

inside... THE PUNDIT LOOKS AT PTI • FALL MERCHANDISING • MICHIGAN APPLES • CHILEAN AVOCADOS • CALIFORNIA GRAPES • HANNAFORD'S LEED STORE
PEARS • NEW YORK APPLES • TRANSPORTATION • REGIONAL MARKET PROFILES: PHILADELPHIA & THE TWIN CITIES • PISTACHIOS • SUSTAINABLE FLORAL MARKETING • POTATOES

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producebusiness

MARKETING • MERCHANDISING • MANAGEMENT • PROCUREMENT

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Unsustainable Sustainability

Why asking producers to shoulder the burden of buyer-led sustainability initiatives is a step in the wrong direction.



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At Dole, we're making sure you'll never look at bagged salads the same way again. Our new bag design uses 26% less ink, creating a larger window so all the freshness inside shines through. With our new lettuce cut, we have nothing to hide. This process replicates the way customers hand-cut at home, reducing the amount of rib pieces. Because when the bag is this clear, only the very best will do. It's time to take a closer look at DOLE, and the many innovations coming soon.

For more information about our new packaging or produce, contact your Dole sales representative.
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Coming This Fall...



October 5th
2009

THIS MONTH'S WINNER:



Tim Nuss
Sales Associate
Prima Bella Produce Inc.
Tracy, CA

To say Tim Nuss has come of age in the produce industry would be an understatement. His father is a farmer, growing tomatoes, beans, asparagus and a variety of other crops. "I've seen the farming and packing side of the business," says Nuss. "Now I get to see the sales side."

A recent graduate of Point Loma Nazarene University, Nuss is a member of the sales team at Prima Bella Produce, a Tracy, CA-based company that sells prepackaged, value-added sweet corn. "We do the 4- and 8-pack shrink-wrapped packs that you see in the grocery store," details Nuss. The company also does business with the foodservice market. "We work with the small independents, and the big boys, too."

Although Nuss first saw PRODUCE BUSINESS this past July at the PMA Foodservice Conference, he took an instant liking to it. "I really like the magazine format," he says. "It's different than all the other publications out there. We have it in the break room to read, and I know everyone here finds it really helpful."

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.

WIN A PORTABLE LCD DIGITAL TELEVISION

Haier's portable 7-inch LCD TV lets you enjoy your favorite television shows anywhere, anytime. A built-in tuner with detachable antenna provides crisp reception. A rechargeable battery offers up to 2½ hours of power.



QUESTIONS FOR THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE

- 1) When do Paramount Farms' television ads begin for Wonderful Pistachios? _____
- 2) What is the web address for Nonpareil? _____
- 3) Which Food Network Chef is involved with Chilean Hass Avocados? _____
- 4) How many generations of the Habelman family have worked with The Cranberry Network? _____
- 5) What is the slogan for T. M. Kovacevich - Philadelphia Inc.? _____
- 6) In what two cities does Wholesale Produce Supply Company have offices? _____

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

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

Photocopies of this form are acceptable. Please send answers to:
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Progress On The Food Safety Front

One of the most vocalized criticisms of food safety oversight in recent years has been that the federal government has been lax in coordinating its efforts to make our food safer. This spring, the Obama administration took a major step toward answering those criticisms when it formed the White House Food Safety Working Group. Designed to coordinate federal efforts and develop short- and long-term plans to make food safer, the group was also charged with presenting recommendations on how to upgrade current U.S. food safety laws and better bridge the gaps between federal agencies in order to ensure those laws are being adequately enforced.

Earlier this summer, the group's work came to fruition as Vice President Joe Biden and working group co-chairs USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack and Health and Human Services Secretary, Kathleen Sebelius, announced a food safety plan created by the group with the assistance and feedback of numerous industry stakeholders, including United Fresh.

