the sluggish economy has reportedly had some effect on the foodservice sector in the Twin Cities, the majority of the produce wholesalers agree that segment remains strong. Although the white tablecloth restaurants seem to be showing a decline, it seems that on-the-go consumers are still eating away from home as much as ever, contends J & J Distributing's Kevin Hannigan.

H. Brooks & Co. has become "a great logistics expert for foodservice providers, and we provide assistance as expeditors in packing and distribution for our foodservice customers," noted Phillip Brooks. Through the company's fresh-cut operation, "We have a great program for foodservice distributors. Our larger packages of fresh-cut product reduce labor costs and waste and provide increased quality and shelf life." Ultimately, whether they are foodservice or retail customers, "People who sell

**"J & J not only provides the organic produce, but extensive merchandising assistance for organic departments. We also help retail cashiers easily identify organic produce by offering installation of 'pull-n-pak' retail merchandising bags in produce departments."** — Kevin Hannigan, J & J Distributing Co.

though us get better bottom-line results," Brooks stresses.

"The Twin Cities consumers are becoming more educated and are looking for different varieties of produce. The first place they may see something new is at a restaurant that features unique types and cuts of produce through an artistic presentation on the plate," says Wholesale Produce's Quiggle. The company's customer base is about a 50-50 split between foodservice and retail distributors, says Hauge.

"Although our customers are mostly retail, we are diversifying as we look toward the future, and we are moving more into

foodservice," says J & J Distributing's Kevin Hannigan. "Our fresh-cut fruits and vegetables provide convenience and are labor-saving." Hannigan adds that although school districts operate very differently in their procurement, he sees fresh produce as an answer to spiraling childhood obesity. "I like the idea of having healthier choices in school vending machines. Fresh fruits and vegetables could be an answer to that."

"Our year-round sweet onion program is very appealing to our foodservice customers as well as to retail," notes Pat Coan, president of The Brings Co., now a division of H. Brooks & Co. Brings' specialties are onion and rutabaga repacking and



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distribution. "Sweet onion varieties are improving all the time. They provide thick rings and are firmer, which make them easier for baking and frying."

### The Organic Explosion

To supply the steadily increasing demand for organics, several Twin Cities wholesalers attribute their increased sales to a still-growing segment in today's food industry. About 30 percent of J & J's produce is organic," notes Kevin Hannigan. "Minnesota is an unusual state. It is very proactive and health-conscious, and people are willing to pay the extra dollars for product they think is better for them." He adds that with some produce items, he prefers organic. "The taste, the smell, and the overall quality are better," he claims.

Hannigan continues, "J & J not only provides the organic produce, but extensive merchandising assistance for organic departments. We also help retail cashiers easily identify organic produce by offering installation of 'pull-n-pak' retail merchandising bags in produce departments."

Maintaining a "certified organic" warehouse and fresh-cut facility, H. Brooks & Co. has put increased focus on that segment of its customer base for several years. "Organics have been a major growth area and focal point for us," notes Brooks. "Whatever the niches might be for our retail customers, we want to help them simplify their supply chain and help them focus on how they can use their produce departments to differentiate themselves from the competition," Brooks emphasizes.

With its current momentum, the natural/organic food segment nationally comprises 11 percent of all produce sales, according to a report from Packaged Facts, a market research publisher, based in New York, NY.

### Food Safety And Sanitation Increase Customer Confidence

Food safety and sanitation, lot traceability and security require daily monitoring to maintain customer confidence, stresses WPS' Hauge. "Food safety is obviously our No. 1 priority," he notes, "not only in our packaging, but through who we buy from. We have monitoring in place to make sure GAP are maintained."

Hauge points out Wholesale's leadership role in the region regarding critical facets for optimum food safety maintenance. "Wholesale Produce started our



Paul Piazza and Minnesota Produce Inc. staff

HACCP program back in 1997, before most people in our industry even knew what that was. Our program has evolved and grown to cover all aspects of HACCP," he explains. "We are not stopping at where the government says we should be; we go beyond that. We already have policies in place for social responsibility at our facility and are making sure the people we deal with are doing the same. Our lot traceability system was developed five years before the government mandate was issued in December of 2005.

"We have outside audits done by USDA, Silliker, Primus, ASI, DRS and MCIA for organics," continues Hauge. "Not only do we have these audits, but we welcome them. It's with this outside information we feel we can learn and offer a better, safer product. Food safety has always been a top priority at Wholesale Produce — from the cleanliness of our facility, to the ongoing training of our personnel, to our fleet of trucks. We make sure that if it comes from us, it's safe for the consumer."

H. Brooks & Co.'s Phillip Brooks also points out the emphasis on food safety. "We've had our HACCP plan in place for years, which we constantly update. We had top ratings from ASI and all the other major food safety and security auditors, and we have additional measures in place that far exceed any governmental mandates."

J & J Distributing's Hannigan stresses the importance of the company's trace-back

system, and he points out that J & J's attention to food safety and sanitation "is second to none." He emphasizes that J & J goes beyond government mandates. "It assures

our customers we are training our employees to the highest level of awareness. Some of it has been a real battle, with continually refining our hardware and soft-

ware, along with audits and certifications, but is a critical and essential part of our business, and our customers know we have all the essentials in place." **pb**

## What's New In The Twin Cities?

**Wholesale Produce Supply LLC, Minneapolis, MN:** Company president Brian Hauge reports that the addition of a full-scale onion repacking operation last year has been an extremely successful new facet of the company. New packing lines have the capabilities to custom-pack all consumer-sized options in red, white and yellow onions. Packed under the Harvest Crisp label, Wholesale Produce also does private labeling. In addition, "We have a sweet onion program, and we bring in sweet onion varieties year-round," Hauge notes.

"The volume of sweet onions going through here has had about a 400 percent increase during the past year," reports Dave Kadlec, head of apple, pear, onion and potato buying.

"We've also had a lot of success with regional programs with potatoes," stresses Kadlec. "We're doing a lot of programs directly with growers, including in North Dakota and Canada. In general, we are increasing our product offerings to customers by going more directly to the growing source."

More efforts to stay "leading edge," according to Hauge, include a food safety program, "which is leaps and bounds above our competitors. We have full traceability on our produce, and we also send our food safety employees to special audit courses, and we remain active on industry committees relating to food safety."

Art Quiggle, vice president and head of tomato buying, notes, "As one of the larger wholesalers in the Midwestern region, we closely monitor our produce 'from womb to tomb.' We are making more and more efforts to support growers and shippers that have the same philosophies that we do about food safety."

Hauge adds, "Whenever possible, we also try to buy from socially responsible and socially accountable growers."

"We've altered our distribution, procurement, and sales to respond our customers' changing needs," continues Hauge. "We're helping customers take more cost out of the system. We're earning more consistent and recurring business based on trust and integrity because of our service level."

**J & J Distributing Co., St. Paul, MN:** Executive vice president of marketing, Kevin Hannigan, reports the company is accelerating its processing operations and is conducting a 20,000-square foot expansion. "We're putting in a large salad line, and we have tons of new products being produced out of our processing department." Hannigan says new fruit blends and different salad blends are in demand. "We have been coring pineapples for years, but that item is becoming more popular. We're also now doing things like cut berries and fresh pomegranate arils. We're also having a lot of success with our fresh juice department," he adds.

"We're doing a lot of partnering with companies such as U.S. Foodservice, Cub Foods and Kowalski's Market for custom-sizing and packaging." Hannigan continues. "And we are doing a lot more with greens, which make a great statement in a flushed out display in produce departments. We continue to push that fresh green program."

J & J Distributing also operates a small retail store, The Produce Exchange Co., which is located in the Midtown Global Market building in St. Paul. "We celebrated our fifth anniversary this year," he notes. "The store has given us great opportunity to showcase more produce and introduce new items to customers."

J & J president and CEO, Jim Hannigan, continues his focus on increasing sustainability efforts in the Twin Cities. Several years ago, he was already implementing many of the initiatives that many are still only talking about in the current eco-friendly environment. Today, he is working toward a full-scale greenhouse — based in the middle of an urban area very close to Minnesota's state capital building. The company also won a Sustainable St. Paul Energy Award earlier this year from the city for its efforts to cut energy use.

**H. Brooks & Co. LLC, New Brighton, MN:** The company celebrated 106 years of continuous operation in November and added a new dimension last year with the acquisition of The Brings Co., an onion and rutabaga distributor formerly based in St. Paul, MN. A new onion-packing area was completed inside the massive H. Brooks facility, and the operation now has five repacking lines in place for packaging all sizes of consumer packs. The vacuum-cleaning of excess onion skins is also part of the packing process. "It makes for much cleaner packs and a more attractive display," reports Pat Coan, president of the Brings division. She stresses Brings has "been doing trace-back packaging for 2½ years already." "We were the first onion repacker in the Midwest to implement that. We now have the ability to do trace-back from the cupboard, back to the field."

Among the sweet onion offerings, "We are the designated repacker for the Oso Sweet brand for the Twin Cities and Chicago," Coan reports.

According to H. Brooks' president, Phillip Brooks, "food safety considerations are critical elements for the company. A director of food safety and quality assurance has been added to the team. Imme Fernandez' credentials include a Master's Degree in Food Science."

In other news, H. Brooks & Co. has been named Vendor of the Year by the Minnesota Grocers Association. The company was presented with the award in August. The company was also named Wisconsin Grocer Association vendor of the year.

The company also launched a new Web site in late June. "It now has a lot more tools to help our customers merchandise and sell more produce, and is designed to help our shippers get ideas that will help them communicate with stores," says Brooks. "And it gives consumers tips and recipe ideas to help them find creative ways to consume more produce."

**Minnesota Produce Inc., Minneapolis, MN:** The company surpassed 50 years of continuous operation this year. "In addition to that, in July, we passed 35 years operating in this same office location," notes company owner and president, Paul Piazza. "We've been very happy that we've been able to continue to hold our ground as long as we have as an independent in the midst of all the corporate growth that has gone on. There are still customers that appreciate the additional service and expertise that we can provide." The bulk of the company's customer base remains food-service distributors and processors.

Along with company tradition has come some change, and Minnesota Produce added bananas to its line last year. According to Piazza, "One of our clients was interested in trying to sell bananas to his retail customers," so Minnesota Produce completed the necessary steps to begin bringing bananas to the Twin Cities. "It also opened up a few more doors for us, including the addition of pineapples." **pb**



# PHILADELPHIA MARKET PROFILE

## The Legacy Continues



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# PHILADELPHIA MARKET PROFILE



## Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market: Continuing A Legacy

A sparkling new market with cold chain efficiencies and technological advancements brings the Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market into the next century. **BY JODEAN ROBBINS**

**B**uilding on a solid heritage, the new Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market (PWPM) continues a legacy of preparing for the future. Back in the 1950s on Dock Street, the merchants of that market foresaw the limitations and necessary improvements and took the initiative to build and re-locate to the Galloway facility. Now, 50-plus years, to say that they have done it once again is an understatement.

"When our merchants built the market in 1959, it was the first of its kind," explains Todd Penza, in sales with Pinto Brothers Produce, a business dating back to the Dock Street market. "And now we're trying to do the same thing here. We're again resetting the bar for a produce wholesale market. We built this facility to fight for the relevance of a wholesale market."

Mark Levin, owner of M. Levin & Co., who is celebrating 105 years in business, adds, "My father and grandfather had the foresight to move from Dock Street to the Galloway facility, and 50 years later, the next generation has had the same foresight to make this move. The next move will be on our future generations."

"My brother and I were one of the first to put up a deposit to move from Dock to Galloway," recollects Joe Procacci, CEO of Procacci Brothers Sales Corporation, founded in 1948. "That move was initiated because the merchants felt the need for better sanitation and better logistics. We're now seeing that repeated, but with a much more sophisticated and customized facility."

This time around, the merchants have built a facility specifically to meet the needs and special handling requirements of their business. "The Galloway market was a cookie-cutter design and not meant specifically for produce," explains John Vena, president of John Vena Inc., founded in 1919. "It was built so that anything could be sold on it. This building was designed, customized and built specifically for produce — specifically for our business to succeed."

Despite harboring some normal apprehension to change, merchants have seen enthusiasm from customers. "When we left Dock Street, we had the same issues and questions as we did with this move," states Mike Maxwell, president of Procacci Brothers. "Have we been scared? Yes, but that's progress. We had to seize the moment and move forward





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# PHILADELPHIA MARKET PROFILE



Joe Bozzelli of Millbridge Farms and John DiFelicianantonio of RyeCo LLC



Tatiana Ladyzhensky, buyer for Fruit & Produce Inc.



Alex Dvor, buyer for ADM Produce



Joseph Harrison, USDA Market News Reports

for our business. The feedback has been tremendous! It's a real attraction for the whole produce industry."

"Just like when we moved from Dock to Galloway, this will turn out to be a big success," foresees Anthony Stea, CEO of Stea Brothers Inc., a third generation business on the market. "After three days in the new market, my worries were gone. You know the future looks good when you see how happy the customers are to be sourcing product

from this new facility."

Buyers express the same sentiment. "You feel like you're on top of the world here," reports Alex Dvor, owner of A&N House of Produce Inc. "There is such a feeling of pride in having this amazing facility right here in our backyard."

"There are a lot of great memories on the old market and we'll reminisce, but the new market is a step forward," says Billy Motto, a buyer with wholesaler Magic Produce. "The

product will be much fresher and in better condition now."

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The 668,000 square-foot building was designed specifically to promote the wholesale produce market business. Penza of Pinto Brothers explains, "We tried to build a marketplace, not just a distribution center or warehouse, but an actual marketplace where our business could optimally be conducted.




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# PHILADELPHIA MARKET PROFILE

Though we have everything a state-of-the-art warehouse does, the sales concourse really promotes the market sales concept.”

“Operators must consider all the issues in developing a distribution center, from warehousing and transportation to selling to food safety,” says John DiFeliciano, partner at

Ryeco Produce. “At the end of the day, everything we do is to help the customer make more money. If what we do makes it easier, promotes better quality and helps them get in and out faster, then we all benefit, including our shippers.”

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### VITAL MARKET STATISTICS

- ✓ Site size: Approx. 48 acres
- ✓ Total building size: 667,000 square feet
- ✓ First floor size (under refrigeration): 558,000 square feet
- ✓ Recycling and Waste building: 18,000 square feet
- ✓ Parking lot capacity: 1,200 vehicles
- ✓ Staging lot size: 15 acres (118 tractor trailers)
- ✓ Number of merchants: 26
- ✓ Number of units: 68
- ✓ Unit size: about 4,200 square feet
- ✓ Common area temperature: 50 degrees
- ✓ Number of sealed dock doors: 224
- ✓ Cost to build approx.: \$216 million

President/CEO: Sonny DiCrecchio  
Market Manager: Dan Kane

merchant. Levin of M. Levin & Co. built an enclosed sales and conference area on the sales floor and has banana-ripening rooms on-site. “We have an old wagon used to haul bananas in the late 1930s mounted above the display area office,” says Levin. “Our new ripening rooms will change our experience in how to ripen bananas. Our six rooms are the newest state-of-the-art rooms available. Each computer-controlled room holds 24 pallets and allows us to do 14 loads a week right at the market.”

Pinto designed a staging/picking area right outside the storage coolers. “The new design allows our customers to view and pick product in a refrigerated area outside our coolers but without them actually having to be back in our coolers,” explains Penza. “It’s safer for them and better for the product.”

Garden State Farms/Procacci Brothers has a beautifully appointed merchandising area. “The larger display area gives us the chance to display more lines,” says Maxwell. “We’ll be even more of a one-stop shop than before, and we can service our customer better.”

The sales area at T.M. Kovacevich boasts a hand-painted mural and display racks allowing customers to sample. “Now, everything we have on display can be sampled by

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# PHILADELPHIA MARKET PROFILE



Joe Procacci and Mike Maxwell,  
Procacci Brothers Sales Corp.



Frank Banecker, Procacci Brothers/Garden State Farms and  
Mike Kwon, J&M Produce



Rick Milavsky, B.R.S. Produce

customers," says Tom Kovacevich, general manager at T.M. Kovacevich, the third generation at the market. "This building is the future. We see a vibrant business here in 20 years."

"We have the chance here to serve our customers in ways we couldn't in the old facility," says Marty Roth, vice president for Coosemans Philadelphia, a company with 19 years on the market. "We can more easily give them great service. We can give them a better

package and maintain better quality regardless of the outside environment."

Customers appreciate the ease of doing business. "The traffic pattern is a lot more user-friendly," adds Maxwell. "It's not intimidating for people who've never been on a market. It's comfortable — like going down to the local mall."

"It's great how we can easily go into the cooler and get a better look at product than we could at the old facility," says Joe Bozzelli,

a buyer with Millbridge Farms.

"We're looking forward to having customers who left the old market come back now because of this great facility," states Chip Wiechec, president of Hunter Bros. Inc., who opened on Dock Street in 1938. "Our extended hours will also make it easier for some buyers to shop here."

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# PHILADELPHIA MARKET PROFILE



John Nelli and Chip Wiechec, Hunter Bros. Inc.



Billy Motto, buyer, Magic Produce and Sonny DiCrecchio, president/CEO of the Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market



Neil Millman and Jim Provost, I Love Produce

from the old facility. "The logistics are much easier here," says Fadi Abi-Khattar, vice-president and treasurer of Klinghoffer Brothers Inc., which opened in 1988. "The new technology makes it easier. The coolers are spacious and easy to move around in."

The new market has 224 dock doors with 50 of them equipped to accommodate trucks of different heights. These doors utilize an adjustable curtain which can be lowered to fit smaller trucks. "Customers are seeing a

difference in speed," says Kovacevich. "We have expedited delivery to our customers as well. Customers are happy. This building affords people the opportunity to really work the product."

"It has so much convenience built in," explains Vena of John Vena Inc. "For example, all the doors and covered shelters are numbered so buyers can write down what door number they are parked at on their ticket, and product can be more easily delivered to them.

A lot of the service we are doing, we tried to do in the old market but it was harder because the facilities were so outdated. Here, the technology and modern design means everyone can work at once without limitation due to the infrastructure of the building."

The building's layout and space promote ease of shopping. "It's much faster to shop because you can cross from store to store," says Tatiana Ladyzhensky, a buyer for Fruit & Produce Inc., in Philadelphia, PA. "I was

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# PHILADELPHIA MARKET PROFILE



David Carfagno, Fred Sauter, Fred Penza, Pinto Brothers Inc.



Nicholas Bongiorno, Steven Yeckes, Anthony Stea, Stea Brothers Inc.

missing a lot of stores at the old market because I didn't cross the parking lot. It's also more convenient to load. The time factor is essential. We need to open the store by 9am, and now I know that I can get in and out of there in plenty of time."

"It's a lot easier maneuvering inside the coolers," says Brian Collotti, in sales at Collotti & Sons Inc., the third generation of a business that started on Dock Street. "In the old market, we didn't have enough space on the ground to display everything. Now we

can. There's room for improvement, but it gives us a great facility to build business on in the future."

The many benefits are sure to result in increased business. "We're going to be opened up to a lot more customers who'll be shopping there," says Ed Reynolds, a sales associate with Philadelphia importer Fresh Taste USA & Associates, with headquarters in Toronto. "They have the space to display more and that will benefit our business. The cold chain benefits will ensure our product integrity and

quality is maintained."

"We encourage customers to visit and see what we have to offer," says Ron Milavsky, vice president with BRS, founded in 1974. "They can shop the whole market concourse because it's so much easier now to see everyone and get product in and out."

## Into The Cold

One of the popular comments about the new PWPM is the fact that it's cold. "The cold chain is an integral part of our business," says



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# PHILADELPHIA MARKET PROFILE



Richie Routhenstein, Marty Roth and Nelson Gonzalez, Coosemans Philadelphia



Fadi Abi-Khattar, Leonard Klinghoffer and Johnny Abi-Khattar, Klinghoffer Brothers, Inc.

Procacci Brothers' Maxwell. "It's incredible to think we've done business for so many years with the obvious break in the chain due to the old facilities."

"Talk of the cold chain has just been a euphemism until now," adds Vena. "Until we see it in action, it's difficult to put a real value on it. Now, we can see what it's doing for the value we give our shippers and our customers."

"Not breaking the product cold chain is a huge benefit," agrees Millbridge's Bozzelli. "I

have some very large customers, and every customer I deal with is concerned about food safety and keeping temperatures where they should be. Now, even when the truck can't get unloaded right away, it's backed up to a dock and sealed into a refrigerated building."

Merchants have already recognized the difference over these past summer months. "In the dead of summer, when it's 98 degrees outside we used to see the stuff sitting on an unrefrigerated platform waiting to be loaded,"

says Coosemans' Roth. "Now, we have everything in controlled temperature and there are refrigerated staging areas for all size buyers."