Recommendations made in the plan include the issuance of a commodity-specific draft guidance on preventive controls that the industry can implement to reduce the risk of microbial contamination in the production and distribution of tomatoes, melons and leafy greens; issuance of a draft guidance on steps the food industry can take to establish effective traceability systems; and implementation of a new incident command system to address outbreaks of food-borne illness. Additionally, the plan announced that the FDA will create a new position, deputy commissioner for foods, to oversee and coordinate its efforts in the food industry, including food safety.

The working group's recommendations demonstrate a shift in government responsi-

bility and oversight on food safety matters and serve to underscore how the public and private sectors can work together to improve the entire food safety system. This plan embraces key recommendations advanced by the produce industry that will help to ensure that initiatives address food safety priorities.

The Senate will likely take up food safety when Congress reconvenes this month.

But the long-term success of food safety legislation must rest on three guiding principles: First, any policy governing food safety must be both commodity-specific and based on sound science; second, the policy must be consistent for each individual crop regardless of domestic or foreign origin; and third, the policy must be provided with significant federal oversight to rebuild consumer confidence.

Legislative work on food safety began in earnest in May, as the House Energy and Commerce Committee drafted the Food Safety Enhancement Act of 2009. The bill passed the House with broad bipartisan support just before the August recess, but the original draft was not without debate. For example, many in the industry bristled at the idea of the draft's prescriptive mandates for traceability, feeling that such mandates would hamper the progress we are making in tracing the billions of cases of produce that crisscross the country every year.

The version of the bill that passed the

House reflected the sustained, bipartisan effort to acknowledge these concerns and the guiding priorities of the produce industry. After extensive feedback and testimony from multiple industry stakeholders, lawmakers revised the bill to include provisions that strengthen the bill's commodity-specific approach to produce, guarantee equal treatment of imported and domestic produce in food safety standards and ensure that FDA would work with USDA, state departments of agriculture and other agencies in implementing all produce provisions. The Senate will likely take up food safety when Congress reconvenes this month.

The push toward better traceability — highlighted by the Produce Traceability Initiative (PTI) — has also taken a central role in the national food safety discussion, and is one in which the entire industry has been closely involved. We are in the midst of arguably the most ambitious self-regulation initiative in the history of the produce business. While PTI is not about providing an immediate panacea to cure the industry of its traceability woes, it is a coordinated effort to bring us past the proprietary, one-step-forward and one-step-back traceability practices our industry currently utilizes.

But initiative and progress should not be confused with achievement. We're not there yet, and we encourage our industry to remain involved.

We've reached a critical mass on food safety. Although the House has made progress in passing workable food safety legislation, the debate over food safety is far from over. The policies made on Capitol Hill reach beyond Washington and into our fields, our produce aisles, our reefer trucks and our processing facilities. As an industry, we must remain both informed and engaged. Together, we are the key to unlocking the future of produce.



In Uncertainty

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When Price Trumps Standards

The greatest threat to the future of the produce industry is this: We rely principally on large buyers to set and enforce standards for important supply chain issues such as food safety, traceability and sustainability. These buyers, however, find it difficult to turn adherence to these standards into a compelling competitive advantage with consumers. This leads to constant pressure to ditch the standards in order to get less expensive product. The savings on this product directly translate into either higher margins or an opportunity to offer consumers a lower price, an attribute with proven appeal.

This dilemma is placing enormous financial pressure on the best growers and packers in the industry, while providing a marketing windfall for the soft underbelly of the industry — the countless producers that work without any sense of supply chain responsibilities beyond what they have to do legally to stay in business. Sometimes they don't even worry about that.

Fulfilling supply chain responsibilities and operating at the highest standards on matters of food safety, traceability, sustainability and other matters of industry concern is only possible with much advance planning. It can take years of effort and involve substantial expenditures to meet the high standards dictated by demanding buyers, yet the buyers' decision to make "exceptions" and buy outside their network of vetted vendors takes two seconds.

This means that there is an enormous dichotomy between the vision discussed at meetings, where requirements for ever-enhancing standards are outlined by important buyers, and the day-to-day experience of vendors working with the actual people charged with procurement, who often find it expedient to purchase based on price.

This dichotomy creates a burden that does not fall evenly across the industry. Since the mediocre producers never paid any attention to these tough buyer standards, they invested nothing to conform to them, so a decision by buyers to not require producers to conform with previously announced requirements costs them nothing, and, in fact, just means that another customer is now available to them. On the other hand, the top-quality producers — those who take supply chain responsibilities seriously and invest the time and money to meet these standards — are left in the position of having paid a substantial amount of money to conform to standards, but find themselves thrown into price competition with those who have not done the same.

The public examples of this are legion, though only the tip of the iceberg. PRODUCE BUSINESS' sister publication, PerishablePundit.com,

recently featured a letter from a producer explaining how Tesco simply abandoned its famous Nature's Choice standards when limiting its supply chain to approved vendors would have proved costly.

Sometimes, buyers present the waiving of standards as compassion for producers, and that is the way the postponement of requirements to conform to the Produce Traceability Initiative have been presented. But seen from the perspective of competitors who managed to conform by the initially declared deadline, the move is a sucker punch.

The latest move in this arena involves private label, already a source of stress for producers who find themselves pressured to commoditize a business they have spent the last two decades trying to de-commoditize. Once again, though, we are hearing of buyers adding insult to injury. To start, these buyers put enormous pressure on producers to do private label and demand that they do so based on marginal costs only, meaning substantially reduced margins for the producer. Then, after the producers buy and inventory all this expensive private label packaging material, the "exceptions" creep in. Buyers are presented with an opportunity to buy less expensive produce and don't order their own private label, the very product they claimed was at the focus of the chain's marketing and image efforts during negotiations.

Of course, one can blame the producers and point out they should be more mindful of these possibilities in writing contracts and making deals. And, certainly, private companies are free to deal with one another on any terms they agree on. Yet the industry as a whole can't be better than the sum success of the companies that compose it. So we can't, as an industry, be indifferent to the consequences of the trade's habits of procurement upon the production base.

And all we are mentioning here is the issue of conformance to pre-announced standards. If we can't do that, what is the chance for innovative producers to actually raise standards? Ideally, we would like to have a situation where producers could walk in the door at a buying office, demonstrate how they are exceeding standards for supply chain responsibilities and this would be worth something to the buyer.

Yet, at best, the individuals who buy have no incentive to pay more for higher standards and, in this value-oriented economy, the buyers increasingly don't seem constrained to even uphold announced standards. In this environment, all that is left to enforce higher standards is mandatory government regulation. If that is where we come out, it will be our own actions that are to blame. **pb**

Top-quality producers are left in the position of having paid substantially to conform to standards, but find themselves thrown into price competition with those who have not done the same.

She's Back!

Stop By Mann's **PMA Booth 2818** and meet Lisa Lillien, the force behind Hungry Girl!

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Lisa Lillien is the web's hottest food star, leading cookbook author and rising television personality. She's also a

certified "Mann fan" naming us her official "go to brand" for fresh vegetables and broccoli cole slaw!

Mann collaborates with Hungry Girl on recipe development, co-branding initiatives, promotions and more—showing her 750,000 daily followers that fresh vegetables cannot only be easy—but fun!

Stop by **Mann's PMA Booth Saturday, October 3**, meet Lisa, and receive a signed copy of her **200 Under 200** cookbook (while supplies last).

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RENAISSANCE FOOD GROUP RANCHO CORDOVA, CA

Don Ochoa has been hired as vice president of business development. After more than 29 years with Safeway, he will oversee the integration of the premium quality Garden Highway brand of fresh-cut produce and Really Cool Foods brand of premium quality prepared foods. Most recently, he worked as the produce category director at Safeway.



MISSION PRODUCE INC. OXNARD, CA

Megan Rood has been hired as a sales representative. She recently graduated from Cal Poly State University with a degree in agribusiness. During her internship at Mission, she worked on many operational projects on the production side. She will be responsible for handling current and prospective accounts as well as attending various industry trade shows.