"In the old market, product would be on the dock and you'd see the stuff wilting in the heat," adds Stea of Stea Bros. "Now, it's as fresh to the customer as when it came off the shipper's truck. The stuff on display holds up so much better. Previously, by mid-morning we'd be throwing out displays. Now it looks as beautiful at 11:00am as it did when we

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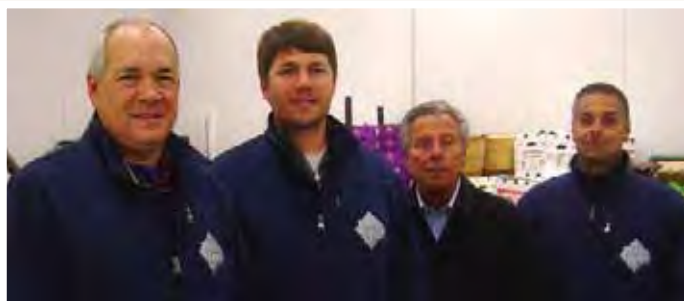
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# PHILADELPHIA MARKET PROFILE



Neil Markovic, Karen Waleski, Susan Waleski, John Waleski, John W. Waleski Produce, Inc.



Louis Penza, Todd Penza, Buddy Lombardo, Michael Lombardo, Pinto Brothers, Inc.

first put it out."

"I now have a little less worry about quality because of the cold chain considerations," states A&N's Dvor. "Before, when my stuff was on the dock and getting hot, I'd be anxious and hurrying to finish my buying. Now, it's in refrigeration even when it's waiting."

## Food Safety Aspect

The cold chain, sanitation and security elements of the new market certainly fit into

current food safety discussions. "Food safety issues are an increasing challenge for the whole industry," says Stea. "We are certified and it's easier to implement traceability with the facility we have now. Customers are demanding more and more in this area and now we can give it to them."

"The food safety benefits are crucial," agrees George Manos, president of T.M. Kovacevich Philadelphia Inc. "We feel like we're a step ahead now because we have a

building that is more consistent with food safety principles."

At last, the Philly merchants' can count their building as a food safety ally. "We always worked hard on quality but the conditions in the old market limited what we could do," says BRS' Milavsky. "Now, the building supports our commitment to quality."

"With all the food safety issues going on, more and more you find people looking for fault and there will be no fault on the facilities



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# PHILADELPHIA MARKET PROFILE



John Collotti, Jack Collotti, Brian Collotti and Mike Bozzelli, Collotti & Sons



Teddy Kean, Ted Kean, Priscilla Kean and Louis-Hunter Kean, E.W. Kean Co., Inc.

of this market now," states Coosemans' Roth.

The market facilities also allow merchants to support the food safety efforts of suppliers and buyers. "Shippers are increasingly focusing on being up-to-date on food safety and traceability issues; now we can support them fully in this arena," says Maxwell.

"The market is going to be a regional draw for customers who want to purchase from companies following food safety protocols," explains Jim Provost, president of I Love

Produce, an importer, exporter, grower and distributor in Kelton, PA. "We're going to piggy back with our customers on that because the market is so close to us — only a 45 minute drive — we can be there on a moment's notice."

"Our certifications are a huge benefit given the food safety implications today," says Richard Nardella, CEO of Nardella Inc. "We're hoping to increase business with chain stores and other large buyers."

## More Opportunity

All expectations point to a bright future for the new PWPM. "This is the future for everyone in the produce industry," says Roth. "We have the opportunity to serve customers we couldn't get on the other market."

"In the future, we want to work with buyers to improve business even more," says Karen Waleski, sales and office manager at John W. Waleski Produce, on the market since 1980. "We can provide even better quality



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# PHILADELPHIA MARKET PROFILE



Joe Armata, Margie Levin-Fischman, Bill DeFelice, Lonnie Zweifel and Pete Gabriele, M. Levin & Company Inc.



Cheryl Grady, Joe Aquilino, John Vena, Dan Vena and James DeMarsh, John Vena Inc.

product and service with our new facility.”

The new facility will push the evolution of the market’s customers. “We’re helping existing customers by being able to now treat the product better,” says Wiechec of Hunter Bros. “We’re also looking to partner with shippers and vendors in areas like forward distribution. There are many small niche products that are very good but only available for a short time. We’ll be looking to get the grower and customer together to better help

develop these types of products.”

“This mid-Atlantic region with the ports, growing areas, and now this new market has created its own FOB shipping point,” explains Provost. “We have enough products for customers to consolidate their buying in this area. They can send trucks to get their garlic, mushrooms and everything else from the market. With this new market, there won’t be anything a buyer can’t get.”

I Love Produce markets Chinese and

Brazilian ginger, organic Peruvian yellow ginger, domestic and imported garlic, pearl onions, sun dried tomatoes and shallots through the PWPM. “With the cost of transportation, it makes sense for retailers east of the Mississippi to concentrate buying and consolidating in this area,” adds Provost. “Why spend \$9,000 on a truck from California when you can get the product for a better quality and price here?”

The market has facilities that can be used




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# PHILADELPHIA MARKET PROFILE



Bob Buchanan, Tom Kovacevich, Mike Watson, Steve Buchanan, Cindy Schannauer and John Birch, T.M. Kovacevich-Philadelphia Inc.



David Levin, Margie Levin-Fischman, Sarah Levin, Joel Segel, Tracie Levin and Mark Levin, M. Levin & Company Inc.



Calman Batt, John Durante, Mark Semerjian, Jim Baldwin and Richard Nardella, Nardella Inc.

for a multitude of purposes and allows even greater collaboration with customers and suppliers. "We can host events to see the wholesale process in action, do demos for chefs or retail staff, and coordinate business or educational events," reports Vena of John Vena Inc. "For example, ShopRite held a regional board of directors meeting here over the summer. This facility helps close the gap between suppliers and end users, which has always been our job. We'll have even greater opportunity to participate in marketing programs with suppliers."

"One of our biggest customers asked about his truck coming in at 7:00pm to pick up what his broker bought earlier that day," reports Nardella. "Our answer was that the broker can

buy whatever he wants, we'll stage it all in refrigeration, and whenever the truck gets here, we'll load it for him. That's an example of our quality and service commitment. There is just so much flexibility we have to in being able to really service our customers."

"We'll have the chance to really capture the restaurant business because we'll be able to offer much more variety," says Wiechec. "We have the chance to now become an information ally for restaurateurs. They can come down here, try out new items."

## Remaining The Same

Despite all the changes in the new Philly market, the focus on relationship and service remains the same. "Our success has always

**"It has so much convenience built in...A lot of the service we're doing, we tried to do in the old market but it was harder because the facilities were so outdated. Here, the technology and modern design means everyone can work at once without limitation due to the infrastructure of the building."**

— JOHN VENA, JOHN VENA INC.

been in building relationships and giving our customers what they need," says John Waleski of John Waleski. "We have good product at a fair price. Now we hope this new facility will bring more buyers here."

"Customers can expect to see the same quality, freshness and variety that we've always offered," says Vena. "We have a lot of strong players and an experienced cadre of produce people here. From there, everything gets better. The levels of service will increase. Our ability to care for the product will increase."

Providing the utmost service to customers remains a top priority. "What hasn't changed is our relationships," says Penza. "We still emphasize holding our customers hands, showing them what we have and meeting their needs. We'll just be able to meet their needs so much better now."

"Our customer service will always be there," says Procacci Brothers' Maxwell. "We're passionate and dedicated and that will never change. We've built our business on service, quality and variety, those still ring true today."

pb

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# PHILADELPHIA RETAIL PROFILE



## Shady Maple Farm Market: Exceptional Service And Value

Built on strong family values and hard work, Shady Maple carries on a legacy of providing fresh, quality, wholesome goodness to its customers. **BY JODEAN ROBBINS**

**T**ucked in the quiet hills of Pennsylvania, Shady Maple Farm Market offers a pleasant surprise in volume, variety and quality for produce shoppers. The current 100,000 square-foot store is a far cry, physically, from its humble beginning as a roadside produce stand, but still maintains the same fresh reputation for which its founder was known.

Henry Z. Martin and his wife originally sold produce in a roadside stand under large maple trees in front of their home. Years later, Miriam and Marvin Weaver (the Martins' daughter and son-in-law) decided to take over the business. In July 1970, at the age of 23, they opened their first 3,000 square-foot building in which they planned to sell produce and teamed with IGA for grocery items. They put overhead garage doors in the building to keep the farm market effect and used an outside porch for selling bulk produce. This small operation began with two cash registers and a handful of employees.

From there, the store has grown through 17 remodels into the acclaimed destination it is today, boasting the freshest products

around. "We started as a roadside farm market and we strive to keep that freshness and philosophy," says Linford Weaver, store manager and son of Shady Maple store founders Miriam and Martin Weaver. "We want to promote making shopping fun and emphasize value, quality, faith, integrity and family tradition."

Fun is precisely the word to describe the feeling of entering this enormous and impeccable store, which boasts more than 70,000 SKUs. In addition to remarkable produce, the store is known for its in-house bakery, with 300 items made from scratch, including specialty cakes and pies. Shady Maple brand meats are processed on site and the store offers over 100 varieties of its own smoked meats. The store's soup and salad department makes over 100 different soups, salads and desserts from scratch, while Maple Leaf Café offers a quick bite before or after shopping.

### Produce Paradise

The store stays true to its produce roots with a concentrated emphasis on fresh fruits and vegetables. "Produce is extremely impor-

tant to us," says Weaver. "It's where we started, and it represents about 15 percent of our business now. Our customers know our product is always fresh, always priced right, always high quality and nutritious."

The 8,000 square-foot department houses close to 1,000 SKUs. Most items are sold in bulk, but some packaged product is offered. "Our customers really prefer to choose their own items," says Weaver, "so large, bulk displays work best for us in most items."

The produce department is set at the very entrance to the store and is an immense, brightly lit area highlighted with vivid artwork reminiscent of the original produce stand. The 10-ft. wide aisles make navigating the department easy on shoppers and employees.

For display, the department utilizes several 5-ft. by 8-ft. island displays on wheels, which are easily moved throughout the department. The cabinetry on the movable and permanent displays is custom-made, locally handcrafted and emphasizes the farm market feel of the department. A refrigerated case with about 30 linear feet of bagged salad, dressings and store brand fresh-cut items lines the side of

# PHILADELPHIA RETAIL PROFILE



Nelson Martin, assistant produce manager and Linford Weaver, store manager

the department. Sharing the same case is an 8-ft. refrigerated organic section.

"We are constantly changing displays to promote what is in season and what tastes the best," says Weaver. "Our best merchandising method is to stack it high and watch it fly."

And fly it does. The volume business of the store is incredible by any standards. The store does so much volume in certain products that there are employees dedicated just to restocking that particular commodity, such as bananas, and nothing else. During the week of Easter, the store went through 16 skids of strawberries. On Saturdays, they have one employee in the department assigned just to core pineapples.

Due to the volume, the department has several stations where shoppers have their produce weighed and priced before leaving the department. "Since we sell such a high volume, having the produce priced in the department eliminates delay at checkout," explains Weaver.

There are 42 full- and part-time employees in produce, with eight full-time and three part-time floor stockers working the floor most of the time. The store outsources some fresh-cut items, but tries to keep most of it in-house. "We're really known for our home-made items, so we try to follow through as much as possible with doing our own," says Weaver.

Produce employees are very knowledgeable and take an obvious pride in their work. "We concentrate on providing on-the-job training and utilize a system of coaches and a mentorship program," states Weaver.

## The Right Source

The operation has three buyers who purchase produce for both the store and the company's restaurant, Shady Maple Smorgas-

board. They unload trucks at their facility into a refrigerated cooler. A majority of product — around 80 percent — is sourced from the Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market. "We buy about four trailer loads a week from the PWPM and we've been sourcing there for over 35 years," reports Weaver. "We're looking forward to the benefits the new facility will offer. I drive a truck down myself and can already see the cold chain difference."

They also source heavily from local farmers when in season. "We buy throughout all of Lancaster County," says Weaver. "However, there are lots of farms within a five-mile radius of this store, so we have a great selection to choose from during their harvest time. In July and August, we line the whole front of the department with just local product."

The store has experienced increasing demand over the years for specialty and ethnic items. "We see more and more demand for all types of ethnic and specialty produce each year," says Weaver.

The owners are focusing on building sales of in-house fresh-cut products. "People want convenience and small portions," says Weaver. "They trust us to put the best quality product out there. We want to meet the needs of every shopper, and fresh-cut items are the best option for some."

## Building On A Great Reputation

Shady Maple draws customers from a wide radius, some traveling up to 70 miles or more to visit the store based on its decades-long reputation for excellent customer service and exceptional value. The store serves a very diverse clientele of all ages and all ethnic groups, though a large portion of customers are females between the ages of 30 and 70 years. Since the 2010 remodel, the store has seen an even greater increase in the number of customers who shop there. "With the new layout of the produce department we've been able to offer better value and ease of shopping for our customers," reports Weaver.

The store also serves as a foodservice source for many local restaurants, in addition to Shady Maple's own restaurant. "Chefs within a 60-mile radius shop here for their restaurant produce," says Weaver. "They know they can find quality and value here. Sometimes they'll call me to ask for something

**"We buy about four trailer loads a week from the PWPM and we've been sourcing there for over 35 years. We're looking forward to the benefits the new facility will offer. I drive a truck down myself and can already see the cold chain difference."**

— LINFORD WEAVER

special and I'll make sure I purchase it and have it ready for them."

The market promotes its products through all vehicles, including weekly circulars and ads. An emphasis on everyday low pricing draws customers. "Customers know they get value from us," says Weaver. "We don't need any fancy merchandising tricks. When you have great quality at fair prices, customers buy it."

Large eye-catching displays of product and sampling are additional tools. "We do a lot of sampling," reports Weaver. "We build huge hand-stacked displays on a daily basis, which puts a WOW factor into the department."

The store also ties in the Shady Maple restaurant offerings and recipes into POS displays. Signs say, "As featured in our restaurant" and provide a recipe or preparation instructions. In a creative response to shrink, the store has a Second's Table where it offers a half-peck basket of different bruised or damaged items for \$1.00. "It's very popular with our customers," says Weaver. "Many of them don't mind a blemished fruit and use this produce for canning. Again, it's about providing all types of value to your customers."

pb

Shady Maple  
Farm Market  
1324 Main Street  
East Earl, PA 17519  
717-354-4981  
www.shady-maple.com



# PHILADELPHIA FOODSERVICE PROFILE



## Shady Maple Smorgasbord Uses One Skid Of Produce Each Day

Lancaster County's Largest Smorgasbord focuses on farm-fresh ingredients for Pennsylvania Dutch cooking. **BY JODEAN ROBBINS**

**T**he Smorgasbord at Shady Maple isn't just a restaurant; it's a destination. The name has become synonymous with quality, delicious home-style food and people flock from all over the country to eat at this unique Lancaster restaurant. Boasting the title of "Lancaster County's Largest Smorgasbord," the buffet encompasses over 200 feet of authentic Pennsylvania Dutch Cooking. The restaurant grew out of the Shady Maple Farm Market success.

"As a young man, my dad had worked in a hospital cafeteria for two years in various capacities," explains Linford Weaver, Farm Market manager and son of Shady Maple store founders. "With these culinary skills and concepts in the back of his mind, he thought a smorgasbord would be a natural tie-in with the grocery store business. The grocery store was purchasing meats and produce in volume and producing its own breads and pastries — an asset to running a successful restaurant."

In the fall of 1984, the Weavers started construction on the Smorgasbord. By July 1985, the new restaurant was ready for business and customers responded to the all-you-can-eat-for-one-price idea. The original restaurant had over 300 seats in the upper floor smorgasbord level. Waiting in line soon became the norm, and popularity for the Smorgasbord grew until a one to two hour wait was not uncommon.

In September 2000, the Weavers opened a brand new Smorgasbord building with a 30,000 square foot Gift Shop and Fast Food Dutchette restaurant on the lower level. In 2005, the Weaver family added on to the Smorgasbord, where they can now seat up to

2,000 people and expanded the gift shop to 41,000 square feet.

### Integral Component

Pennsylvania Dutch cooking is all about farm-fresh ingredients, so logically, produce plays a key role in Shady Maple's menu. "Produce is our most important component next to meats," says Weaver. "Over one-third of the menu is produce. The produce in our smorgasbord sends a healthy, fresh and delicious message to our diners."

The restaurant uses about one skid (1,000 pounds) of produce each day. The produce is sourced through the same channels as for the Shady Maple Farm Market. Buying and transportation is consolidated with the Farm Market supply. Criteria for sourcing product revolve around getting the highest quality, freshest and best-tasting product.

"We must start with great ingredients," says Weaver. "The quality of what we put out is based very much on the quality of what we buy."

The entire building has over 300 employees and the Smorgasbord employs over 100 people preparing and serving the food.

### Tempting Taste

The menu offerings of the Smorgasbord change daily, but customers count on many of their Dutch favorites to be consistently offered. The immense salad bar features over 40 items, including multiple types of lettuce and tomatoes among many other fresh vegetables and fruit. A delicious Pennsylvania Dutch favorite is Hot Bacon Dressing poured over fresh spinach leaves. The salad bar also includes a multitude of fresh fruit choices.

The hot sections of the Smorgasbord offer over seven different meats, 14 different vegetables and other grilled specialties. The fried chicken is about as good as it gets and definitely encourages finger licking. Pork and homemade sauerkraut tempt diners to put just a little more on the plate. Succulent honey ham and perfectly cooked roast beef throw yet more indecision into what to eat.

Not to be overshadowed by the meats, the hot vegetable offerings hold their own in eye appeal. Vibrant broccoli, corn, green beans, carrots, artichokes and a plethora of potato options all look just as tasty and tempting as their meat counterparts. A special station offers corn fritters and potato pancakes made to order.

In addition to the staple Pennsylvania Dutch cuisine, Shady Maple chefs also add some variety into the Smorgasbord. Crab cakes, Cajun catfish, Delmonico Steak and a Chicken Breast with Oriental Grilled Vegetables are just a few of the daily specials that make an appearance.

Creativity spills over into the use of fruits and vegetables as well. "We have carved a fruit basket out of a watermelon and made a palm tree out of sugar cane and artichoke," relates Weaver. **pb**

SHADY MAPLE  
SMORGASBORD  
129 TODDY DRIVE  
EAST EARL, PA 17519  
717-354-8222  
WWW.SHADY-MAPLE.COM



# Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market

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## Merchant Directory

| COMPANY NAME                  | UNIT #     | PHONE        | FAX          |
|-------------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| Al Finer Co.                  | I-1 to I-3 | 215-336-6789 | 215-271-7014 |
| B.R.S. Produce                | D-2 to D-4 | 215-336-5454 | 215-336-5220 |
| Collotti & Son                | I-7 to I-8 | 215-389-3335 | 215-755-9616 |
| Coosemans Philadelphia        | D-5 to D-6 | 215-334-3634 | 215-334-3636 |
| E.W. Kean Co.                 | D-1        | 215-336-2321 | 215-336-1596 |
| E.W. Kean Co.                 | G-1 to G-2 | 215-336-2321 | 215-336-1596 |
| G&G Produce, Inc.             | F-7 to F-8 | 215-336-9922 | 215-336-9925 |
| G.K. Produce                  | B-6        | 215-336-3551 | 215-336-3544 |
| Hunter Brothers, Inc.         | H-8 to H-9 | 215-336-4343 | 215-336-4340 |
| Jesse Pitt Company            | I-9        | 215-336-5325 | 215-389-1490 |
| John Vena, Inc.               | F-1 to F-5 | 215-336-0766 | 215-336-2812 |
| John W. Waleski Produce, Inc. | F-9        | 215-365-0160 | 215-365-0163 |
| Kaleck Brothers, Inc.         | B-5        | 215-336-3027 | 215-551-1083 |
| Klayman Brothers, Inc.        | H-6 to H-7 | 215-468-1400 | 215-468-0824 |
| Klinghoffer Bros.             | C-8 to C-9 | 215-336-3800 | 215-336-5234 |
| M. Levin & Company, Inc.      | H-2 to H-5 | 215-336-2900 | 215-755-6757 |

| COMPANY NAME                         | UNIT #     | PHONE        | FAX          |
|--------------------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------|
| Nardella, Inc.                       | G-4 to G-6 | 215-336-1558 | 215-336-5757 |
| Norm & Lou's Restaurant              | C-1        | 215-336-4848 | 215-271-2416 |
| Paul Giordano & Son's, Inc.          | D-7 to D-9 | 215-755-7900 | 215-755-7160 |
| Pinto Brothers, Inc.                 | G-7 to G-9 | 215-336-3015 | 215-336-5422 |
| Procacci Brothers/Garden State Farms | I-4 to I-6 | 215-334-1400 | 215-339-0974 |
| PWPM                                 | B-4        | 215-336-3003 | 215-336-5542 |
| Quaker City Produce Co.              | B-1 to B-3 | 215-467-5000 | 215-336-4416 |
| Ryeco, LLC                           | C-3 to C-7 | 215-551-8883 | 215-551-9036 |
| Stea Brothers, Inc.                  | B-7 to B-8 | 215-336-7806 | 215-336-2194 |
| T.M. Kovacevich-Phila, Inc.          | A-1 to A-6 | 215-336-3160 | 267-790-0442 |
| Thomas Colace Co.                    | A-7 to A-9 | 856-384-4980 | 215-467-0414 |
| USDA Inspection Service              | C-2        | 215-336-0845 | 215-336-2051 |
| Vassallo, Inc.                       | F-6        | 215-336-1984 | 215-336-7955 |
| Wick & Brothers, Inc.                | G-3        | 215-336-2252 | 215-336-2255 |

**AISLE *by* AISLE**

*Booth*  *Review*

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PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

AISLE 100

**Booth #139**  
**USDA**  
*Riverdale, MD*



The USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is a multi-faceted agency that protects and promotes U.S. agricultural health, regulates genetically engineered organisms, administers the Animal Welfare Act and carries out wildlife damage management activities. These efforts support the USDA's mission, which is to protect and promote food, agriculture, natural resources and related issues.