FRUIT PATCH INC. DINUBA, CA

Scott Wallace was appointed to president and chief executive officer. He previously was the president, CEO and chairman of the board for Gardenburger Corp., and later the president of global operations for SVP Worldwide Corp. The Fruit Patch Board of Directors is confident he will add value for all stakeholders, including employees, growers and retailers.



STEMILT GROWERS INC. WENATCHEE, WA

Rebecca Meyers has been hired as merchandising manager for the Midwest and Southeast regions of the United States. She previously worked three years at C&S Wholesale Grocers, most recently as its apple and pear national produce buyer. Her duties will include working directly with partner customers to develop marketing programs.



THE SHOLL GROUP II/GREEN GIANT FRESH MINNEAPOLIS, MN

Jason Landry has been promoted to vice president of sales. He formerly worked as director of sales after joining the company in 2005 as northern sales manager. He will be responsible for driving the sales and distribution expansion of the Green Giant Fresh value-added produce business.



MARKET FRESH PRODUCE LLC NIXA, MO

Don Sieling has joined as national director of business development. He brings more than 23 years experience in senior level management, sales and marketing. He will be responsible for ongoing development and implementation of the Market Fresh strategic marketing plan across North America.



R.S. HANLINE CO. SHELBY, OHIO

Tom Browning was appointed to director of sales and marketing for the company's newly created retail products division. For the past seven years, he served as the vice president of national accounts for Fresh Express/Chiquita. He will be responsible for the creation, development and sales of value-added fruit and vegetable products.



CALIFORNIA AVOCADO COMMISSION IRVINE, CA

Tom Bellamore has been named president. A CAC member since 1994, he has served as acting president since May 2008. His duties will include building on CAC's strong foundation of leadership in marketing and category research, solidifying premium positioning with consumers and identifying efficiencies in production that will enhance CAC's yield-per-acre.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEIJER TO SOURCE FROM AREA FARMERS

Meijer, a Grand Rapids, MI-based chain with 189 stores, plans to expand its sourcing of local produce with an increased emphasis on its Home Grown initiative aimed at boosting local economies throughout the Midwest. This year, the chain plans to work with more than 65 local growers in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Kentucky.



Reader Service No. 300

APEAM TO LAUNCH MEXICAN AVOCADO MARKETING PROGRAM

The Avocado Producers and Exporting Packers Association of Michoacán, Los Angeles, CA, plans to launch a marketing program aimed at increasing consumer purchase frequency and market demand for Mexican avocados during the fall/winter season. The program will include radio, television and online advertising that will air between November 9, 2009 and February 7, 2010.



Reader Service No. 301

CFFA TO KICK OFF LAUNCH MEDIA CAMPAIGN

The Chilean Fresh Fruit Association will be marking the first arrival of navel oranges from Chile with the launch of a media campaign to build consumer awareness for its latest addition to the summer citrus mix. CFFA is working with green grocers and food personalities across the country to produce TV and in-store video segments featuring navel oranges.



Reader Service No. 302

ALBERT'S ORGANICS TO OPEN NEW SOUTHEAST DIVISION

Albert's Organics Inc., Bridgeport, NJ, plans to expand its operations with its eighth distribution center set to open September 14 in Charlotte, NC. The 43,000-square-foot facility will serve the Southeastern United States. It will allow Albert's to continue to provide customers with the best care, handling and distribution of organic, fresh foods.



Reader Service No. 303

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

SEALD SWEET TO IMPORT FAIR TRADE-CERTIFIED CITRUS
Seald Sweet International, Vero Beach, FL, will begin importing Fair Trade-Certified citrus, further advancing its commitment to socially responsible growing and marketing practices. This makes it one of the first companies in the United States to offer Fair Trade-Certified citrus certified by Transfair USA and sourced from Fair Trade-Certified grower partners in South Africa.



Reader Service No. 304

GILLS ONIONS TURNS ONION JUICE INTO GREEN POWER
Gills Onions, Oxnard, CA, recently debuted its onion juice-fueled Advanced Energy Recovery System that transforms onion waste into enough energy to power up to 460 homes. For installing the system and reducing gas emissions by up to 300,000 tons per year, Gills is eligible to receive \$2.7 million from Southern California Gas Co. (The Gas Company) as part of a state program to encourage self-contained energy generation by businesses.



Reader Service No. 305

OCEAN MIST PLEDGES TO SUPPORT PMA FIT
Ocean Mist Farms, Castroville, CA, pledged \$50,000 to the Produce Marketing Association Foundation for Industry Talent (PMA FIT). The funding will support programs, such as student outreach initiatives and internship best practices, designed to broaden awareness about the rewards and opportunities of a career in the produce industry.



Reader Service No. 306

PFK, MASTRONARDI/SUNSET AND SHUMAN SUPPORT YOUNGEST SAILOR
Produce For Kids (PFK), Orlando, FL; Mastronardi Produce/Sunset, Kingsville, ON, Canada; and Shuman Produce Inc., Reidsville, GA, teamed up to support Zac Sunderland's endeavor to become the youngest person to sail around the world solo. The companies sponsored Sunderland's month-long excursion to encourage kids around the world to follow in his footsteps.



Reader Service No. 307

PBN PAIRS UP WITH POP ROCK BAND
Pear Bureau Northwest (PBN), Portland, OR, teamed up with Honor Society, a pop-rock band, to generate excitement for USA Pears across the country. The partnership includes a comprehensive integrated marketing program and consumer contests taking place in each metropolitan area playing host to Honor Society during its summertime tour.



Reader Service No. 308

OSO SWEET TO HARVEST PERUVIAN ONIONS
OSO Sweet, Charleston, WV, announced the availability of its new Peruvian onion from September through December. OSO Sweet's parent company, Saven Corp., successfully extended its growing season an additional three months, placing the OSO Sweet brand in U.S. stores for more than nine months of the year.



Reader Service No. 309

GIUMARRA TO MARKET ASPARAGUS
Giumarra, Los Angeles, CA, announced a new partnership with Campo Pablo Borquez S.A. de C.V. to market asparagus in North America. (Pablo Borquez is pictured at right.) The new marketing company, Giumarra Borquez LLC will market asparagus from Mexico, Chile, Peru and California. The product will be sold in the United States and Canada.



Reader Service No. 310

SPA ANNOUNCES OFFICIAL OPENING
Specialty Potato Alliance, Mountainside, NJ, a group comprised of North America's premier growers and distributors of specialty potatoes, announced its company opening. SPA introduced its products and founding members on July 26 at the Produce Marketing Association's (PMA) Foodservice Conference in Monterey, CA. SPA will provide a family of products to the foodservice and retail industries.



Reader Service No. 311

REALLY COOL FOOD PARTNER WITH RENAISSANCE FOOD GROUP
Really Cool Food Company LLC, Cambridge City, IN, merged with Renaissance Food Group LLC, Sacramento, CA. The move will offer retailers and consumers the broadest selection of the freshest prepared and value-added fresh foods. Renaissance will lead the sales and marketing team for Garden Highway-Chef Essentials, Really Cool Foods, Garden Highway and Kitchen 1836 brands.



Reader Service No. 312

DESERT GLORY RELEASES FIRST SUSTAINABILITY REPORT
Desert Glory, San Antonio, TX, released *Desert Glory Sustainability Report*, its first sustainability document that covers all aspects of sustainability and meets the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) criteria. The report is the culmination of an intensive on-site audit, conducted by Strategic Sustainability Consultants and Fleishman-Hillard.



Reader Service No. 313

RED RIVER VALLEY POTATO SHIPPERS FIGHT BREAST CANCER
Red River Valley Potato Shippers, East Grand Forks, MN, hopes to raise \$250,000 in donations for the National Breast Cancer Foundation based in Frisco, Texas. Red River Valley Potatoes tagged with a pink ribbon Kwik Lok, along with POS materials, will be available to retailers throughout the country.