AISLE 400

**Booth #435**  
**MANN PACKING**  
*Salinas, CA*

This year, Mann Packing is featuring Snacks On The Go™, a full line of fresh-cut vegetables and fruit, packaged in multiple combinations for snacking convenience. Available in multiple sizes and varieties, Snacks On The Go™ is all-encompassing and designed to meet the needs of multiple snacking demographics.



AISLE 300

**Booth #321**  
**HMC FARMS**  
*Kingsburg, CA*



HMC Farms is excited to offer new concepts that will help achieve its goal of increasing the consumption of the fruit we grow, such as Grape Escape®, ready-to-eat single-serve 2- and 3-oz. bags, which are the perfect solutions for Moms and others looking for a healthy snack. Available year-round, in both foodservice and retail pack styles, Grape Escape is a great addition to the snack produce line up.

**Booth #447**  
**CARLSON AIRFLO**  
*Brooklyn Park, MN*

Interested in increasing your profits, saving labor costs, and reducing shrink? Carlson AirFlo® has created many comprehensive display systems that provide customers with effective, cost-efficient solutions to merchandise fresh produce.



**Booth #327**  
**PURE HOT HOUSE FOODS INC.**  
*Leamington, ON, Canada*

Pure Hot House Foods Inc. is a grower, shipper and marketer of greenhouse-grown vegetables and ready-to-cook fresh-cut vegetable trays sold under the Pure Flavor name across North America.



**Booth #457**  
**ITAUEIRA**  
*Fortaleza, Ceara, Brazil*

We are a family-own company, growing melons in Brazil since 1983. The Canary Yellow melon is an exotic variety of melons, with dark yellow skin, white flesh, and is extremely juice. Our Main office is in Fortaleza-Ceara, Brazil, but we have farms in three different states, stretching over 620 miles.



**Booth #335**  
**CRUNCH PAK**  
*Cashmere, WA*

Crunch Pak, the leading maker of fresh-sliced apples, will introduce two new products at this year's PMA. The first Princess-themed Foodles featuring Cinderella's carriage will be unveiled, along with the new Dipperz line of fresh-sliced apples with caramel or chocolate dip or baby peeled carrots with Ranch dip.



AISLE 500

**Booth #514**  
**BRIDGES ORGANIC PRODUCE**  
*Portland, OR*

Bridges Organic Produce is a cooperative of organic family farms that grow packs, and ships high-quality organic potatoes. Visit our booth to see our brand new variety, AmaRosa, a stunning and tasty red skin, red flesh fingerling! Also consider our TaterPiks, made from organic Klamath Pearl™ potatoes harvested at the peak of flavor and then infused with a powerful punch of all natural flavors.



**Booth #527**  
**WADA FARMS**  
*Idaho Falls, ID*

Wada Farms Marketing Group is the exclusive marketer of Dole fresh potatoes, onions and sweet potatoes in North America. Wada packs a variety of labels in addition to Dole with the ability to supply fresh product from every major growing area in the country.



**Booth #535**  
**MONTEREY MUSHROOMS**  
*Watsonville, CA*

Monterey Mushrooms continues to lead in the area of environmental concerns of consumers. Monterey will be introducing a completely new line of sustainable mushroom packaging. Come by our booth to learn more!



**Booth #547**  
**BROOKS TROPICALS**  
*Homestead, FL*

Since 1928, Brooks Tropicals has grown, packed and shipped the very best tropical fruits and vegetables from sunny South Florida and the Caribbean. Brooks' specialties include: Caribbean Red® Papayas, Slim-Cado® avocados, starfruit, Uniq Fruit® and Persian limes.



**Booth #567**  
**LAKEWOOD PROCESS**  
*Holland, MI*

Lakewood Process Machinery is a leading manufacturer of packing, processing and washing equipment for the fruit and vegetable industry. Lakewood's line of equipment includes complete fresh packing lines, complete processing lines, washing and drying systems, fill-by-weight and volumetric fillers, berry de-stemmers, adjustable sievers, checkweighers, air cleaners, brush washers, grading conveyors, and much more.



AISLE 600

**Booth #614**  
**RPE**  
*Bancroft, WI*



RPE is a year-round grower and shipper of potatoes and onions that specializes in providing category innovation and best-in-class solutions for its customers. RPE packs a full-line of russet, red, yellow and white potatoes along with its newest line of baby potatoes, Tasteful Selections™, as well as a full line of onions.

**Booth #635**  
**ANDREW WILLIAMSON FRESH PRODUCE**  
*Watsonville, CA*



Andrew Williamson Fresh Produce introduces a new line of snacking tomatoes in convenient grab-n-go bags! These unique and carefully selected high flavor varieties were developed with the consumer in mind. Marketed under the Limited Edition brand, A&W will present three new snack tomato packs: a red snack pack, a golden snack pack and a mixed pack.

**Booth #647**  
**PROPHET**  
*Bakersfield, CA*



Prophet North America's software is engineered with industry-specific know-how for the perishable-food and horticultural-products industries. The software is fully configurable, incorporating end-to-end functionality, including real time inventory, quality control, logistics management, total traceability, materials and resource planning, sales and purchase management, lot cost management and integrated financial ledgers.

**Booth #669**  
**OLD DOMINION PEANUT CO.**  
*Norfolk, VA*



The Old Dominion Peanut Co. produces great tasting, fresh peanut candy that is wholesome, portable and sharable. Peanut Brittle, Peanut Squares, Single and Double Dipped Peanuts, Butter Toffee Peanuts and Break N' Eat Peanut Candy are just a few of the tempting treats we produce. New this year, we are offering Half Dipped Peanut Squares!

AISLE 700

**Booth #715**  
**BIONATUR INVERNADEROS BIOLOGICOS**

*Pasteje, Jocotitlan, Mexico*  
Bionatur is a year-round grower of premium tomatoes and peppers with 100 acres of state-of-the-art glass greenhouses centrally located in the State of Mexico. Bionatur supports retail customers throughout Mexico, the United States and Canada.



**Booth #715**  
**SUN BELLE INC.**  
*Schiller Park, IL*



Sun Belle offers premium blackberries, blueberries, raspberries and red currants, as well as greenhouse-grown and specialty produce. We are proud to announce our relocation to the Mid-Atlantic sales into a state-of-the-art 62,000 square-foot refrigerated warehouse located in Jessup, MD. Sun Belle has facilities in Florida, Illinois and California as well.

**Booth #731**  
**DEL MONTE FOODS**  
*Keller, TX*



Del Monte Foods delivers delicious, healthy, ready-to-enjoy refrigerated products specially packaged to seal in flavor. Our innovative product line is driving traffic into the refrigerated fruit section by transforming it into a destination for healthy snacking and breakfast.

**Booth #734**  
**SPECIALTY POTATO**  
*Mountainside, NJ*

Specialty Potato Alliance will be in full force in Atlanta. Come see our new organic varieties and our brand new four-color, high graphic, UV light-resistant, poly Organic bag. We will be sampling our new varieties and will display our full line of retail-ready products that are available year round. For organics, packaging flavor and color in fingerling potatoes, SPA sets the standard.





**PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW**

**Booth #736  
SAMBRAILO PACKAGING  
Watsonville, CA**

Since 1923, Sambrailo Packaging has been known for our innovative packaging solutions. We will be featuring our cost-saving packaging systems, as well as our single-serve and new biodegradable containers. Come see the advantages of our freight-saving MIXIM Packaging System, the RunRite Family of high-speed packaging clamshells and more.



**Booth #847  
SEALD SWEET  
Vero Beach, FL**



Seald Sweet was founded in 1909 when a grower cooperative formed to improve the standards of the Florida citrus industry. Today, Seald Sweet is a leading supplier of the full citrus category and other fresh produce such as apples, grapes, pears, stone fruit, pineapples and more. As a vertically integrated company, we grow and nurture fresh produce from seed to consumer with the highest food safety standards and consistent quality.

**Booth #963  
INLINE PLASTICS CORP.  
Shelton, CT**

Inline Plastics announces the introduction of a new Tri-Compartment Bowl clamshell container, the latest version of the company's breakthrough Safe-T-Fresh® line of products. The Tri-Compartment bowl's upscale design promotes attractive product merchandising that highlights the quality of its contents.



**Booth #1060  
DISCOVERY GARDENS  
Oakdale, CA**

Stop by the "new" Discovery Gardens/Market Fresh/Bushmans' booth for the 2011 Potato Putting Challenge and to learn what more than 100 years of growing excellence can do for your business in 2012. Combined, our companies feature potatoes, sweet potatoes, onions, tomatoes and much more.



**Booth #1247  
POTANDON PRODUCE  
Idaho Falls, ID**

Potandon offers commodity, exclusive variety, value-added and convenience potato products plus a complete onion line. Visit Potandon's booth to discover what this proven leader can do for you.



**Booth #747  
MARZETTI  
Columbus, OH**

Marzetti is a leading manufacturer of produce salad dressings and dips in the United States. Marzetti innovation has created categories like veggie dips, apple dips, fruit dips and hummus for vegetables. We also manufacture and market our 'All-Natural' croutons under the Marzetti and Chatham Village brands.



**Booth #864  
INNOVATIVE PACKAGING SOLUTIONS  
Cumming, GA**

Innovative Packaging Solutions will be showcasing our Horizontal Flow wrapper, wrapping tomatoes, peppers and eggplant with the same machine at the same time demonstrating the flexibility of the machine. We will also be demonstrating a Net Weighing Filling System and Checkweigher conveyor.



**Booth #1030  
SCIENTIFIC CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS  
Emeryville, CA**

For more than 27 years, Scientific Certification Systems has developed certifications and provided key services supporting growers, producers, wholesalers and distributors providing safe, quality produce. As your trusted, independent source for food safety, testing, training and certification, SCS combines rigorous science with outstanding customer service.

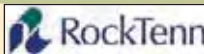


**Booth #1123  
DNE WORLD FRUIT SALES  
Fort Pierce, FL**

DNE World Fruit Sales offers year-round citrus of the highest quality. Our experience is in growing, packing and marketing citrus from Florida, Texas and California as well as importing citrus from around the world from countries such as Australia, South Africa, Spain, Chile, Morocco, Peru and Mexico.



**Booth #817  
ROCKTENN  
Atlanta, GA**



The Meta Tray-8® from RockTenn is an eight-corner tray that outperforms any other tray in the produce market by delivering: increased stacking strength with less fiber, reduced waste and transportation costs and eight graphics panels for greater brand differentiation. RockTenn is the only company that integrates our own corrugated packaging with our own line of machinery and offers consulting and support services.

**AISLE 800**

**Booth #921  
GRIMMWAY FARMS  
Bakersfield, CA**

Grimmway Farms is a grower/shipper of fresh and processed carrots, carrot juice concentrate and a full-line of organic carrots, fruits and vegetables under the Cal-Organic label. Grimmway also grows and ships year-round supplies of potatoes and citrus.



A family of Growing companies.

**AISLE 900**

**Booth #1034  
SEV-REND  
Collinsville, IL**

Sev-Rend is a manufacturer of high-performance packaging for tags, labels and flexible packaging. We specialize in manufacturing the vertical stand up Film-Bag with our Soft-Net for 2-, 3-, 4- and 5-lb. produce bags.



**Booth #825  
DOMEX SUPERFRESH GROWERS  
Yakima, WA**

Domex Superfresh Growers® is the leading supplier of fresh apples, pears and cherries from the Pacific Northwest. Come learn about how our expert category management, logistical expertise and extraordinary customer service create the Difference That Makes All the Difference™.



**Booth #939  
CLASSIC SALADS  
Watsonville, CA**

Classic Salads is a grower/shipper/processor of gourmet baby leaf salads, including spring mix, baby and teen spinach, and baby arugula. Established in 2000 by longtime Salinas Valley farmer Lance Batistich, our world-class conventional and organic products are 100 percent U.S. grown, and meet the highest industry standards.



**Booth #1056  
GOURMET GARDEN  
Folsom, CA**

Gourmet Garden helps make fresh herbs and spices easy for time-pressed shoppers' weekday meals. Our organically grown herbs and spices are cold-captured in convenient squeezable tubes that retain the best flavor and aroma. They are full of antioxidants and naturally gluten-free. They last for three months when refrigerated.



**Booth #1167  
SAGE FRUIT COMPANY  
Yakima, WA**

Sage Fruit is a grower/shipper of high quality Washington State apples, pears and cherries. We develop marketing programs to help our customers grow their sales to new levels.



**AISLE 1200**

**Booth #1235  
KEENAN FARMS  
Avenal, CA**

Family owned since 1972, Keenan Farms is a premium grower, processor and marketer of California pistachios. We take great pride and passion in producing a quality, wholesome and great-tasting pistachio.





**PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW**

**AISLE 1300**

**Booth #1314  
FLORAL BUSINESS**

*Boca Raton, FL*  
Come visit Booth 1314 and pick up the newest tool to help supermarket floral executives become better marketers, merchandisers, managers and buyers of floral products: FLORAL BUSINESS



**Booth #1314  
PERISHABLE NEWS**

*Boca Raton, FL*  
Visit our booth to sign up for a free subscription to PerishableNews.com, the first news site written exclusively for the entire perishables arena. Be among the growing list of subscribers who get instant, daily or weekly e-mailed announcements.



**Booth #1314  
PERISHABLE PUNDIT**

*Boca Raton, FL*  
There is nothing quite like Jim Prevor's Perishable Pundit. Access the Pundit at www.perishablepundit.com and see for yourself. Or come by our booth and meet Jim Prevor and the whole staff.



**Booth #1314  
PRODUCE BUSINESS**

*Boca Raton, FL*  
Last year, PRODUCE BUSINESS celebrated its 25th anniversary. Covering marketing, merchandising, management and procurement issues that affect the sales of produce and floral items, PRODUCE BUSINESS uniquely "initiates industry improvements."



**AISLE 1400**

**Booth #1339  
C.H. ROBINSON  
WORLDWIDE INC.**

*Eden Prairie, MN*  
Looking for ways to increase your value-added category? Need a robust local sourcing program? Learn how we helped retailers increase their value-added category by 129 percent over other offerings. From field to store, we'll customize a program to help you maximize your supply and demand chain.



**Booth #1347  
OCEAN MIST**

*Castroville, CA*  
Ocean Mist Farms is introducing a two-count "Season & Steam" microwavable fresh artichoke pack at booth #1347. The fresh Globe artichokes are cleaned, trimmed and ready to cook. The innovative packaging allows consumers to pre-season, reseal and steam the artichokes by microwave all within the same bag.



**AISLE 1400**

**Booth #1429  
DURAND-WAYLAND INC.**

*LaGrange, GA*  
Durand-Wayland, Greefa and others are partners combining advanced technology with expert sales, service and support. Our complete line of produce-packing equipment includes: electronic grading by blemish, sweetness, internal defect, weight, dimension, shape and color, as well as other peripheral equipment that include bin sanitizers, tote dumpers and volume fillers.



**AISLE 1500**

**Booth #1523  
SUNNYRIDGE FARM INC.**

*Winter Haven, FL*  
SunnyRidge Farm, family owned and operated since 1993, is a grower, packer, shipper and marketer of conventional and organic blueberries, raspberries, blackberries and strawberries. The company represents the finest growers from regions throughout North and South America providing a reliable year-round berry supply.



**AISLE 1600**

**Booth #1632  
I LOVE PRODUCE**

*West Grove, PA*  
I Love Produce is a major grower and marketer of garlic, ginger and shallots with year-round supplies from sources around the world including the United States, China and South America. I Love Produce also markets organic garlic, ginger and shallots year-round, with distribution to all points in the United States and Canada. We package in retail units and also carry a full-line of value-added products for foodservice.



**Booth #1652  
BLUE BOOK SERVICES**

*Carol Stream, IL*  
Blue Book Services is the industry's leading credit and marketing authority since 1901. This year, we introduced helpful tools to protect your company from risk and increase the visibility of your various marketing messages. Come to our booth to learn about BBOS Mobile, social media integration and News Views!



**Booth #1661  
HBF HURST BERRY  
SHERIDAN, OR**

HBF International sells a wide variety of berries under the Hurst's Berry Farm brand. From raspberries and blueberries to specialty varieties such as kiwiberries, currants and cranberries, HBF offers premium berries year-round.



**Booth #1666  
FRUIT2DAY  
Broomfield, CO**

Introducing Fruit2day's latest special edition: Sweetie Pie, Cherry Apple! Cozy up to the flavors of ripe cherry and crisp apple with our signature bits of real fruit!



**AISLE 1700**

**Booth #1755  
FRESKA PRODUCE  
INTERNATIONAL LLC**

*Oxnard, CA*  
Freska Produce was formed in 2004 with the intention of providing our customers with the world finest mangos 365 days per year. To do this, we have procured the best growers around the world in Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Guatemala and Mexico. We hope to demonstrate our intent to bring high quality, food safety-conscious nutritious mangos and bell peppers to the global marketplace.



**AISLE 1800**

**Booth #1851  
MICKY'S MINIS FLORA  
EXPRESS**

*Millstadt, IL*  
Micky's Minis offers a unique line of miniature potted plants and seasonal accessories. We offer 14 different types of plants — everyday and seasonal plants, matched with complementary accessories. Micky's Minis has been going strong for more than 20 years. Stop by and see what we can do for you!



**AISLE 1900**

**Booth #1946  
CHRISTOPHER RANCH**

*Gilroy, CA*  
Christopher Ranch has given its California Heirloom garlic a name befitting its heritage: Monviso. Named after its Italian roots, our Monviso garlic is grown from selected seed exclusive to Christopher Ranch, and has been nurtured for over 50 years to preserve its exceptional flavor, consistency and quality. Monviso fresh bulbs and freshly peeled cloves are available year-round in retail, food-service and industrial packs.

**Booth # 1959  
MASTRONARDI  
PRODUCE/SUNSET**

Mastronardi Produce/SUNSET® grows award-winning nationally recognized brands such as Campari®, Kumato™, Splendido™, One Sweet™ and Zima™. We pride ourselves in discovering the most flavorful gourmet tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers for you to enjoy.



**AISLE 2000**

**Booth #2069  
EVE'S GARDEN**

*Land O Lakes, FL*  
Visit our booth to view our new designs in Lucky Bamboo and Bonsai Trees. We decorate and design our products to make perfect gifts for all occasions and adds creativity in your stores. We bring you unique products that are designed, produced and sold by us directly and can be delivered to your stores or to your distribution centers.



**AISLE 2100**

**Booth #2157  
ATLAS PRODUCE &  
DISTRIBUTION INC.**

*Bakersfield, CA*  
Atlas is the grower and shipper of the popular Caramel Naturel™ Medjool Dates, Date Coconut Rolls, Date Almond Rolls and Jumbo Dried Grapes. Visit our booth to taste the amazing flavor of Caramel Naturel!





**PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW**

**Booth #2165  
NATIONAL RAISIN COMPANY  
Fowler, CA**

National Raisin introduces Sour Watermelon Raisels. Raisels are sour-flavored Golden Raisins dusted lightly with sugar, available in five flavors of convenient 1.25-oz 6-packs. Raisels are an innovative, real fruit combination of sweet and sour tastes. This fruit snack contains 100 percent of your daily Vitamin C and will pucker your lips and leave a smile on your face.



**Booth #2423  
LGS SPECIALTY SALES LTD.  
Bronx, NY**

LGS is your year-round source for premium produce from around the world. Our core group of commodities include Hass avocados, Clementines and other citrus, grapes, apples, pears and stone fruit. We offer a variety of innovative and attractive new packages and pallet configurations to fit the needs of different retailers and family groups.

**Booth #2327  
CALIFORNIA GIANT BERRY  
Watsonville, CA**

AISLE 2300

We connect with consumers everyday about our message of health, fitness and philanthropy. During October, our packages turn pink in support of Breast Cancer Awareness. Please visit us at the show to discuss the many ways to participate in consumer-focused programs in 2012.



**Booth #2347  
EDINBURG CITRUS ASSOCIATION  
Edinburg, TX**

We have been proudly growing and packing our citrus for 79 years. The growers of Edinburg Citrus invite you to enjoy the fruits of our labor — sweet and juicy Texas Red grapefruit and oranges. We are committed to producing top-quality fruit and assisting customers in ideas and programs to increase consumer sales.