Reader Service No. 314

CORRECTION
In the Chicago Regional Market Profile in the August issue of *PRODUCE BUSINESS*, we misidentified the company name of Mr. Brent Schmit. He is the president of Eclipse Dist. Inc. We regret the error.



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

Recessionary Reactions

What entices consumers to buy fruits and vegetables these days? In this new economy, you might expect price to be the most important factor. So it's no surprise that according to consumers surveyed recently by The Hartman Group on behalf of the Produce Marketing Association, in-store discounts and coupons from specific stores would most influence them to buy.

But don't assume the story stops — or even starts there — because price seldom stands alone in defining value, and certainly doesn't in this case. Amid the current recession's penny pinching, more than nine out of 10 survey respondents said quality remains the most important factor in their choice of a produce department. Price came in third, behind store cleanliness, which was second. So it's the quality and cleanliness that gets shoppers into the produce department in the first place — before anything else factors in.

Consumers also told us that the produce department continues to be a strong driver of overall store choice; 53 percent of respondents report they have changed stores for the produce. With supermarkets facing an ever-widening array of competing locations offering more fresh produce — different retail formats, farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture and foodservice outlets among them — the need to focus on the produce offering in a store has never been greater. (These new studies join the database of research available through our Consumer Research Online subscription service.)

PMA's new research helps us understand consumers' changing needs and expectations at a time when the consumers are cutting corners and examining the value of every dollar spent. Today's struggling economy has not only redefined their meaning of value — likely in ways that will last long after the recession is over — but also has heightened consumers' awareness of good value in the marketplace. This research illustrates that for most consumers, value sits prominently at the intersection of quality and price, and neither can succeed at the expense of the other.

Consumers are looking for the same value industry members are looking for nowadays: help through the troubled economy and assurance of every day, year-round value for dollars spent.

Consumers' behavior is shifting in ways that really aren't surprising, our new research tells us. The consumers we surveyed note they're buying less expensive fruits and vegetables during the down economy, and getting back to basics. In this way, they are defining value as those familiar, stand-by fruits and vegetables known for their reliability and relative low prices. Consumers may be reducing fresh-cut purchases and even growing their own fruits and vegetables to save money, both of which present opportunities for suppliers and retailers.

As consumers adapt their meaning of value in this economy, our consumer marketing and messages must adapt accordingly. Our focus shouldn't just be on selling at the lowest price — quality is equally important. This new research offers myriad ideas for consumer messaging in today's newly challenged economy.

A recent survey of PMA's members shows the economy has members redefining value, too. The association's members — our "consumers," if you will — expect even more from your trade association than you have in the past. You told us you are looking for the latest information and tools to help cope with the economy. You want industry promotion, advocacy and leadership with government on the industry's behalf and industry representation during food safety crises. You are entrusting PMA with your recession-pinched dollar, and in return expect and demand more programs and services that deliver the value

you seek to help your business grow.

Just as I encouraged you to adapt accordingly to consumers' new needs, PMA is adapting accordingly to our members' new needs. We're emphasizing our year-round value, beginning with our economy-busting programming at the Fresh Summit International Convention and Exposition. This year's Fresh Summit includes general session speakers such as Condoleezza Rice and Obama campaign strategist David Plouffe, numerous workshops to help your business find the upside to today's downturn, one-stop learning at our new Produce Traceability Learning Center and the global industry's best networking, education and trade show.

And our value continues year-round, with Fresh Connections education and networking events that bring PMA to your backyard, and our expanded food safety offerings including our "Ask Dr. Bob" audioblog featuring Dr. Bob Whitaker, new food safety symposia and our crucial financial and scientific support for research at the Center for Produce Safety, to name just a few examples.

In essence, consumers are looking for the same value industry members are looking for nowadays: help through the troubled economy and assurance of every day, year-round value for dollars spent. We can both meet our customers' needs by building better connections and by providing products and services that promote prosperity — with a commitment to quality that nobody should compromise at any price.