**Booth #2415  
MIXTEC GROUP  
Pasadena, CA**

MIXTEC Group is the #1 executive search firm in produce. We provide exceptional executive recruitment and leadership consulting to the industry's top companies.



**Booth #2446  
NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD  
Orlando, FL**

Watermelon is sweet, juicy, bright and fun! The National Watermelon Promotion Board wants to tell everyone that watermelon is healthy and delicious and everyday. Stop by our booth to see what's new in the world of watermelon and to see the latest carving creations from Chef Joe Poon!



**Booth #2447  
PROWARE SERVICES  
Plant City, FL**

ProWare Services offers AgWare, a versatile software package designed for small and mid-size produce companies. AgWare addresses your complex operational and traceability requirements. Its functionality includes purchase orders, receiving, packing/value-add processing, inventory control, sales order automation, document preparation, and includes a direct integration into A/R, A/P and GL.



**Booth #2452  
KEYES PACKAGING  
Wenatchee, WA**

Keyes is a leader in the molded fiber packaging industry. Our products and services are primarily focused in the produce, egg and wine industries. We have followed environmental and sustainable practices for over 60 years.



**Booth #2455  
STEMILT GROWERS  
Wenatchee, WA**

Stemilt Growers, a leading supplier of fresh apples, pears, cherries and stone fruits based in Wenatchee, WA, is looking forward to sharing its exclusive apple variety, Piñata, with you at PMA Fresh Summit in Atlanta. Experience the unique flavors of Piñata first-hand when you visit our booth.



**Booth #2456  
POTTER INC.  
Bryan, OH**

Potter Inc. is your fruit and gift basket specialists. Let us help you customize your holiday and everyday fruit basket programs. Our unique basket and container designs along with our coordinating hand-tied bows are a sure way to create excitement and boost sales. From ready-to-sell baskets to in-store kits and supplies, Potter Inc. can serve all of your fruit and gift basket needs. Come check out our newest lines for 2011 and 2012.



**Booth #2516  
BEDFORD INDUSTRIES, INC.  
Worthington, MN**

Bedford Industries is excited to introduce our new SocialTies™. It's much more than just an ordinary twist tie. SocialTies™ can promote your social media sites, QR codes, brand identity, traceability codes, or other promotions right at the POS. Enable your consumers while they shop by adding Bedford SocialTies™ to your packaging options.



**Booth #2527  
TEMPLE-INLAND  
Austin, TX**

At Temple-Inland, we create packaging that protects far more than product. We protect margins, reputations and resources for every one of our customers, one hard-working container at a time. In addition to brown boxes, bulk harvest bins and common footprint, we create and produce innovative retail ready packaging solutions and intricate multi-color POP displays.



**Booth #2635  
SUN WORLD INTERNATIONAL  
Bakersfield, CA**

With its roots into the fresh fruit produce industry going back to 1976, Sun World is a breeder, grower and marketer of our own signature fruit varieties. We offer a full line of grapes, peppers, stonefruit and more. Stop by our booth to discover category insights, taste the latest in variety development and experience dynamic online branding with the new Sun World website.



**Booth #2659  
THERMAL TECHNOLOGIES  
Ardmore, PA**

Thermal Technologies is a provider of produce ripening room systems. Our patented Tarpless design is the most widely used in the marketplace, processing over 100 million pounds of bananas across the United States, Canada and Mexico every day.



**Booth #2667  
KEYSTONE FRUIT MARKETING INC.  
Greencastle, PA**

We are a single-source grower, packer and shipper of year-round Certified Sweet® Onions. We have year-round supplies of Walla Walla® River, Vidalia® and Mayan Sweet® sweet onions, plus hybrid red, white and yellow onions. We also supply southern peaches, eastern apples and asparagus.



**Booth #2717  
PRODUCE CAREERS  
Arroyo Grande, CA**

AISLE 2700

Produce Careers is an executive search firm that specializes in talent acquisition for the produce, food and agricultural industries. Our clients range from grower/shippers, fresh-cut/food processors, foodservice operators, wholesalers/distributors, retailers and industry suppliers. We place all job categories ranging from middle to senior management.



**Booth #2719  
AMERIFRESH  
Scottsdale, AZ**

Amerifresh is one of the only source-based produce marketers covering all major agricultural regions. Our Snoboy brand was trademarked in 1925. Since then, it has been synonymous with high quality produce and satisfaction.







# GRILLING SEASON



It's time to Go Bananas After Dark. Encourage customers to pick up a bunch (or two) of DOLE Bananas and visit [Dole.com/bananas](http://Dole.com/bananas) for delicious banana recipes, ranging from desserts to cocktails to cooking on the grill. Our recipes are bound to make bananas the official fruit of summer!



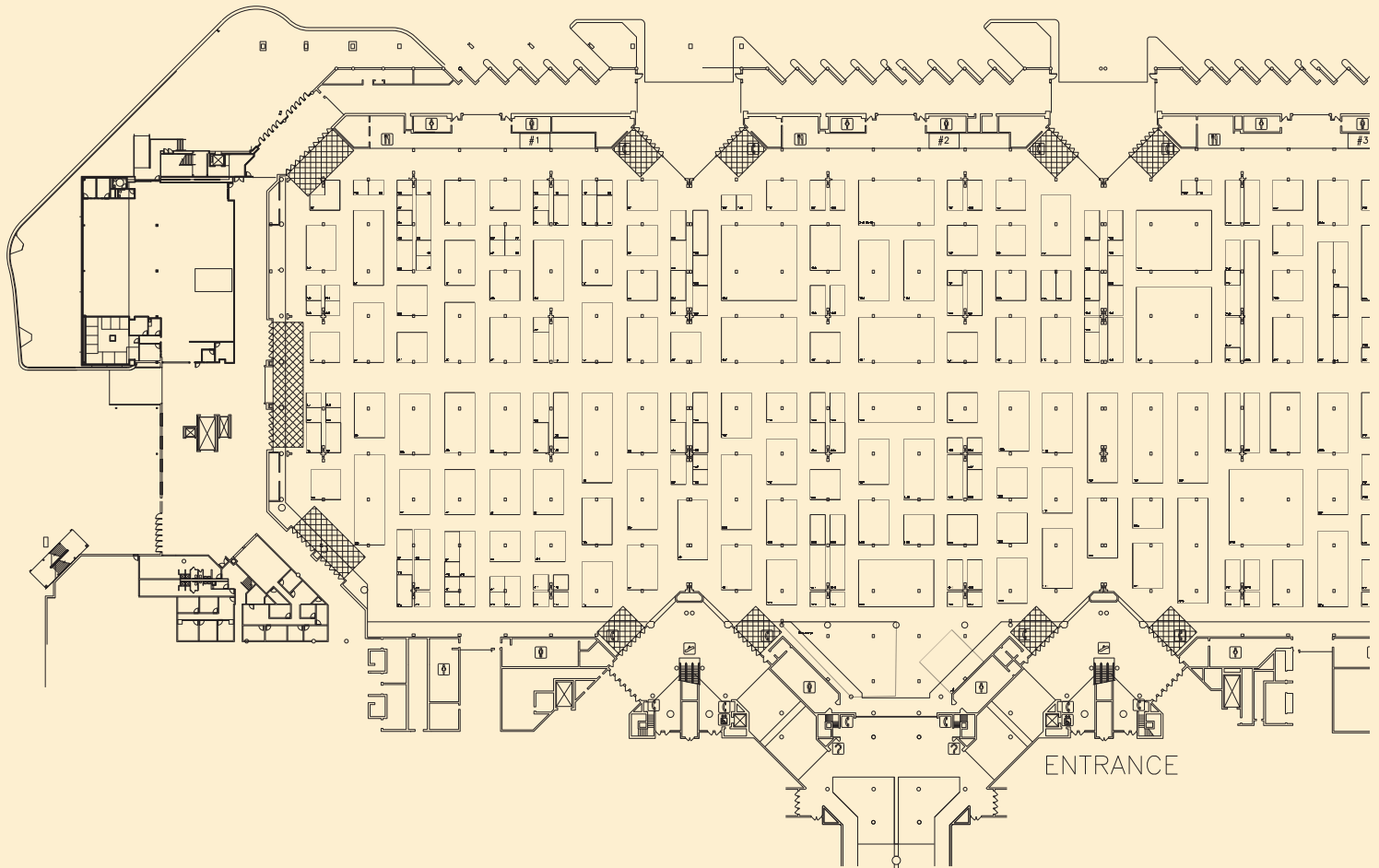
Join us on  
[Facebook.com/DOLEbananas](https://www.facebook.com/DOLEbananas)

Scan the Dole Bananas QR code or text  
"trade" to 47170 for instant recipes.  
standard msg & data rates may apply

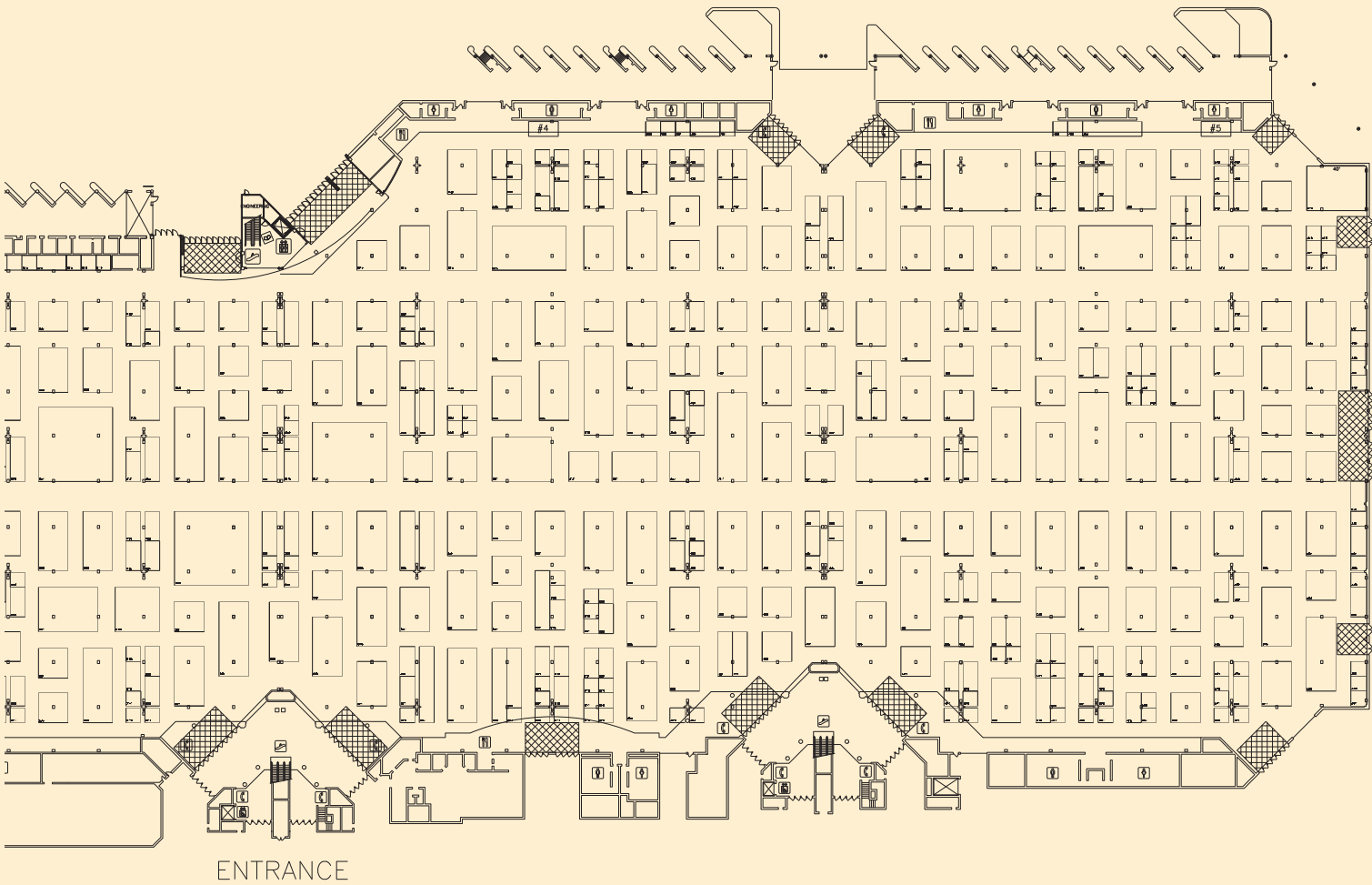


## AISLE *by* AISLE

## Booth *Review*



# 2011 FRESH SUMMIT OCTOBER 14-17, 2011 GEORGIA WORLD CONGRESS CENTER FLOOR PLAN





PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

**Booth #2726**

**JMB**

**San Francisco, CA**

Since 1888, JMB has provided the highest quality produce. From our specialty asparagus to our variety of other commodities, JMB consistently delivers the quality and service that have kept us in business for over 120 years.



**Booth #2726**

**WELL PICT BERRIES**

**Watsonville, CA**

Well Pict's premium proprietary strawberries and raspberries are available year-round. Now featuring greater raspberry availability and our newest summer strawberry variety, which provides a longer shelf-life with the premium flavor quality for which Well Pict is known.



**Booth #2747**

**DOLE**

**Westlake Village, CA**

Following its successful summer "Go Bananas After Dark" campaign, Dole Fresh Fruit is continuing its push to expand the common usages for bananas with new recipes and culinary concepts. And while you're there, visit the Dole Fresh Vegetables team to learn about their new program to help you build consumer sales.



See our ad on page 121

AISLE 2800

**Booth #2816**

**SILVER CREEK**

**Boise, ID**

Silver Creek Software knows what it takes to stay in business. Visual Produce, our accounting/financial management software targets the fresh produce industry and offers unique capabilities to produce wholesalers, distributors, packers, brokers, fresh-cut and growers with traceability, customer menus, contract pricing, lot control, route accounting, Visual Internet online ordering, EDI, landed cost and much more.



**Booth #2817**

**SOUTHERN SPECIALTIES**

**Atlanta, GA**

Southern Specialties has been providing produce solutions since 1990. Our Southern Selects, Paradise Tropicals and Today's Gourmet brands have been proven to provide profits for our customers. Our team of growers, importers, processors and shippers are from Florida, Texas and California.



**Booth #2820**

**PEAKFRESH**

**Lake Forest, CA**

Protect your profits with Peakfresh® — a modified atmosphere packaging film specifically developed for the packaging of fresh fruit, vegetables, plants and cut flowers to extend the life of your product.



**Booth #2838**

**MICHIGAN APPLE COMMITTEE**

**Lansing, MI**

From the most traditional varieties to tasty new ones, apples are growing better than ever in Michigan. We have more than 20 different varieties produced commercially. You're sure to find one to suit your taste.



**Booth #2867**

**BORTON & SONS**

**Yakima, WA**

We are a premier grower/shipper of quality apples, pears, and cherries aspiring to the highest level of excellence in our products and services. We're committed to our customers' ongoing success through continuous innovative programs/solutions and our integrity that has been our hallmark for almost 100 years.



AISLE 3000

**Booth #3047**

**RED RIVER VALLEY POTATOES**

**East Grand Forks, MN**

The Red River Valley of North Dakota and Minnesota is the largest producer of red potatoes in the country. Our red potatoes are unique because they are grown in heavy black soil and do not require irrigation. This gives them the deep red color and robust flavor for which they are known. See what separates a red potato from a pink potato.



**Booth #3065**

**DEARDORFF FAMILY FARMS**

**Oxnard, CA**

Since the 1930s, Deardorff Family Farms has been a family-owned grower and shipper of high quality vegetables, tomatoes and strawberries. Deardorff combines a commitment to the environment, people and local communities with four generations of experience to bring the best organic and conventional products to you and your customers.



AISLE 3100

**Booth #3136**

**WAYMOUTH FARMS**

**Minneapolis, MN**

Waymouth Farms, maker of Good Sense(r) snacks, offers a variety of unique trail mixes, gourmet dried fruits, nuts and seeds, chocolate- and yogurt-covered snacks, salad enhancements, and seasonal items. Visit our booth to learn more about our innovative products and sample our most popular snacks, as well as new additions to the line!



**Booth #3147**

**DEL MONTE FRESH PRODUCE N. AMERICA INC.**

**Coral Gables, FL**

Del Monte Fresh Produce offers premium quality Del Monte® branded whole and fresh-cut fruits and vegetables. For more information call 800-950-3683 or visit our websites, www.freshdelmonte.com and www.fruits.com



**Booth #3154**

**GALAXY NUTRITIONAL FOODS**

**North Kingstown, RI**

Committed to providing delicious plant-based cheese alternatives, Galaxy Nutritional Foods introduces its rich and spreadable, dairy-free Veggie brand cream cheese alternatives. They are kosher-certified, lactose-, cholesterol-, GMO- and gluten-free!



**Booth #3164**

**YAKIMA FRESH**

**Park Ridge, IL**

Our growing, packing and shipping experience reaches back to the early 1900s. Yakima Fresh was formed by three of the most successful Northwest growers: Roche, Stadelman and Yakima Fruit. Yakima Fresh is your source for your entire Northwest apple, cherry and pear needs.



AISLE 3200

**Booth #3217**

**CALIFORNIA AVOCADO COMMISSION**

**Irvine, CA**

Insist on California avocados. Visit the California Avocado Commission booth to discover consumer preferences and how to maximize your spring-summer avocado sales with consistently reliable California avocados.



**Booth #3225**

**NATURIBE**

**Salinas, CA**

Naturipe® fresh berries are vibrant, delicious and nutritious! Stop by and see our extensive line of conventional and organic strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and blackberries in a variety of pack sizes. Learn more about our innovative new products including our Selections line and award-winning ready-to-eat blueberries. Country Singer Billy Dean will also be performing and handing out free "Earning Our Place On Earth" CDs.





PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

AISLE 3300

**Booth #3347  
CONCORD FOODS INC.**  
*Brockton, MA*

Concord Foods is a leading supplier of retail food products and custom ingredients to nationally recognized supermarkets, food service operators and leading food manufacturers. The company is introducing a new addition to its line of easy-to-make seasoning mixes — Greens Seasoning Mix, a blend of spices that enhances a natural smoky flavor and matches perfectly with collard greens or kale.



**Booth #3359  
BASKET EASE**  
*PRIOR LAKE, MN*

Basket Ease is the easiest and fastest way to make fruit baskets. Our baskets and trays are patented, and designed especially for fruit baskets. We offer all the supplies needed to create beautiful fruit and gift baskets year-round.



**Booth #3367  
SGS INTERNATIONAL**  
*Marietta, GA*

SGS is a proven leader with more than 60 years of experience supplying the consumer products, retail and food manufacturers markets. Our global services include package design, prepress, image carriers and global design-to-print management.



**Booth #3369  
SANTA CRUZ BERRY FARMING CO.**  
*Watsonville, CA*

Santa Cruz Berry Farming grows and ships high quality conventional and organic strawberries from throughout the state of California. We and our sales representatives at Seven Seas Berry Sales understand the importance of the consumer and recognize that it is all our responsibility to make sure that Santa Cruz Berry Farming strawberries provide them with an outstanding experience.



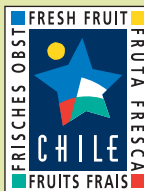
**Booth #3375  
MISIONERO**  
*Gonzales, CA*

Stop by our booth and see the latest additions to our complete line of washed and trimmed salads: Wasabi Arugula and Cascade Blend. Innovation, quality and customer service are No. 1 at Misionero Vegetables.



**Booth # 3414, 3415, 3515  
CHILEAN FRESH FRUIT ASSOCIATION**  
*Sonoma, CA*

There are many new elements in the promotion plan that support the sale of the wide variety of fruits available from Chile. See examples of materials that support our promotions.



**Booth #3447  
FRESH SOLUTIONS NETWORK LLC**  
*Loveland, OH*

Fresh Solutions provides insight, innovation and impact. We are a grower-owned potato and onion operational solutions and strategic marketing firm that deliver results. The network partners are Serman Masser Inc.; Keystone Potato Products LLC; Michael Farms Inc.; Basin Gold Cooperative Inc.; Green Thumb Farms Inc.; and Red Isle Produce Company Ltd.



**Booth #3453  
GRAPPLE FRUITS**  
*Wenatchee, WA*

Grapple® brand apples reach customers with a new taste and flavor. Try one of the latest juicy, crispy, up-and-coming gourmet Grapple® brand apples at our booth.



AISLE 3500

**Booth # 3555  
DUDA FARM FRESH FOODS**  
*Oviedo, FL*

Our fifth-generation, family-owned business remains strong after 85 years of living the American dream. Visit the Duda Farm Fresh Foods team in Atlanta to experience our fresh, flavorful and premium quality fresh products that are available today.



**Booth #3685  
AMERICAN NON STOP LABEL**  
*Santa Fe Springs, CA*

We offer quality flexographic labels. At American Non Stop Label, we strive to remain current with the latest technologies in the flexographic industry, including biodegradable materials and very soon, linerless labels.



AISLE 3700

**Booth # 3726  
BABÉ FARMS**  
*Santa Maria, CA*

Babé Farms is a premier grower/shipper of specialty vegetables. Babé Farms will exhibit select items from its bountiful year-round harvest of over 70 varieties of baby lettuces, specialty greens, colorful root veggies, baby cauliflower and seasonal specialties. Our custom salad blends and creative packs are designed to fit the needs of top chefs, fine retailers and culinary artists. Our gourmet produce is hand-harvested to order daily.



**Booth # 3753  
MISSION PRODUCE**  
*Oxnard, CA*

Mission Produce is a global supplier of avocados and asparagus. Our ripening and distribution centers in California, Colorado, Illinois, New Jersey, Georgia, Texas, Washington and Toronto enable just-in-time delivery nationwide. New at Mission is our Mr. Avocado Fresh Guacamole product line. Also new is Mission's distributorship for Frontera Foods, featuring guacamole mixes created by Chef Rick Bayless.



**Booth #3775  
PERO FAMILY FARMS FOOD COMPANY LLC**  
*Delray Beach, FL*

Pero Family Farms is a vibrant, 100-year old, privately owned business. We specialize in the retail and wholesale of high-quality produce as a grower, processor, packager, marketer and distributor.



**Booth #3782  
INTELLEFLEX**  
*Santa Clara, CA*

Intellex provides growers, packers, distributors and grocers with on-demand visibility for tracking and monitoring the temperature and condition of fresh-cut produce from the harvester to the store shelf. Intellex enables on-demand visibility of the produce's condition — without unpacking the pallet or unloading the trailer — improving product quality, maximizing shelf life and increasing customer satisfaction and brand value.

**Booth #3788  
SPECTRUM TECHNOLOGIES INC.**  
*Plainfield, IL*

Spectrum Technologies Inc. offers affordable devices to detect frost, measure nutrient levels, soil qualities, light, weather and other factors affecting plant growth. Our WatchDog weather stations and data loggers make it easy to record weather events and conditions. Over 15,000 customers count on Spectrum's easy-to-use, dependable technology for their growing needs.



AISLE 3800

**Booth #3820  
SETTON INTERNATIONAL FOODS**  
*Commack, NY*

Setton Farms is proud to introduce Pistachio Chewy Bites! Packed with power, nutrient-dense and filled with whole pistachios and moist cranberries, they make a perfect on-the-go healthy and delicious snack choice. Come visit us at our booth to see what the buzz is all about!



**Booth #3825  
BOSKOVICH FARMS**  
*Oxnard, CA*

Since 1915, the Boskovich Family has grown produce that is safe, nutritious and wholesome. Today, Boskovich Farms grows on more than 14,000 acres of land in California and Mexico, producing nearly 30 vegetables crops and strawberries year-round. Our processing division specializes in fresh-cut and value-added produce, giving us a diverse and comprehensive product line.





PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

**Booth #3847**  
**EARTHBOUND FARM**  
*Santa Juan Bautista, CA*

Earthbound Farm's new Organic Mixed Baby Kales brings convenience and accessibility to kale by completely eliminating the need for preparing the greens. Pre-washed and ready to use, the leaves are tender enough to add directly to salads or to a quick stir-fry as they require less cooking time than mature kale.



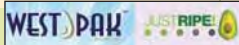
**Booth #3853**  
**NY APPLE ASSOCIATION**  
*Fishers, NY*

New York's 2011-2012 apple crop will meet our 5-year average in volume, but will excel in flavor, size and condition. Leading NY favorites are McIntosh, Empire, Gala, Honeycrisp, Cortland, Crispin and Macoun. Harvest began in August and will finish in early November. Stop by and sample fresh NY cider and a fresh NY apple!



**Booth #3981**  
**WEST PAK**  
**AVOCADO INC.**  
*Temecula, CA*

From our humble beginnings in Fallbrook, CA in 1982, West Pak Avocado has evolved into an industry-leading grower, packer and shipper of quality avocados from California, Mexico, Chile and Peru with regional distribution and ripening centers across the U.S. We've built our company upon a reputation of outstanding quality, innovation and dedication to our customers.



**Booth #3988**  
**YOGAVIVE**  
*Napa, CA*

Yogavive™ is a leading producer of USDA-certified organic fruit snacks. Our "popped" Fuji apple chips are fat-free, crunchy and uniquely delicious! In addition to being organic, they are Gluten-Free, Vegan, non-GMO, Kosher, Halal and Low Calorie. Yogavive™ gourmet apple chips come in seven mouth-watering flavors: Original, Cinnamon, Caramel, Peach, Strawberry, Ginger and Garlic.



**Booth #3939**  
**TANIMURA & ANTLE**

Salinas, CA  
Based in California's Salinas Valley, Tanimura & Antle is a family-owned and operated business focus on quality, freshness and innovation. Tanimura & Antle produces a full line of fresh vegetables including Artisan Lettuce, Artisan Romaine, Artisan Red Onion, Living Lettuce, Iceberg, Broccoli, Cauliflower and Romaine.



**Booth #3967**  
**GILLS ONIONS**  
*Oxnard, CA*

Gills Onions' 100 percent usable, sliced and diced California grown red, yellow and sweet onions are guaranteed to reduce waste and always deliver on taste. Consumers love saving time in the kitchen and reducing waste while still being able to deliver a full-flavored, home-cooked meal with Gills' ready-to-use sliced and diced onions.



**Booth #4035**  
**CALAVO**  
*Santa Paula, CA*

Since 1924, Calavo has been known as the first name in avocados. Over the years, we've expanded our product offerings with papayas, pineapples, tomatoes, natural guacamoles, fresh salsas, delicious tortilla chips, fresh-cut fruits and vegetables, and new this year, healthful Calavo Avocado Hummus.



**Booth #4035**  
**LIMONEIRA**  
*Santa Paula, CA*

Limoneira is a global company, founded in 1893, with investments in agribusiness, real estate, and natural resource management. We are the largest vertically integrated lemon supplier in the U.S. Our global network and vertical integration provides flexible go-to-market strategies for our customers. Our operations provide greater growing, harvesting and packing efficiencies that afford faster marketplace response.



**Booth #4047**  
**SUNSWEEP GROWERS**  
*Yuba City, CA*

Sunsweet offers a variety of dried fruits with all natural nutrition, delicious taste, and convenience. See our new look with appealing new packaging for our delicious dried fruit. Plus look for our new items — D'Noir Prunes & Plum Amazins diced dried plums!



**Booth # 4052**  
**DADE SERVICE CORPORATION**  
*Daytona Beach, FL*

We supply turn-key solutions for ripening rooms, rapid chill rooms, produce coolers and distribution centers. Ripening Systems are designed for bananas, avocados, tomatoes, and papayas.



**Booth # 4061**  
**SUNRISE GROWERS**  
*Placentia, CA*

Sunrise Growers-Frosun Foods is a top producer and marketer of high-quality, fresh strawberries year-round. In addition, we are the leader of the frozen fruit category and offer a full line of top quality products. We are fully vertically integrated from source to market, ensuring quality and safety throughout the supply chain. Please stop by and try our delicious smoothies!



See our ad on page 116

**Booth #4066**  
**AMERICAN PACKAGING CORP.**  
*Story City, IA*

American Packaging will be introducing, FreshEx®, a unique Anti-Microbial Technology that extends the shelf-life of fresh produce, fresh vegetables and fresh fruit. Other specialized capabilities include breathable specifications, registered anti-fog coatings for product visibility, laser micro-perforation, registered coupons for product promotion and pressure sensitive re-close tape.



**Booth #4067**  
**PROGRESSIVE PRODUCE**  
*Los Angeles, CA*

Progressive Produce is the right team for your business! We've got your back with product that sells, food safety and traceability and our superior service you can depend on. We are your category partner in potatoes, onions, sweet onions, asparagus, chiles, Key limes, baby lemons, limes, Hispanic specialty items, beans and rice as well as organic potatoes and onions.



**Booth #4135**  
**IDAHO POTATO COMMISSION**  
*Eagle, ID*

The Idaho Potato Commission is the marketing arm for the entire Idaho® potato industry. We provide marketing support and programs for fresh, frozen and dehydrated Idaho® potatoes.



AISLE 4100



**PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW**

**Booth #4147  
READY PAC FOODS**  
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Ready Pac, the nations' leading innovator of fresh-cut produce, is excited to showcase progressive capabilities and new products including premium quality salads, healthy snacks and complete single-serve salads.



**Booth #4167  
PURFRESH**  
*Fremont, CA*

Purfresh, a leading provider of clean technologies that purify, protect, and preserve the global food supply chain, announces an addition to its existing product line — Model 2405 — which raises the bar in information management, helping shippers and carriers adapt to increasing regulatory pressures and market demand.



**Booth #4186  
ROYAL 4 SYSTEMS**  
*Long Beach, CA*

Royal 4 Systems offers a complete PTI solution for growers/shippers, processors and distributors. Visit us to see the latest in software, portable printing and print and apply solutions, as well as our WISE warehouse management software for every business.



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UNISUN SOFTWARE**  
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Envio's inheritance of over 25 years of fresh produce experience offers the latest in software technology, PTI compliancy and integration to QuickBooks, Microsoft Great Plains and TRAVERSE accounting solutions. Envio automates the growing, packing, shipping and distributing activities for all commodities. Stop by our booth for a demonstration.



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PRODUCEPRO SOFTWARE**  
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Produce Pro Software provides sales order entry, purchasing, inventory management, routing/logistics, accounting, EDI, E-commerce, analytics and warehouse management features specifically designed and customized to each client's unique needs.



**Booth #4281  
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*Dayton, NJ*

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**Booth #4334  
CAVENDISH PRODUCE**  
*Charlottetown, PEI, Canada*

Cavendish Produce is the fresh potato specialist offering an assortment of value-added and mainstream potato products. We are your one-stop supplier of top quality potatoes.



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TURBANA**  
*Coral Gables, FL*

Turbana, the leading importer of Fair Trade bananas and plantains, the fourth largest importer of bananas in the U.S., also offers gold pineapple and exotic gourmet plantain chips available in a unique variety of natural flavors. Our commitment to product quality and personal customer satisfaction is second to none.



**Booth #4355  
PLANT & FOOD RESEARCH**  
*Saundersham, Auckland, New Zealand*

Plant & Food Research provides research and development that adds value to fruit, vegetable, crop, seafood and food products. Our science in key areas, including elite cultivar development, sustainable production systems and bioprotection, supports the production of high quality produce that earns a premium in international markets.



**Booth #4365  
BEACHSIDE PRODUCE LLC**  
*Guadalupe, CA*

Beachside Produce is a year-round grower/shipper, and one of the leading producers and marketers of commodity packed broccoli in the U.S. In addition to numerous grown commodities, we provide a full line of vegetable consolidation for its customer base.



**Booth #4427  
JEM-D INTERNATIONAL GREENHOUSE GROWERS**  
*Kingsville, ON, Canada*

Jem-D International and Red Sun Greenhouse Vegetables offer North American retailers year-round freshness direct from our farms. Our quality greenhouse vegetables are grown in state-of-the-art facilities, handpicked and hand-inspected to achieve the highest of standards for all our customers.



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*Longview, WA*

At Longview Fibre Paper and Packaging, we do more than convert wood waste and recycled fiber into paper and packaging. We make sustainable products and create some of the most uniform and consistent, high quality paper and corrugated packaging products in the industry.



**Booth #4458  
REDLINE SOLUTIONS**  
*Santa Clara, CA*

RedLine Solutions provides whole chain traceability and inventory control solutions for grower/shippers. Our Traceability Suite lets you collect and manage information as work is performed, providing detailed operational insights in real-time. Our cost-effective solutions make your operation more efficient and productive, while meeting PTI requirements.



**Booth #4475  
DULCINEA**  
*Ladera Ranch, CA*

At Dulcinea our commitment is to deliver only the highest quality, best tasting fruit. We are passionate about providing the freshest produce and flavor consumers love year-round.



**Booth #4487  
PAKSENSE**  
*Boise, ID*

PakSense manufactures intelligent labels that monitor the temperature of produce during distribution and storage. PakSense Labels help ensure that only the freshest products reach consumers.



**Booth #4519  
SUNRIDGE FARMS**  
*Pajaro, CA*

SunRidge Farms is a family-owned manufacturer of USDA Certified Organic and natural foods. Guided by quality and environmental sustainability, products manufactured by our solar powered facility include trail mixes, candies, nuts, dried fruit and more.



**Booth #4537  
BANACOL MARKETING CORP.**  
*Coral Gables, FL*

Banacol is a multi-national corporation, dedicated to the production and distribution of agro-industrial products, including pineapples, bananas, plantains and tropicals (yucca). More than a company, Banacol is a community of people who work hard every day to offer the best products and services. At Banacol we not only grow fruit, we cultivate well-being.





**PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW**

**Booth #4547  
GREAT LAKES INTERNATIONAL TRADING INC.**

Traverse City, MI  
Great Lakes International Trading has been specializing in premium-quality dried fruits, nuts and edible seeds for over 25 years. This year, we are proud to announce we are also going fresh. We welcome you to stop by our booth to see our expanding product line.



**Booth #4586  
INTERRUPCION\* FAIR TRADE**

Brooklyn, NY  
The Interruption\* Fair Trade experience brings a world of sustainable, organic and Fair Trade products to your customers. There's more value because every purchase generates a positive social impact, protects the environment and provides a healthy and nutritious choice.



**Booth #4588  
JOVY FRUIT ROLLS**

City Of Industry, CA  
Jovy Fruit Rolls are produced by Tri-unfo-Mex Inc. and are available in 10 delicious flavors. Jovy Fruit Rolls have an extended shelf-life and are produced in a facility free of peanuts, tree nuts, dairy, gluten, sulfites and soy.



**Booth #4616  
OOCL**

San Ramon, CA  
Every commodity requires a specific optimal climate inside the container to ensure that the best quality can be delivered to the end users. With OOCL's unique MyOOCLReefer service, we provide full visibility of the container temperature, relative humidity and location during the entire shipment. Benefits include auto e-notifications and 24/7 dedicated support team.



**Booth #4646  
QA SUPPLIES LLC**

Norfolk, VA  
The RTR-500 Series of Data Loggers make it possible to track the real-time temperatures and GPS location of food products during transport and storage. The system also monitors preset limits and alerts users via e-mail or text message if there are any problems. The mobile base station is equipped with GSM cell network capabilities, which creates unprecedented flexibility for monitoring and collecting data.



**Booth #4647  
DRISCOLL'S**

Watsonville, CA  
Driscoll's has been growing great berries on family farms for over 100 years. The art and science of developing better varieties using only natural breeding methods is a vital part of our company's heritage. Driscoll's mission is to continually delight berry consumers, and it's our promise to offer Only the Finest Berries™.



**Booth #4650  
COMPU-TECH INC.**

Wenatchee, WA  
Compu-Tech Inc. has served the agribusiness industry as a custom software provider since 1974. We offer fully integrated accounting and business software solutions.



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**Booth #4675  
RED BLOSSOM SALES**

Salinas, CA  
We deliver exceptional berries, season after season, enticing your customers with fresh, sweet, delicious berries, day after day. Come see us in Atlanta at Booth #4675.



**Booth #4721  
FOXJET, AN ITW COMPANY**

Saint Charles, MO  
Foxjet offers a wide range of inkjet and labeling solutions to meet the requirements of the Produce Traceability Initiative. At Foxjet we define reliability as up-time, low-maintenance and clean operation. All of our products are designed with features that decrease your total cost of ownership.



**Booth #4747  
RIVER RANCH FRESH FOODS**

Salinas, CA  
River Ranch Fresh Foods is showcasing Heritage Blend™ Salad Greens, its newest proprietary salad blend at the 2011 Fresh Summit. As a robust and distinctive alternative to traditional Spring Mix, River Ranch's Heritage Blend™ is a mixture of petite red and green lettuces with incredible taste, texture and appearance — plus a longer shelf-life and richer nutritional value than Spring Mix.



**Booth #4757  
NNZ INC.**

Lawrenceville, GA  
NNZ Inc. will be showcasing a new potato package that is taking Europe by storm — the stand up high-graphic microwaveable film bag. This bag is produced on a vertical form fill and seal machine, which can also make a pillow pack with additional light blocking film.



**Booth #4822  
DEVIK INTERNATIONAL**

White Plains, NY  
Devik International Inc. is a leading importer and distributor of Medjool, Halawi, Deglet Noor and Hayani dates from Israel. Please join us at Facebook.com/DevikDelilahDates.



**Booth #4847  
ARGENTINA BLUEBERRY**

Buenos Aires, Argentina  
The Argentinean Blueberry Committee will celebrate the launch of the fall blueberry route to North America in the Argentinean National Pavilion. Argentinean-grown blueberries are the first off-season blueberries to reach the U.S. market, with peak supplies available for the height of the holiday season and promotable volume through late December.



**Booth #4861  
BUDDY FRUITS**

Coral Gables, FL  
Three years ago, Ouhla Gourmet launched Buddy Fruits all natural fruit pouches, the first of its kind in the U.S., which are now a best-seller at many retailers across the USA. Buddy Fruits is unveiling the first all natural fruit+milk pouches and Fruit Bites. Both 100 percent natural and 100 percent fruit, with a drop of milk in the pouches.



**Booth #4916  
SUNCOAST PRODUCE INC.**

Calabasas, CA  
SunCoast Produce Inc. is a grower, shipper and distributor of fresh produce including avocados, citrus, melons, grapes and stone fruit. Majority of our volume sold is in citrus. We are the exclusive distributors of Sweet Blossom and California Appeal brands. We pride ourselves in being a family-operated business and strive to treat our customers as one of our own.



**Booth #4918  
CLEVERCO**

Washington, UT  
With the amazing antioxidants, and many other health benefits of the ruby red pomegranate, and an almost universal desire to de-seed them quickly, CleverCo brings the new, innovative 60 Second Pomegranate Deseeder to the table. With this simple new invention, you can deseed not only deseed one, but two pomegranates in less than 60 seconds.







PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

**Booth #4927**  
**BUNZL DISTRIBUTION**  
*Saint Louis, MO*



Bunzl Distribution provides food processors with a wide variety of direct/indirect packaging, extended shelf-life solutions, plant operating supplies, specialty products, sanitation, food safety, inbound logistics and supply chain solutions. Through our Cool-Pak division, we offer innovative, high quality packaging, labels and traceability solutions.

**Booth #4957**  
**VIRTUALONE**  
*Plant City, FL*



VirtualOne provides technology to solve safety and business challenges for the produce industry. Its patented FreshQC® solution integrates data collection, traceback and payroll capabilities to deliver superior results for the produce industry. FreshQC® ensures quality by tying consumer feedback to the harvest time, place and picker.

**Booth #4967**  
**IPPOLITO PRODUCE**  
*Salinas, CA*



Visit North America's largest Brussels sprouts grower/shipper, and let's talk about getting your company on a year-round Brussels sprouts program. We also offer a full line of vegetables, including artichokes, iceberg lettuce, broccoli, cauliflower, romaine hearts, green onions, leaf lettuces and specialty vegetables.

**Booth #5014**  
**CALIFRESH OF CALIFORNIA LLC**  
*Sanger, CA*



The highest quality fresh green garbanzos/chickpeas are available year-round from Califresh. Offered in 15-lb. bulk cartons and 10-oz clamshells, these delightful international delicacies are a must have in any Hispanic, Middle Eastern and high-end produce display.

**Booth #5015**  
**USA BOUQUET**  
*Doral, FL*



We are a national distributor of premium floral products with full service manufacturing and distribution facilities in FL, IL, CA, GA, TX and NJ. We service mass and grocery retailers, e-commerce and retail florists. We offer a dedicated management team, global sourcing, constant innovation and national distribution, all enabling us to be the solution for your floral needs.

**Booth #5027**  
**CLIFFORD PRODUCE**  
*Ruthven, ON, Canada*



Clifford Produce is a premium hot-house vegetable supplier to the North American market. Clifford offers year-round product availability of beef tomatoes, on-the-vine tomatoes, sweet bell peppers, seedless cucumbers, baby eggplant and other specialty products. Because we are consumer-focused and results-driven, we employ cutting-edge technology tools to meet cool chain and traceability requirements.

**Booth #5035**  
**VILLAGE FARMS**  
*Eatontown, NJ*



Village Farms leads the industry as a premier grower and marketer in North America of branded, finest quality, hydroponic greenhouse-grown produce. Our great tasting fresh vine-ripened tomatoes, bell peppers, and cucumber varieties are handpicked at the peak of flavor. At Village Farms we exceed customer expectations through our unparalleled commitment to quality produce.

**Booth #5101**  
**FORTE PRODUCT SOLUTIONS**  
*Kansas City, MO*



Forté's Front Case Merchandiser (FCM) is a superb fixture that fits right under produce cases and utilizes store spaces that are usually wasted. The FCM is great for cross-merchandising. Products placed on the FCM look more visually appealing, are easy to grab and are protected from direct contact with the store floor to reduce exposure to debris and prevent damage to merchandise.

**ALCO DESIGNS**  
*Gardena, CA*

Alco Designs will be showing their newest innovative design solutions for your fresh produce department. Our produce fixtures are all designed to improve product presentation, minimize inventories and maximize profits.



**Booth #5147**  
**NORTH BAY PRODUCE INC.**  
*Traverse City, MI*



North Bay Produce is a grower-owned marketing and distribution cooperative, growing a diverse range of fresh fruits and vegetables. This year, North Bay Produce's apple growers have an excellent crop of Michigan apples. North Bay Produce also grows and distributes asparagus, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, sugar snaps, snow peas along with other fruits and vegetables.

**Booth #5155**  
**WISHNATZKI FARMS**  
*Plant City, FL*



Wish Farms, the largest strawberry shipper/grower in Florida, is proud to continue its tradition of providing high quality produce since 1922. We represents more than 2,000 acres and ship approximately 3.5 million flats of strawberries, 6 million pounds of blueberries and 1 million packages of vegetables a year.

**Booth #5187**  
**WILCOX FRESH**  
*Stilwell, KS*



Wilcox Fresh is a Rexburg, ID-based grower shipper with a national network of co-pack partners in potatoes, onions and sweet potatoes. Our company is committed to sustainability, food safety, social responsibility and quality for our customers. We are also the leader in value-added potatoes featuring Potato Jazz.

**Booth #5167**  
**FAVORITA**  
*Road Town, Tortola, British Virgin Island*



Through subsidiaries, we have been promoting key lines focusing our commitment to excellence and sustainable development; venturing in domestic and international markets with production, industrialization and commercialization of products and services with the highest standards of quality and socio-environmental norms.

**Booth #5185**  
**C.R. ENGLAND GLOBAL TRANSPORTATION**  
*Salt Lake City, UT*



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**Booth #5331**  
**POLYMER LOGISTICS**  
*Riverside, CA*



Polymer Logistics, a leader in one-touch/retail-ready packaging, provides merchandising units including RPCs and foldable bins to clients worldwide. Display-ready from grower to retail means significant reduced costs while increased in-store availability.

**Booth #5353**  
**PECO PALLET**  
*Yonkers, NY*



PECO Pallet, a national leader in pallet pooling services, is now offering PECO's signature red wooden pallets that are heat-treated for use in Mexico.

**Booth #5359**  
**AMCO PRODUCE**  
*Leamington, ON, Canada*



Amco Produce is growing again! Recently, we completed a 5-acre greenhouse expansion and are currently constructing an additional 15 acres to better serve the produce industry. In addition to our staple products (TOVs, beef, bell pepper, cucumber), we offer a full range of specialty products, such as cocktail tomatoes, baby eggplant, mini bell peppers, chili peppers and banana peppers.



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# Produce In The Motor City



PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTBORN MARKET

Despite economic hardship, Detroit's thriving produce markets and diverse customer base keep its fruit and vegetable industry booming. **BY LISA WHITE**



**R**enowned Generals Ulysses S. Grant, George Custer and John J. Pershing were headquartered in Michigan and marched troops up and down the area where Detroit's Eastern Market is now located, proof that the city's history is aligned with its thriving produce industry.

"Detroit is unique, not only because we've always been a metropolis for motors, but also because our population loves food," says Philip Riggio, Sr., president and CEO of Aunt Mids Produce Co., a supplier in the Detroit Terminal Market. "We're a community of world-class markets, stores and restaurants that serve the needs of a population that fits all sectors of nationalities."

## The Markets

Detroit's retailers and restaurants take advantage of two fruit and vegetable markets in the area. Built in 1929, the Detroit Terminal Market houses eight vendors in two long buildings constructed in an 'H' format. Open weekdays from midnight to

6am, it is frequented by dozens of Michigan farmers who bring their produce to market to supermarkets, distributors, foodservice operations, farm stands and the general public.

The city's Eastern Market, open since 1891, is responsible for much of the fresh produce consumed in southeast Michigan. Open to the public on Saturdays, this six-block operation has more than 250 vendors and attracts as many as 40,000 people each week. Produce from Michigan, Ohio and Canada, in addition to Europe, the Middle East, Asia and South America, is sold at this market.

The Eastern Market Corporation's Economic Development Strategy is currently planning to revitalize the area, which is expected to bring even more attention to the Eastern Market. The goal is to reassert the Eastern Market's historic prominence relative to competing markets and attract more customers.

To accomplish this, the corporation plans to strengthen the role of Eastern Market as the hub of a complete local food system by developing retail, wholesale and processing businesses that are



PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTBORN MARKET

food-related. In addition, the area will serve as a center for urban agriculture by hosting both a model market garden and urban garden training classes and become a venue for improving education about food-related public health issues. Plans also are in the works to develop cutting-edge systems to convert waste streams generated in the district to provide energy to heat, cool and power facilities, and compost to increase food production yields.

### A Wholesale Perspective

The Detroit Terminal Market's tenants are the backbone of Michigan's wholesale industry and on the cusp of today's trends. "What makes the terminal market unique is that retailers and foodservice people can find what they're looking for," says Nate Stone, manager and chief operations officer of Ben B. Schwartz & Sons Inc., which has been in the terminal market since 1906. The full service wholesaler mainly services area retailers, in addition to foodservice operations.

The company's business is booming, mainly due to the trend in healthier eating and an eye on sustainability with local produce. "There has been much talk about people eating healthier, and they are," Stone says. "People are eating more fresh fruit and vegetables, and it's obvious by the big increase in our business."

Ben B. Schwartz & Sons is currently expanding its business, adding new cooler space to store additional produce items.

**"If retailers thought they could run a good business and make money in the inner city, there would be hundreds of stores there. When a city isn't at its best, it is a unique situation. The question is, how can a major retailer be successful in the inner city? No one has figured it out yet. We just don't have the volume of people living there that once was."**

— Nate Stone, Ben B. Schwartz & Sons Inc.

The challenges of doing business in the Detroit area are no different than in other regions. "There are a lot of moving parts in this business, the same as in any other major metropolitan area," Stone says. "Produce companies need a good facility for receiving and a well organized operation for distributing."

Detroit is a unique market with a diverse customer base that takes advantage of the produce terminal. However, it has been hit harder by the recession than many other areas. "We've had our share of economic hardships," says Jeff Abrash, owner and president of Andrews Brothers Inc., a wholesaler in the terminal market. "The area is not growing as rapidly as other areas. Essentially, we are selling to a shrinking population, although the metropolitan area still holds close to 5 million people."

Yet, there is tremendous opportunity in the city and surrounding areas. "It can be

difficult dealing with perishable products and finding the right customers to match it up with," Abrash says. "We're faced with rising costs, like everyone else. It can be difficult to keep expenses under control."

As a result, Andrews Brothers works on thin margins in order to sell produce at competitive prices. "When produce is reasonably priced and quality is good, it sells really well," Abrash says. "I'm always encouraged because there is so much supply from all around the world, and that's a huge positive."

Fortunately, the Detroit Produce Terminal's location and format make it easy for wholesalers and retail customers to do business. "This market is especially geared toward high-quality items," says Eddie Isayev, owner of Eddie's Produce Express, a wholesaler that does business in Detroit, New York and Canada. The company, which has been in the terminal market for a



PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTBORN MARKET

decade, specializes in tomatoes and peppers. "Currently, we are selling a lot of hothouse items from Canada, such as tomatoes, peppers and mini cucumbers," Isayev adds. "Our customers also are looking for local items."

The bevy of products in the Detroit Terminal Market enables it to service a variety of ethnic communities in the area. "What is unique about the region is its ethnic diversity," Aunt Mids' Riggio says. "We try to supplement traditional produce with items for our Italian, Middle Eastern, Polish, Albanian and Jewish clientele."

Last August, Aunt Mids completed a second expansion at its processing facility. A potato room with a separate filtering system and cooler were added, in addition to a processing area for fruits and vegetables. "We built seven more loading docks to the back of the building, as well," Riggio says. "The goal is to not just comply with FDA, OSHA and HACCP regulations, but exceed them with this new project."

The company, which has been in business since 1948, specializes in all types of produce and cut fruit. "It has been difficult to keep margins up in lieu of the economy in the last three to five years," Riggio says. "Today, it's more about finding the right niche for customers who are looking for high quality items at value prices."

### A Retail Perspective

There has been much criticism in recent

years about the lack of inner-city stores in Detroit. "The lack of inner city stores is a strong criticism, and deservedly so," Riggio says. "There needs to be agreement to initiate a program that can bring the city back. We need to revitalize underdeveloped and decaying neighborhoods before there can be store development within Detroit."

The city is lacking in large chains as well as fruit markets, which can further expand the produce opportunities. "There are prac-

tically no independent stores in the city and most grocery stores are family-owned," Riggio says. "Whole Foods has been in discussions with the city council to build a store in downtown Detroit, and Meijer is looking at adding a store at our Michigan State Fairgrounds. These chains would bring a lot of development to the city."

Many say the lack of stores in the city is strictly due to economics. "If retailers thought they could run a good business and

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make money in the inner city, there would be hundreds of stores there,” Stone of Ben B. Schwartz says. “When a city isn’t at its best, it is a unique situation. The question is, how can a major retailer be successful in the inner city? No one has figured it out yet. We just don’t have the volume of people living there that once was.”

Yet, there are a number of successful independent specialty markets in this region. Vince & Joe’s Gourmet Markets, with

two locations in Clinton and Shelby Townships, sell fresh and organic fruits and vegetables, including imported varieties. “In terms of trends, there seems to be more of an interest in organic produce over the past 10 years,” says general manager Vince Sciarrino. “People are concerned about their health, and this has spurred the popularity of these items.”

Vince & Joe’s has seen an increase in pre-cut produce sales, as well. “This

**“What we’re tagging at 4am is hitting our stores the same day by 10am. It’s not sitting on the truck for two days.”**

— *Bryan Bandyk, Westborn Market*

includes pre-washed, pre-misted Romaine,” Sciarrino says. “There is less waste and more convenience with these items.”

### A Competitive Edge

Michigan benefits from its location, which affords it a bounty of produce in the summer. “Over the last 20 years, the produce terminal has become a more popular place for growers and packers,” Sciarrino recognizes. “Produce distributors in our terminal generally bring in only what they can sell on consignment, so it becomes a matter of supply and demand.”

This helps control prices, but also can mean supply is sometimes tight. The benefit is that there is not an overabundance of products, so waste is negligible. “With the price of fuel today, it now can cost as much to ship a case of certain products than the product is worth,” Sciarrino explains. “This means buying local is more advantageous.”

Because there are fewer farmers than 20 years ago, due to the construction boom of the 90s where farmers sold their properties at record prices, the Detroit region has been inundated with greenhouse-grown produce from Canada. “This has helped us circumvent the Michigan weather,” Sciarrino says. “Canada has tens of thousands of acres of greenhouses that provide tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers year-round.”

Many independent retailers say the Detroit Terminal Market provides a competitive edge. “With wholesalers under one roof bringing great product into the terminal, it allows our buyers to hand-select produce on a daily basis,” says Bryan Bandyk, director of marketing for Westborn Market, a Detroit-area retailer with three stores located in Livonia, Berkley and Dearborn. Produce is 30 percent of its business. “What we’re tagging at 4am is hitting our stores the same day by 10am. It’s not sitting on the truck for two days.”

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Westborn Market's focus has been to support local growers, farmers and products, due to increased customer demand for these products. "Our customer base is extremely passionate about that," Bandyk asserts. "I just finished hosting a Meet Michigan event for two days in Livonia with 40 Michigan-based companies. The turnout was tremendous. The passion our customers have for supporting local businesses may be elevated compared to other areas outside of southeast Michigan."

### Facing Challenges

Bandyk is still seeing a big push for Michigan strawberries and corn. The challenge of doing business in the area continues to be produce availability. "Once you have these issues, then you are dealing with cost factors," Bandyk says. "The produce industry is one of the few where when the quality goes down, the pricing goes up. As a retailer, this can be challenging."

With lettuce fields out West contending with bad weather conditions and disease, this year has been particularly rough. "Earlier this year, farmers couldn't plant due to the volume of rain, and then we went into drought conditions," Bandyk says. "This summer, 70 percent of the country was trapped in 100-degree weather."

With the economy, even high-end retailers like Westborn Market have been forced to tweak their business model to respond to price-sensitive consumers. "The competition is more focused on price point than quality, and it's been a battle," Bandyk says.

Where price is not as much of a factor is in the organic produce segment. "The education of consumers has helped build the organic category and has helped

retailers market these products," acknowledges Bandyk.

Despite its challenges, Detroit's produce industry continues on the upswing due to an abundance of local produce and an influx of independent markets in the surrounding areas. "Any commodity is challenging, but for those dependent on nature, it's a continuing struggle," Bandyk says. "Still, produce is a big part of our business model. It's who we are." **pb**

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# Five Keys To Maximizing Pear Promotions

With extra attention and a smart ripening program, pears are poised to take on the produce department. **BY BOB JOHNSON**



PHOTO COURTESY OF PEAR BUREAU NORTHWEST

Studies have shown that a conditioning program can lead to a 16 percent increase in pear sales.

**D**espite their enticing flavor, long shelf-life and year-round availability, pears have, so far, enjoyed only modest growth in recent years. “Pears have seen a little bit of an uptick, but nothing dramatic,” admits Bob Mast, vice president of marketing at Columbia Marketing International Corp. (CMI), based in Wenatchee, WA. “Pears are like apricots in that most of the consumers are older. We’re trying to appeal to the younger generation.”

The pear industry, however, has recently taken steps that could increase consumer demand. Retailers, too, can help maximize pear sales by ensuring the following situations are met:

## 1. Have Ripe Pears

Nothing has the potential to expand the demand for pears more than the recent emergence of ripe and ready-to-eat pear programs. “Ripe pears are still ‘new’ for many consumers and have the potential to change the category,” asserts Suzanne Wolter, director of marketing at Rainier Fruit Co., in Selah, WA. “Consumers

are looking for flavor, and conditioned D’Anjou pears are the perfect fit. A perfectly ripe D’Anjou pear is the juiciest, sweetest pear eating experience anyone will have. Retailers executing a ripe pear program have more than doubled their sales.”

The potential impact of a ripe pear program on sales for the entire category is nothing short of staggering. “A conditioning program takes the guesswork out for the consumer,” explains Kevin Moffitt, president of the Milwaukie, OR-based Pear Bureau Northwest (PBN). “This conditioning can be done at the store warehouse level, or many of our shippers condition pears. It’s a great way to increase sales. We did a third-party study that showed a 16 percent increase in sales.”

That figure, while robust, is in line with estimates from other pear industry sources. Loren Queen, marketing and communications manager at Domex Superfresh Growers, in Yakima, WA, encourages retailers to take advantage of its conditioned pear program. “Consumers can pick up a pear and eat it that day or in the next two days,” he notes. “There is

a 17 percent increase in sales when it is done well. You have to merchandise it with signage that says you have ripe, ready-to-eat pears. Once the consumers are educated, your turnover picks up quite a bit.”

Some in the industry believe a ripe pear program can increase the category by an even more robust 20 percent, if it is done well. “Ripened pears can create a lift in a retailer’s pear category of 20 percent or more within four to six weeks of launching the initiative,” reports Roger Pepperl, marketing director at Stemilt Growers LLC, in Wenatchee, WA. “Customers will love it.”

But it takes more than just ordering pre-ripened pears to make the program work. “One of the biggest challenges is communicating to consumers the pears are ripe,” says Wolter. “A combination of ads, signage, demos and personnel training is important to a successful program.”

Because the pears are ripe, they must not be piled too deep in the display. “Don’t have deep displays; have two or three pears deep at most,” warns Mac Riggan, vice president of marketing



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**“A conditioning program takes the guesswork out for the consumer. This conditioning can be done at the store warehouse level, or many of our shippers condition pears. It’s a great way to increase sales. We did a third-party study that showed a 16 percent increase in sales.”**

— Kevin Moffitt, Pear Bureau Northwest

at Chelan Fresh Marketing, in Chelan, WA.

It may make sense to go with display boxes specifically designed to hold ripe pears. “Ripe pears should not be stacked more than one or two high,” agrees Pepperl. “Ideally, if space allows, the pears should be displayed in the Euro boxes to reduce handling. However, several retailers have executed successful programs with bulk displays by educating store personnel on handling.”

Once the ripe pear program is put in place, it is important to always have ripe pears available. “Retailers need to institute and maintain a consistent ripe pear display at all stores to drive consumer confidence, taste expectations and repeat purchase behavior,” emphasizes Rainier’s Wolter. “It’s also important to stick to a conditioned program. Switching back and forth only confuses customers. Displaying conditioned with non-conditioned fruit will sabotage retail efforts of building a successful program. Emphasizing the correct procedures at store level is essential to capitalize on maximum benefits of the program.”

It is complicated and takes time, but a well-managed ripe pear program pays great

benefits. “The avocado category has enacted a conditioning program in the past, and it worked well; it drives repeat sales,” says Riggan. “We’ve been doing it for two years now and our sales velocity has increased. Studies have shown that shrink actually goes down because the velocity goes up.”

**2. Grab Their Attention**

Few people come to the store looking to buy pears, but they can be persuaded if retailers grab their attention. “Pears aren’t usually an item people have on their grocery list; they aren’t a staple like apples,” acknowledges CMI’s Mast.

Sampling can be an effective way of drawing consumer attention to the pears. “In our direct sales, we offer tasting samples,” says Paul Estabrook, owner of Virginia Gold Orchard, an Asian pear grower, in Natural Bridge, VA. “We cut our Asian pears into slices and let the customers taste them. It works well; we have a lot of direct sales.”

The sampling program at Virginia Gold Orchards is so effective that the company runs out of pears before the end of the year, and an

important reason is that care is taken to make sure the display of samples looks good. “You have to have an attractive presentation for your samples,” Estabrook adds.

One way to draw attention to pears is to put them in a prominent place in the produce department. “Pears are an impulse item. If you put a higher impulse item such as pears at the front of the department you can increase sales,” says Moffitt of PBN. “The pears from the Northwest have many different colors and shapes, so they make a vibrant display. It is important to create a pear department by displaying all of the varieties together, especially in the fall and winter when all the varieties are available. We have eight to 10 varieties available from September to January or February.”

Multiple pear varieties can make for an impressive, colorful and attention-grabbing display. “The most important factor to consider is having multiple varieties, and having a good representation of the category,” says Chris Zanobini, executive director of the Sacramento-based California Pear Advisory Board (CPAB).

Tote bags can be a convenient eye-catching way to merchandise pears. Steve Reisenauer, sales manager at Sage Fruit Co. LLC, in Yakima, WA, remarks, “You can get a little more inventive using tote bags to encourage pear sales. Our apple tote bags are becoming more widely used. We have started to use pear tote bags with our retailers.”

The bottom line is that devoting enough prime space to pears will increase pear sales. “Space and location are the main components,” recognizes Riggan of Chelan Fresh, “If you can catch people when the store is filled with good looking fruit that’s ready to eat and prices are right, you’ll increase sales.”

**3. Pear With Apples**

Pears go well with apples in a display, and pairing them this way increases sales of both fruits. “One critical thing we’re suggesting to retailers is to merchandise pears together with apples,” suggests Domex’s Queen. “They sell each other well. When pears and apples are together there’s a 7.5 percent incremental volume increase compared to when they are displayed separately.”

One creative way of displaying pears and apples together is to use the pears to separate varieties of apples that look alike. “You can use your pears as color breaks between apple varieties that are the same color,” adds Queen.

Another advantage of this mutual display is that it encourages giving pears as much attention as apples. According to Reisenauer,



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**“One critical thing we’re suggesting to retailers is to merchandise pears together with apples. They sell each other well. When pears and apples are together there’s a 7.5 percent incremental volume increase compared to when they are displayed separately.”**

— Loren Queen, Domex Superfresh Growers

“Retailers have to look at pears the same way they do apples. Put up good displays, put them at the forefront of the department, and use POP materials. Give pears the same attention you do apples and you’ll sell more pears.”

#### 4. Pear Pairings

There are more ways to use pears than meets the eye — or the lunch box. “We developed a ‘pick a pear’ secondary display unit that has a pear, cheese and wine pairing wheel. We also developed a tote bag with take home information for the consumer,” describes Mast.

Other producers have also picked up on the theme of increasing pear sales by educating consumers about the finer uses of pears. “We are doing a ‘Pairings’ section on our Web page, which shows you how to match up wine and cheese with your fruit in an interactive tool,” says Pepperl of Stemilt. “It’s very fun and printable. It will be accessible with a QR code in the store on POS through a mobile site.”

Sometimes, a secondary display can help deliver the message about uses of pears. “We have also seen great success at retail by building secondary display locations within the produce department,” says Bruce Turner, national sales representative for Diamond Fruit Growers Inc., in Hood River, OR. “Our ‘Pear the Taste’ free-standing display bins and tote bags were proven to increase both incremental sales and average ring. Our campaign to merchandise the Diamond Starr Growers’ 2011-2012 pear crop promotes healthful eating and sports activities. The demand from our retail customers for Oneonta’s bins and totes for back-to-school and new crop promotions is pretty exciting.”

#### 5. The Promotable Pear

There are many different times that lend themselves to promoting pears, and none is better than the end of summer. “Bagged pears have become a good value during parts of the year including back-to-school,” Pepperl says. “It offers a value proposition for pears. Some of the pears that Stemilt is promoting are Stark

Crimson, Concorde, Comice, Seckel, Bosc, Asian, Red D’Anjou and, of course, Bartletts and D’Anjou.”

Bartlett and Red Bartlett are promotable from September to December, D’Anjou and Red D’Anjou from October to June, Bosc from October to March and Comice from October to February.

“Great eating pears from the Pacific Northwest are usually available from late August through the end of June,” reports Turner. “Bartletts and Red Bartletts lead off the new crop season with a terrific eating pear. September adds in the merchandising opportunities when the Bosc, D’Anjou, Red D’Anjou and Comice become available. The Forelle and Seckel pears represent some of the very classic flavors and are a sure hit in certain markets.”

There is an even longer season during which some varieties of pears are available in promotable volumes. “Each variety has its own season and peak, and the Northwest pear industry’s fantastic storage infrastructure has extended the Northwest Pear season to ensure there will be promotable volumes at least nine to 10 months per year,” Turner says.

The best price range for moving pears in volume is “between \$1.05 and \$1.29 per pound,” according to Queen.

The Perishables Group did a 2009 survey on pear variety priority for the Pear Bureau Northwest and found that two varieties drive the category. “Maximizing sales of D’Anjou and Bartlett has a direct positive correlation to category performance,” reports Rainier’s Wolter.

These two dominant varieties are both available for long seasons. “Bartletts are the variety many of us think of as the ‘classic’ green pear,” says Diamond’s Turner. “It turns a golden yellow when ready to eat and can be eaten fresh or used in cooking and canning. Anjous are available in the greatest volume and with the longest season. This pear has excellent storage and shelf-life, and can be displayed from September through June with minimal shrink. With some backroom management to ensure the ripening process has been triggered,



PHOTO COURTESY OF ONEONTA STARR RANCH GROWERS

**Secondary displays and bins have proven very successful for Diamond Starr Growers.**

satisfied consumers will return to the store for repeat sales every week.”

There are other varieties that bring unique flavors to the category. “Bosc is a dense, crunchy pear with intense flavor. Having a russeted pear in the display is important to ensure a pear for every palate is on the shelf! Red Bartlett and Red D’Anjou provide a similar eating experience as their green counterparts, and the color break in the display offers a terrific eye appeal on the shelf,” Turner says.

The beginning of the major pear harvest season in late summer is a logical time to begin a series of pear promotions. “We believe all retailers should jump on the category starting in September,” says Stemilt’s Pepperl. “We need to run a ‘Pear Festival’ ad, which has multiple varieties with four to six SKUs. The largest movers will always be Bartletts and D’Anjous but the other pears create interest and more shopper activity in the section. You will also sell great numbers of other pears at this time, too. Customers need promotion to encourage shoppers to experiment. We think a ‘Pear Festival’ needs to be run in September, October, November, December and January. This creates an instant healthy category.” **pb**

# Seeing Leafy Greens Grow

Health-conscious consumers and convenient options for time-starved consumers are growing the category. **BY PAULA HENDRICKSON**



Leafy greens varieties include such items as Romaine, spinach, cabbage, chard and many more.

Perhaps one stumbling block when it comes to marketing leafy greens is that some retailers aren't quite sure which leafy vegetables fall into the category. Is red cabbage considered a leafy green? What about radicchio?

"There is absolutely a defined list," says Scott Horsfall, CEO of the Sacramento-based California Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement (LGMA), an organization that certifies that California-based growers adhere to strict food safety guidelines. "Our list includes all of the different lettuce varieties, from Romaine to green leaf and red leaf — not all of the products are green. It's all of the lettuce varieties: spinach, specific cabbage varieties, chard, arugula and then, of course, 'spring mix,' a category unto itself that can include a whole host of baby greens," Horsfall continues. "Strangely enough, radicchio is not included on the list, and I'm not really sure why."

Horsfall says the LGMA doesn't currently include leafy herbs like cilantro and parsley under its leafy greens banner, but hasn't ruled out the possibility of adding those in the future.

Radicchio is on the Leafy Greens Council's "G List," which encompasses most of the LGMA's list, and also includes dandelion greens, broccoli, rapini and watercress, among other vegetables. Both organizations consider red cabbage to be a leafy green. Kale, mustard greens, turnip greens, collard greens and bok

choy are other products that fall under the leafy greens label.

## A Changing Market

Perhaps the most notable change to hit the leafy greens category over the years has been the addition of packaged greens that are either wrapped in plastic or washed, chopped (or shredded) and bagged for immediate use. "Wrapped cabbage, 10 years ago, was on its way to cannibalizing the market," acknowledges Tim Greene, director of marketing and farming at Boone, NC-based Hollar & Greene Produce Co. Inc., a grower that specializes in several varieties of cabbage. He says economic issues caused many grocery chains to stop stocking wrapped cabbage.

"In the late '90s and early turn of the 21st Century, the biggest demand was for bags of leafy greens," says Steve Jarzombek, vice president of perishables merchandising at Roundy's Supermarkets Inc., a Milwaukee, WI, retailer that operates 154 stores in Wisconsin and Minnesota. "However, in the past few years the trend has turned to customers wanting fresh greens and dark greens, as they better understand the nutritional values of fresh greens."

The story might differ a bit when it comes to cabbage. "The only leafy green we harvest is cabbage," says Dave Miedema, president of E. Miedema & Sons Inc., headquartered in Byron Center, MI. "Our sales have been cut one-third

or larger due to consumer demand for bagged, shredded cabbage instead of purchasing an unpacked head of cabbage," Miedema reports.

On a national average, bulk greens account for about 65-70 percent of fresh greens sales, with bagged greens making up the remaining 30-35 percent, according to Bruce Bolton, retail sales manager at C.H. Robinson Worldwide Inc., in Eden Prairie, MN. "It varies slightly depending on the type of green," Bolton says. "For example, bagged collard greens are about 45 percent of national sales, followed by kale." C.H. Robinson markets a variety of fresh, packaged greens under the Glory Foods label and offers proprietary and private label greens, too.

Wrapped cabbage and packaged greens allow growers space to print recipes or include cross-promotional offers and information, and offer consumers a more convenient alternative to bulk greens, but Greene notes that unpackaged cabbage has two distinct advantages: "Naked" cabbage can be re-trimmed to reveal the fresher leaves below if it's been out too long, and unwrapped produce can be sold at a lower cost.

Frank Ratto, vice president of marketing at Ratto Bros. Inc., in Modesto, CA, acknowledges that packaged greens have cannibalized some of the category's market share. He says Ratto Bros. doesn't package any of its lettuces, cabbages or greens, yet has still seen an increase in sales. "Absolutely, there is a convenience

**“The health benefits have spurred interest from new customers for leafy greens. However, taste is still critical for future sales. Fortunately, cooking shows and publications are expounding the virtues of both health and taste, which stimulates usage and recurring sales.”**

— Frank Ratto, Ratto Bros. Inc.

factor with a packaged product that is attractive to some consumers,” Ratto says. “Our sales on bunched greens have increased each year, and I attribute this to the increased awareness of the health benefits of dark leafy vegetables and the quality that we produce.”

### A Growing Demographic

Considering the vast number of vegetables that fall into the category — and how nutritious most of them are — it’s almost surprising what little fanfare leafy greens seem to get in a typical produce department.

Bagged salads took off due to the sheer convenience of ready-to-eat salads, and pre-washed spinach has been a boon to home cooks tired of repeatedly washing and rinsing spinach leaves to eliminate any grit. While other greens have been slower to catch consumer interest, they are increasing in popularity. “Over the past few years, we have seen changes in not only the consumption of greens, but the users of greens,” reports Ashley Rawl, director of sales and marketing for Walter P. Rawl & Sons Inc., in Pelion, SC.

Some types of greens are associated with certain cultures. Collard, mustard and turnip greens are often thought of as Southern comfort foods and have a long history in African American cuisine. Green cabbage is considered a staple in the British Isles. And bok choy is common to many Asian cultures. “Many ethnic groups have traditionally enjoyed the taste and health benefits of greens,” Ratto says. “As an Italian American, our family has enjoyed chards in several traditional dishes.”

As a child, Frank Schuster, president of Val Verde Vegetable Co. Inc., headquartered in McAllen, TX, was exposed to a wide variety of greens. “My dad grew spinach, collards and kohlrabi back when only a few European ethnic groups knew what kohlrabi was,” he recalls. “My greens diet was expanded when I got married, as my wife grew up in a typical Southern kitchen with turnip greens and cornbread as regular items on the dinner table.”

Roughly 10 years ago, Val Verde began packing and marketing a wide assortment of

greens, including kohlrabi. “I’ve seen good growth over those years in the whole category,” Schuster says. “But consumption has not been limited to the old demographics. A more healthful diet is a conscious choice for more people. This health kick has widened consumption beyond the typical demographic.”

“Going back a decade or two,” Bolton of C.H. Robinson says, “there wasn’t a Food Network, social media, or the abundance of cookbooks on specific topics like leafy greens. Today’s world affords us the opportunity to pick a single ingredient and make a meal

around it. On top of that, the healthy lifestyle movement has caused retailers to change the way they stock their shelves and provide more options. Leafy greens aren’t just for salads anymore.”

### Turning Challenges Into Opportunities

“Fifty to 100 years ago, parents understood the importance of nutritional and economical food. What the parents ate is what the family ate. Now — beginning 10 to 20 years ago — we have digressed to our poorest eating habits of anytime in history,” Greene of Hollar & Greene says.

However, there is hope. “Whereas some consumers eat greens for taste alone, others are noticing their positive nutritional and the benefits of adding them to their daily diets,” Rawl says.

Providing consumers with easy access to nutritional information and recipes can only help boost the consumption of leafy greens. “Educate or offer information to consumers on how to easily prep, cook or process leafy

## SPREADING THE WORD

Frank Schuster, president of Val Verde Vegetable Co. Inc., headquartered in McAllen, TX, suggests that anyone who doubts the increased interest of greens do a quick Internet search for kale chips. Over 4.5 million hits will come up. “There is Martha Stewart’s recipe available, or even a YouTube version of Gwyneth Paltrow whipping up some kale chips,” he says. One thing many of the sites have in common is that they extol the nutritional benefits of kale. “Humble kale is driving the category,” he adds.

The Internet and the popularity of cooking shows are tempting consumers with recipes they want to try. “It’s a wider and faster information flow than we ever dreamed of 10 years ago,” Schuster says. “The old limitations on consumption patterns is out the window.”

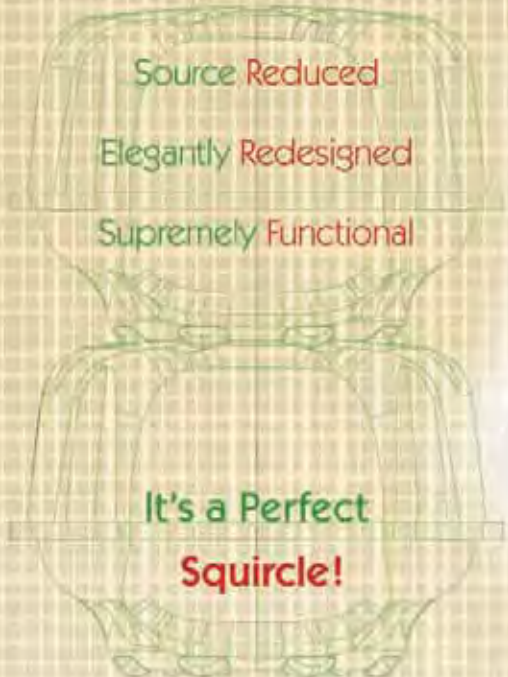
Val Verde and other growers are capitalizing on new media to entice consumers to eat more greens. Some companies are expanding existing Web sites, while others are busy building a social media presence on Facebook and Twitter.

“With this happening, we need to make sure we have the information they are looking for on social media sites such as Facebook and YouTube,” Bruce Bolton, retail sales manager at C.H. Robinson Worldwide Inc., based in Eden Prairie, MN, recognizes. At the same time, we’re working with retailers to help them create cooking greens sections so consumers have a direct path to what they’re looking for, instead of searching amongst the salad greens.”

“When we launched our new Web site we made sure to include a variety of recipes including juicing, salads, entrees, side dishes, etcetera,” says Ashley Rawl, director of sales and marketing for Walter P. Rawl & Sons Inc., in Pelion, SC. “Through our Facebook page our customers can share their recipes and have fun seeing our new daily tidbits.”

Dave Miedema, president of E. Miedema & Sons Inc., headquartered in Byron Center, MI, echoes Rawl’s comment, noting how growers can use Web sites and social media to educate consumers about greens and dispel common misconceptions people may have, such as thinking cabbage is a “gassy” food, or that collard, mustard and turnip greens are downscale menu items. Such long held misconceptions can be difficult to break.

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greens; which part of the plant is best for you; or proper storage in order to preserve freshness,” Miedema suggests. That kind of information can be distributed online, in-store and even via packaging.

“We have attractive new packaging for our processed greens that calls out variations of uses and cooking methods, without alienating the traditional user,” Rawl says.

Without packaging on which to print recipes, unwrapped greens are at a slight disadvantage. “The challenge in merchandising the greens is that they are typically under a misting system,” Roundy’s Jarzombek says. “Retailers definitely could do a little better in this area. However, we use recipe cards and pamphlets when we can to call out differences in the products and show our customers how they can use each product. We also utilize demonstrations and tastings.”

Add pricing promotions to the recipes and nutritional facts and consumers will take notice. Ratto recognizes, “Ads are extremely helpful. Retailers need to promote the health benefits and use cross-marketing like including vegetables with other foods and wines to create a dining experience.”

C.H. Robinson’s Bolton agrees with the idea of cross-promoting greens with other products to give shoppers convenient meal solutions. He also suggests retailers take a closer look at their own merchandising plans. “For example, retailers might be able to increase their sales by increasing the number of advertisements they place at key times of the year,” he notes. “A majority of produce purchases are impulse, so designing appealing signage to grab customers’ eyes will drive additional spending.”

Another challenge in selling greens stems from occasional recalls, like August’s voluntary recall of one brand of bagged organic baby spinach after a single bag tested positive for *Listeria monocytogenes*. It can take time to regain consumer trust after a recall, even when the recall is done proactively and no illnesses were reported, as seems to be the case of that recent recall.

“We try to be a source of factual information if there is a problem — and knock on wood — we haven’t had a big problem in a long time,” says LGMA’s Horsfall. “But I believe the way we win back consumer confidence is just by not having problems; by controlling the issue; by not having recalls and not having outbreaks. And the only way we can do that is by maintaining a really vigilant level of food safety practices in the industry and down the distribution line.”

Stringent food safety guidelines keep



## **“We think the food safety story in the industry over the past five years since we started the LGMA is really strong, and that’s the message we want to get out so buyers and their customers can be confident in the safety and quality of the leafy greens they are buying,”**

— Scott Horsfall, Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement

consumers safe, but knowing those guidelines are in place and can catch potential problems before they happen help assure consumers that they’re buying safe produce. “We think the food safety story in the industry over the past five years since we started the LGMA is really strong, and that’s the message we want to get out so buyers and their customers can be confident in the safety and quality of the leafy greens they are buying,” Horsfall says.

### **The Importance Of Packaging, Merchandising And Cooling**

Shoppers might not fully understand how what happens in the field and how the produce is handled and stored impacts the safety and quality of the lettuce, kale or cabbage they’re

buying, but they certainly can tell when greens — packaged or not — are past their prime.

“I think the industry is certainly on the cutting edge of packaging and shipping technology,” notes Horsfall. “Growers can deliver product to the buyers, to the retailers or to restaurants that is at the peak of its quality and freshness.”

Packaged greens tend to do fine in a produce cooler, but unwrapped greens of all types are often set in wet racks. While the dewy look is appealing to buyers, too much water can pose a problem. “It’s best to merchandise leafy greens under refrigeration, utilizing a good misting system,” Roundy’s Jarzombek advises. “Misting keeps leafy greens fresh.” He notes that at Roundy’s they replenish the mois-

ture of greens by pre-crisping them. “If you don’t pre-crisp and merchandise greens under refrigeration, you take life away from greens and destabilize the product for the customer. This merchandising does limit exposure some, and may take away from some incremental sales, but we believe it is the right thing to do.”

Horsfall maintains temperature and cold-chain integrity are critical to keeping greens at peak freshness. “When you walk into a supermarket you’ll sometimes see greens either in bags or not, but they’ve been put into a display and the cold-chain integrity isn’t being kept,” he says. “Greens have a limited shelf-life, so obviously the quality is going to be better if the cold chain is kept intact from the moment it’s shipped through to when the consumer takes it home.”

Technical advances and tough food safety guidelines are but two factors in leafy greens sales. Consumer education is key, too. As more consumers begin to differentiate among the various types of leafy greens and learn how to use them, industry players believe sales will soar. “This is an exciting time to be in the greens business,” Schuster says. “I believe we are on the cusp of an explosion in the consumption of greens.” **pb**



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# Consumer Demand For Pistachios Surges

This heart-healthy nut belongs in produce departments year-round. **BY SUSAN FEINBERG**



PHOTO COURTESY OF SETTON INTERNATIONAL FOODS INC.

Freestanding cardboard bins, such as those offered by Setton International, make great prominent secondary displays.

**W**ith the surge of interest in fitness and nutrition, consumer demand for pistachios is steadily increasing. A recent flurry of well publicized health studies and articles are getting the message out that pistachios are not only delicious, but good for you, too. Consumers are realizing that this heart-healthy snack, packed with nutrition, vitamins, fiber and antioxidants, is a key to good health, weight loss and anti-aging.

## Heart-Healthy Benefits

The pistachio industry recently got a big boost from a study at the Harvard School of Public Health, which touted the health and weight loss benefits of pistachios and other nuts. The industry is beginning to capitalize on the positive publicity. “The Harvard study is just one of many studies that are coming out,” says Judy Hirigoyen, director of global marketing at American Pistachio Growers, formerly the Western Pistachio Association, based in Visalia, CA. “There’s an outpouring of nutritional information all over the world about the nutritional benefits of pistachios. People are learning that pistachios are one of the lowest fat nuts and have all of the vital

benefits of tree nuts and plant-based protein. I think this will have a tremendous impact on the pistachio industry.”

American Pistachio Growers is launching a marketing campaign called the “Power of Pistachios,” which was mentioned in a recent story in *USA Today*. “Now that pistachios are the official snack of Miss California and the U.S. men’s and women’s water polo teams, we’ll be using these individuals to tell people around the world about the nutrition and health benefits of pistachios, which promote weight loss, help fight diabetes and cardiovascular disease, and have an antioxidant capacity,” explains Hirigoyen.

Avenal, CA-based Keenan Farms Inc. sees the surging public interest in the health benefits of pistachios as a unique marketing opportunity. “This is great news, and more news about the health benefits of pistachios is on the way to consumers,” says Teresa Keenan, marketing manager. “There are several newly published university studies proving that pistachios are much more than just delicious. These nuts are shown to stabilize blood sugar levels in type 2 diabetes patients and lower the risk of heart disease. We believe that promoting pistachios with this healthy message is a great opportunity to increase pistachios sales.”

## Not Just A Holiday Nut

Typically, pistachio sales peak in the winter months. These nuts are popular during football and basketball seasons, and are prized by Super Bowl fans. At holiday parties, pistachios are a staple. But Los Angeles, CA-based Paramount Farms is challenging the perception that pistachios are just a holiday nut.

The company ran the \$6 million “Get Cracking” advertising campaign for Paramount Farms’ Wonderful Pistachio brand in May and June. This campaign had been used during the previous holiday season in November and December, and the results have been outstanding. “Summers used to be a dead time for the company’s pistachio sales, but we’re now up 80 percent in volume from a year ago,” says Marc Seguin, senior director of marketing for Roll International. “We’ve demonstrated that there is no off-season for pistachios.”

## Boosting Pistachios Sales

The key to driving pistachio sales? According to Seguin, it’s about getting displays in stores and putting them in the right places. “You need to have ‘points of interruption’ and heart-stopping displays throughout the store,” he says. “We sell retailers pre-packed

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**“Cross-merchandise pistachios next to complementary items, for example, next to the soda or beer sections. Offer hotter promotional discounts during specific times of the year in order to prompt multiple purchases. Consider a ‘buy-two-get-one-free’ promotion during the Super Bowl.”**

— Laura Blackwell, Aurora Products

Wonderful Pistachio bins. They come ready to go. You just drop them on the floor, cut the tape, put a sign on it, and they’re ready to sell. We put high-impact graphics on the bins so when consumers walk through the store, they are almost impossible to miss.”

Hirigoyen of American Pistachio Growers recommends that retailers merchandise pistachios prominently in produce departments. “When people start thinking of pistachios as something sold in the produce department, they’ll start viewing the nut as a source of nutritional value,” she says. “A lot of U.S. retailers are doing that now, and in Europe, they’re starting to do it, too.”

Pistachios are often an impulse purchase and sell best when merchandised with secondary displays. “Displays should be located in high traffic areas within the produce department, such as next to the packaged salads or bananas,” says Laura Blackwell, national marketing manager at Aurora Products, based in Stratford, CT. “Cross-merchandise pistachios next to complementary items, for example, next to the soda or beer sections. Offer hotter promotional discounts during specific times of the year in order to prompt multiple purchases. Consider a ‘buy-two-get-one-free’ promotion during the Super Bowl.” Another way to drive

pistachio sales, says Blackwell, is to convey the nut’s health benefits on packaging and displays, which differentiate it from traditional snack foods.

Abingdon, VA-based K-VA-T stores promote pistachios by giving consumers options to choose from. “In order to really capitalize on pistachios, you need to stock more than one or two varieties at a time, such as roasted and salted, or roasted and salted-shelled,” says Keith Cox, produce buyer. “A lot of consumers want ready-to-eat pistachios, and they don’t want to do the cracking. The salt and pepper flavored pistachio is a really good item for us.”

The key thing, Cox believes, is to make the product more visible to the consumer with a bin display or a winged display off an island table in the produce department. “This gives the product better exposure,” he says. “Customers buy what they see. If the product looks good and is well displayed, they’ll buy it. You have to do something other than just shelf stock.”

Setton International Foods Inc., based in Commack, NY, produces freestanding cardboard bins for pistachios in the produce department. “When the product is sold out, the bin gets thrown away,” says Mia Cohen, chief operating officer. “The cardboard is recyclable. That’s better than a more permanent fixture. It allows retailers to really put the pistachios in prominent places in the produce department. And on the bin, there are eye-catching graphics of our farm that illustrate to the consumer that this is a heart-healthy product. That works really well for us.”

The company also creates clear produce tubs, allowing consumers to see the product. The tubs feature a simple photo of Setton Farm, reinforcing the message that this product comes straight from the farm. “The produce tubs are meant to look like stores pack their own product, without the stores having to do that,” Cohen explains. “We offer them in trays that stack up on the floor in produce on mini-pallets, which take up less floor space.”

While the pistachio industry faces challenges, Cohen believes consumer demand will continue to increase. “This is a strong healthy industry that is focused on the future,” she says. “We will be producing some larger crops in the years ahead, and it’s important to build up demand in advance of that supply increase. The industry is doing that now through the nutritional research and studies.”

Hirigoyen of American Pistachio Growers agrees. “We just have to do a good job of communicating that a handful of nuts has tremendous value nutritionally,” she says. **pb**

**Setton Farms**

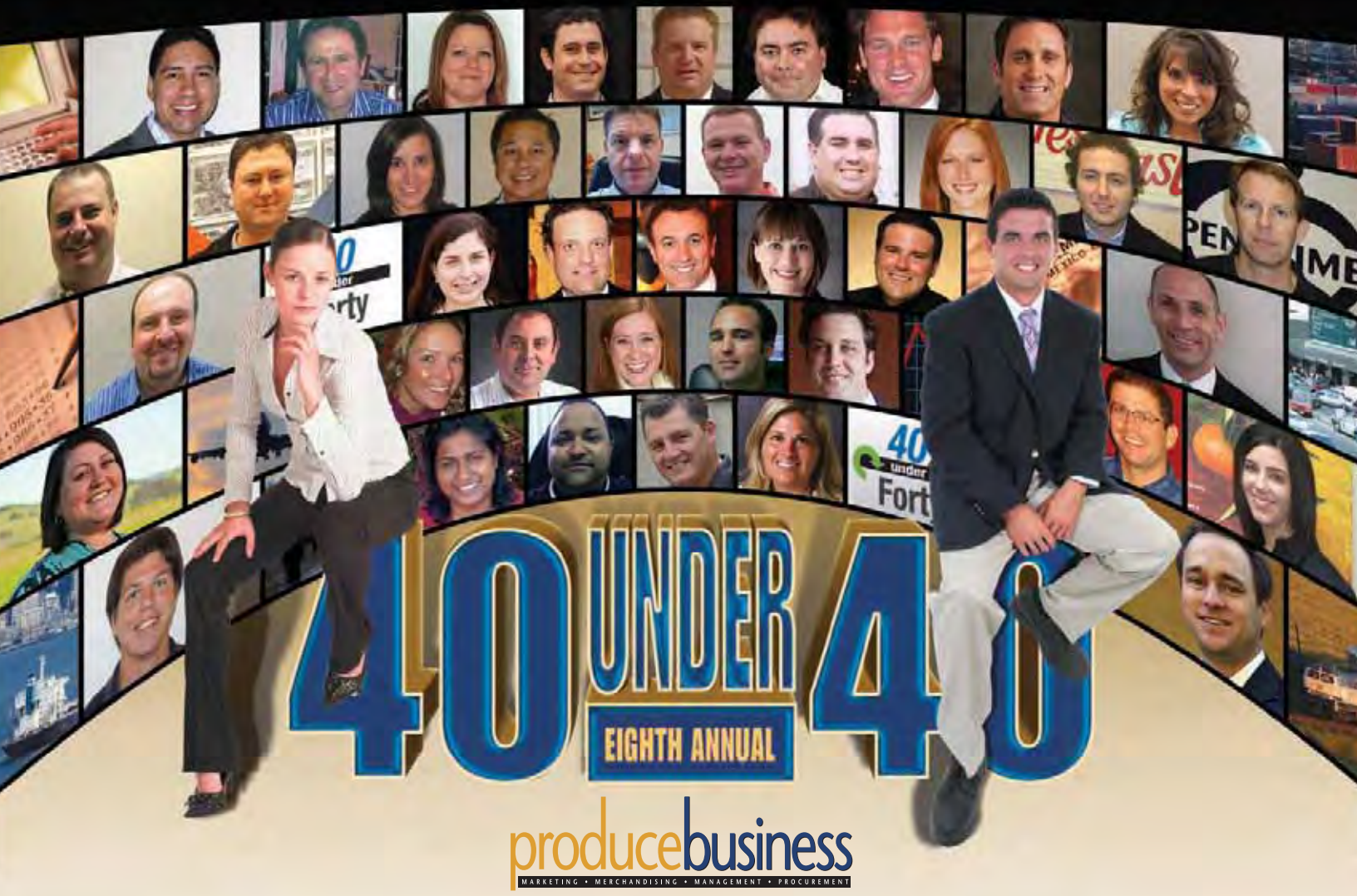
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To nominate someone, please fill out this form by March 1, 2012, and fax back to 561-994-1610.

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 Company \_\_\_\_\_  
 Position \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Country \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee's Professional Achievements:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee's Industry/Community/Charitable Activities:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

In 100 words or less, describe why this person should be nominated:  
 (You can use a separate sheet for this)

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**ABOUT THE NOMINATOR:**

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# ALTERNATIVE RETAIL



**A**pproaching the distant outskirts of Charleston, South Carolina, I was intrigued when I saw a large, colorful billboard displaying the words, “Farmer’s Market” in huge print. The directions indicated continuing five miles to the road leading to Kiawah Island.

As I approached the main road, I could see a large sign near an approximately 40-ft. x 70-ft. open air tent sitting on higher elevation approximately 150 yards from where I turned off the major highway leading to downtown Charleston, about eight miles in the distance. The parking area was filled with cars coming and going. Equally interesting were the three large RVs parked behind the tent, obviously the seasonal home for those running the market.

Under the tent was rows upon rows of fresh produce. A few days after Fourth of July, the majority of space was filled with tomatoes, peaches, corn, cantaloupe and watermelon with smaller quantities of vegetables grown in the surrounding area.

The presentation of the farm stand was best exemplified by the large offering of peaches and tomatoes in wood-sided, slanted quart containers with product pyramided above the top. Closer inspection showed generally one of the largest items centered at the bottom enabling each unit to contain plenty of air space limiting the weight to three to four pounds, with no scales readily visible. Not bad when each basket sells for five dollars. For the most part, the product was fully mature — unlikely to pass grade standards for shipping to supermarkets. However, a bruise could be overlooked in return for wonderful flavor and texture sure to bring return customers.

Making the operation profitable does not stop there. Sales are recorded for cash at a one of two old-style registers, and the purchases are transferred from the reusable basket to a poly bag. The amount of refrigeration space is at a minimum.

Only a short distance further, a bridge connects the mainland with St. John’s Island — a particularly fertile agricultural area leading to Kiawah Island with its upscale community where demand for fresh is at its peak during the homegrown season.

Not surprisingly, several farms with their own farm stand are found almost immediately before the turnabout leading to both Kiawah and Seabrook Island residential communities. Talk about local, and the definition is more accurately described by the populace as neighborhood.

These types of farm stands are only a portion of the challenge to retail supermarkets. In the area are also Community Supported Agriculture groups where members assume the risks in a partnership between community and farmer (see related article on page 21). One of these has a varying selection of produce available during three 11 to 13-week periods during the year.

For a weekly fee, a member receives one of three sizes of boxed fresh produce weekly, which is delivered to designated locations for two additional dollars. If members choose to pick up at the farm, they have their choice among available items. In all instances, the members’ reward is characterized as quality, freshness and flavor.

One farm’s integrated operation includes not only a CSA operation, but also a U-Pick farm for selective item harvesting during April and May. They also have a year-round farmer’s market located next to the

Kiawah highway with organic and conventional produce grown on and off the farm. Not to be outdone, they also operate Inside the Market café for lunch and to-go meals.

No wonder a local chain is using a TV commercial dedicated to the advantages of its home-grown produce. In this area, where locally grown is abundant, retailers also heavily promote produce grown outside the area to make up for the loss from

competition not seen in many larger metropolitan areas.

Granted, nearly every community in the vicinity of a produce growing area has some type of farmer’s market or a group of consumers with access to small acreage of land or rooftop growing some of their own produce for the same reasons found in South Carolina.

One would miss the variance of the activity without reference to the Tuttle Family Farm and farm stand on the outskirts of Dover, New Hampshire. Now in the 379th year and eleventh generation in the same family, the operation is currently for sale. The recent economic downturn has played a role for an integrated retail operation, which had grown to include a connected greenhouse for plants and offered gourmet product, such as imported cheeses generally found in upscale stores.

Competition primarily from expanded Hannaford stores in the area offering similar upscale foods and locally grown produce with dramatic presentation has curtailed Tuttle’s sales since higher gas prices have impacted special shopping trips.

Done well, either supermarkets or alternative retail operations can prosper as long as they adapt to needs of their consumers. Responding to those interests will determine market share.

**pb**

**For the most part, the product was fully mature — unlikely to pass grade standards for shipping to supermarkets. However, a bruise could be overlooked in return for wonderful flavor and texture sure to bring return customers.**

**By Dave Diver**

Dave Diver is the former vice president of produce at Hannaford, and a regular columnist for PRODUCE BUSINESS.

# BIOPESTICIDES: VALUE UP AND DOWN THE SUPPLY CHAIN



**T**here's no doubt that produce quality begins with food safety, a topic that garners lots of ink on these pages. But it's more than just the microbiological and regulatory aspects that make food safety a hot topic. There's also the seemingly endless debate around pesticide residues on fresh produce and in processed foods — the same consumer-driven dynamic that has spawned the organic foods industry.

With a long career in support of production agriculture both in the public and the private sector, I've spent most of my adult life working on systems designed to yield quality food products. In 2008, I accepted a position as executive director for the Biopesticide Industry Alliance (BPIA) and joined in its mission to raise awareness on the considerable benefits of biopesticide technology. In the three years since, I've seen BPIA membership more than double, from nearly 28 members in 2008 to more than 60 members today.

As much as I'd like to take the credit for this growth, there are much larger forces at work. Over that same stretch, the sustainability movement has raised the level of consumer awareness surrounding potential impacts of commercial farming and other industries, while world population has been projected to top 9 billion people by 2050.

This means we have to produce more food, with greater efficiency, than ever before, while at the same time, continuing to reduce the environmental impact of commercial farming. A daunting task, but not one that's out of the realm of possibility. Around the world, more and more local food industries and the regulatory agencies that govern them are beginning to see biopesticides as a way to meet these seemingly divergent challenges.

Key benefits of biopesticides are that they are usually less toxic than conventional pesticides, are generally very specific to the target pests, are often effective in very small quantities, decompose quickly, are free of any potential residues and can greatly decrease the use of conventional pesticides while keeping crop productivity high. In order for the whole chain to realize maximum benefit from these products, produce marketers need to understand how these products are used, what the sum total of the value equation is, and how they can increase their own ROI by dictating that these products are incorporated into their suppliers' programs.

First, it's important to accept that sustainability is not just a catch

phrase for the marketing of green products. Major retailers and food-service providers are committing vast amounts of time and resources to sustainability programs. The Sustainability Consortium ([www.sustainabilityconsortium.org](http://www.sustainabilityconsortium.org)) was established to define sustainability and provide tools to retailers to make decisions about the sustainability of the products they purchase and resell. Biopesticides will be a major part of the model built for the food and beverages sector.

At BPIA, we see three challenges that biopesticides address: productivity, food quality and reduced impact.

Very often, productivity improves with the use of biopesticides in fruit and produce production, and new data suggest a variety of plant health benefits associated with many biopesticides, including enhanced yield. Taken one step further, biopesticides in food production systems offer direct quality benefits to food retailers, namely products of high grade that are nutritious and safe to eat. Biopesticides help to ensure high-quality appearance on the retail shelf, and, through a variety of post harvest applications, prevent spoilage and waste.

For importers and exporters of fresh produce, pesticide residues are a very real quality consideration that exist in the form of Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs). Biopesticides do not leave even low levels of potential toxins, and nearly 100 percent of biopesticides are exempt from a tolerance requirement. This is a major benefit when buyers are setting residue limits more stringent than those established through *Codex Alimentarius*. In fact, biopesticides have gained huge momentum in Europe as food retailers have begun leveraging low residue/no residue products as a point of brand differentiation.

Add these sustainability benefits — biopesticides do not persist in environment, are made from renewable resources, are safe for workers, farm neighbors and consumers and have very limited impact of beneficial insects or biodiversity — and you have a solution that delivers value to the whole chain.

BPIA asks produce buyers and retailers to consider defining sustainable agriculture as programs using a significant portion of biopesticides in production. Train/educate your staff and customers on the benefits of biopesticides for food quality, food safety and sustainability. Help develop and publicize lists showing biopesticides are exempt from residue tolerances and publicize your commitment to sustainable production.

You'll gain a market edge as a result.

**pb**

**The best solutions for the produce industry bring value to growers, food retailers and consumers alike.**

**By Bill Stoneman**

Bill Stoneman is executive director of the Biopesticide Industry Alliance, a 60-member organization dedicated to fostering adoption of biopesticide technology through increased awareness about their effectiveness and full range of benefits to a progressive pest management program. For more information, contact Bill Stoneman at 202-536-4602 or email him at [bstoneman@biopesticideindustryalliance.org](mailto:bstoneman@biopesticideindustryalliance.org)

# THE EFFECTS OF THE EUROPEAN *E. COLI* CRISIS: HOW WILL THE PRODUCE INDUSTRY MOVE FORWARD?

A Q&A with Phillippe Binard, General Delegate, Freshfel Europe, based in Brussels, Belgium



**PRODUCE BUSINESS:** What has the Commission done to address the *E. coli* crisis?

**Phillippe Binard:** The *E. coli* crisis in Europe has probably been one of the most serious, and with its implications, far reaching crisis that the European fresh produce sector has had to confront. Within a few days, the positive image of fresh produce and all existing endeavors to stimulate consumption were put in jeopardy. The German authorities were facing an unprecedented outbreak from an unknown source, and the public authority's communication was echoed and amplified by the media, rapidly exposing the fresh produce sector as a whole across Europe to a devastating market standstill.

The management of the crisis was a primary responsibility in Germany and in the various German states most particularly affected by the outbreak. The European Commission has also been involved at different levels to address the European dimension of the case. During the crisis, Freshfel collaborated with the European commission on these various aspects. Not all of the issues dealt with were satisfactorily solved. The response by the European Commission (DG AGRI) in regard to compensation was extremely limited as well as the communication campaign to restore consumer confidence. The promotion package was also limited and disappointing, as the first actions will only be possible as of December 2011 for an outbreak that took place in May 2011!

Throughout the crisis, Freshfel had also extensive cooperation with the TRADE Department of the European Commission to address the market access restrictions and lift them as soon as possible, as well as with the Health and Consumer Department (SANCO) for the safety aspects. Currently, Freshfel is cooperating with the Commission in regard to the sprouts sector.

**PB: How would Freshfel like the European Commission to be further involved? What kind of participation and aid would the association like to see from them to help restore consumer confidence?**

**Phillippe Binard:** More could have been done by public authorities both at the national or regional level in Germany, as well as at the European level to better manage the communication side of this enormous crisis. The communication with consumers was of particular relevance.

The *E. coli* outbreak unfairly targeted fresh fruit and vegetables and the communication quickly became out of control, which had devastating effects both on volume and value of fresh produce. Recovery is timely and uncertain. The market situation has been further aggravated due to other climatic conditions in Europe, leading to overlap of production for summer fruit, but also a mild summer in many parts of Europe, which was not stimulating the demand for seasonal products. A strong promotional campaign by authorities and backed by scientists would have been of great value.

Given the role of fresh produce as a part of a healthy diet, the role of public authorities in this case would have been, on the one hand, to limit the damage of this unexpected crisis, but also to help citizens gain back confidence in a category or in certain origins that were pinpointed during the first days of the outbreak.

**PB: How do you think Europeans' attempt at a healthy diet by eating more fresh produce has been affected by recent events?**

**Phillippe Binard:** Obesity and other related chronic diseases are becoming a major public health issue with far reaching implications for the health of European citizens and its consequences for social security. For several years already, Freshfel has been advocating for a European policy to address this major policy challenge. Increased physical activities and a better diet, including regular intake of fresh fruit and vegetables, are the main drivers of a successful policy to fight obesity. This outbreak came at a particular moment where the sector was undertaking steps to better profile the wide varieties of fresh fruit and vegetables and how to enjoy it.

**PB: Has consumption of fresh produce — purchased at retail or ordered in restaurants — declined since then?**

**Phillippe Binard:** For several years, the consumption of fresh produce has been under pressure. Some categories might have been developing, but overall, the consumption trend across Europe is, on the one hand, below the minimum recommended level of the World Health Organization in most of the EU Member States, while on the other hand — and even more worrisome — the level of consumption is at best stagnating or is even declining.

With this in mind, the *E. coli* outbreak has been adding another layer of difficulties. At the peak of the crisis and in many important markets across Europe, the consumption declined for a wide range of vegetables (tomatoes, cucumbers, sweet peppers, zucchini, salads) to an extremely low level (20 to 30 percent) of normal sales volume. This situation persisted for several weeks and was coupled with low return prices for distributors and growers.

**PB: What is the current status of proposed repayments to the Spanish growers?**

The Commission adopted a package of 210 million Euro to compensate for losses of producers across Europe for products like tomatoes, salads, cucumbers, sweet peppers and zucchini. The indemnity period was limited in time. Growers requested the whole budget. The aid package is currently being executed to compensate the growers. This measure is only a partial indemnity as the damage has been far beyond the proposed amount. Spain, as an origin, was heavily affected on its image and this element was not at all taken into account in the package of indemnity. Many other products were also affected by the crisis, but no compensation was offered. Finally, the European indemnity only contemplated one side of the losses — those affecting the producers.





## MOVING FORWARD



**A**n example of commitment to continuous innovation is evidenced in this photo from M. Levin & Co. Taken at the old Philadelphia wholesale market location on Galloway Street in 1987, the picture shows Levin's first load of container/palletized bananas ripened in what was then new state-of-the-art pressurized rooms. The first load ripened was from Pacific Fruit (*Bonita* bananas). Shown from left to right are Martin Levin, David Levin, Michael Levin, Mark Levin, Joel Segel and Leon Levin. Now, 24 years later, Levin is ripening loads of bananas in new, state-of-the-art tarpless pressurized rooms at the brand new Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market.

"While our industry roots run deep and we're proud of our past, we are also an industry focused on innovation and moving forward," says Tracie Levin, daughter of Mark Levin and granddaughter of Leon Levin. "Our company was committed to investing in state-of-the-art technology to the benefit of our product back in 1987, and we've just recommitted ourselves to the latest innovation in our new facility."

The photo represents the second and third generations of Levins to run the business. Tracie is the fourth generation of the family business, which happens to be all women, including Margie Fischman, Sarah Levin and Brenda Segel.

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](mailto:info@producebusiness.com)

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Over 30-million\* on-product stickers and tags on pineapples,



bananas, fresh-cut fruits and vegetables, cantaloupe, grapes, avocados and tomatoes will alert shoppers to the promotion in-store, supported with channel strips, price cards, danglers and display signs. Del Monte Fresh Produce will also distribute recipe booklets and \$5 off coupons for fresh fruits and vegetables to consumers in 50 major markets across the U.S. and Canada. Consumers will be notified about giveaways via Twitter, Facebook and radio promotions.

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