Cutting Through Consumer Biases

Consumer research is filled with intriguing insights into consumer behavior, yet any attempts to deduce how a business ought to behave from what consumers report must be carefully considered.

It is not surprising that quality, cleanliness and price guide consumer decisions. If you add in some sort of reference to assortment and location, you get the five elements that have won every consumer survey on selection of shopping venues that seems to have ever been conducted.

The real question is what to make of these declarations. Cleanliness, for example, is right up there as a determinant of where consumers choose to shop — yet does that mean retailers ought to hire dozens of mop boys to be scrubbing all day? Probably not. More likely, all the popular supermarket chains are acceptably clean in general, just as they offer acceptable quality, acceptable prices and acceptable assortment. Those that are not reasonably close are not even considered. Obviously there are niche players that cater to certain income groups or ethnic groups but, for the mass market, these widely desired traits — all traits long known to retailers as important — function as the ante, the price of entry if you will, for playing in this game.

This is where the power of specialty foods, including specialty produce, can kick in. If all the players are offering acceptable stores, one may choose one store over another because it always has that special salad dressing or sells those unusual melons or a favored brand.

Often with consumer research, it is not the most popular items that are the point of differentiation; often it is some trait that is very important to a small group. Selling Kosher or Halal foods is a perfect example. These items will show up way down the list of important reasons for selecting one store over another, yet in a world where all the stores are pretty clean, the offering of wide selections of Kosher or Halal food is likely to actually be the determinant of which store gets the business of those requiring such certified foods for religious reasons.

The challenge for produce producers and retailers alike is to educate consumers to appreciate delicious fruits and vegetables that may not win a beauty contest or may not conform to the biases of consumers.

A decision to offer quality to consumers seems like a no-brainer, but then one realizes the difficulty within the fresh produce category of persuading consumers that there is a quality difference. Obviously there is appearance, but wilted greens, moldy berries and gnats flying nearby are typically a function of a flawed store-level operation. No major chain buys rotten produce.

Taste differs, but for the most part, consumers don't know about the taste until they buy the product and take it home.

There is a whole infrastructure of food safety behind many products. But, for the most part, the industry frowns on promoting food safety so consumers know little about it.

Some companies are trumpeting sustainability and it matters to some consumers, but that seems to be a rather specialized niche.

This is really where branding comes in and we find consumers have definite preferences for certain brands. Surprisingly, they even pay attention to certain trade brands and look for them, because they have had good experience with them through the years.

In the end, though, most consumers shop with their eyes, and “quality” thus comes to mean “good-looking.” This is problematic for the produce industry because the largest strawberry is not necessarily the sweetest; the reddest apple, not necessarily the most crisp.

Alternatively, sometimes consumers shop with their predispositions leading the way and so they may assume — wrongly — that something at a local farmers market is neces-

sarily fresher, safer or more tasty than something produced by a grower shipping regionally, nationally or internationally.

The challenge for produce producers and retailers alike is to educate consumers to appreciate delicious fruits and vegetables, even though they may not win a beauty contest or may not conform to the biases of consumers. This is difficult for the industry, as producers have, with few exceptions, left marketing to retailers and retailers have generally seen their place as offering things for sale, not changing consumer attitudes. It is the province of the chef to select product to offer based on freshness and flavor; retailers tend to offer almost everything.

Yet in this day of pursuing value, part of the value quotient may include being more selective. Retailers have partially caught on to this and many are trimming their assortment. All too often though, this is to enhance leverage against suppliers, rather than being focused on offering consumers the best.

Much like consumers thinking the obviously beautiful is always the best, the trade sometimes makes the same error in how they participate in conventions. Yes, shaking hands with a big buyer is an obvious good, but so much money and time is invested in developing fantastic educational programs, which too many don't make a priority of attending. Long-term, the beauty of learning and connecting in the educational program will stay with you long after that handshake is forgotten.

Pundit's Mailbag — Wholesaler's Struggle With PTI And Real Life Situations

From Jim Prevor's Perishable Pundit
August 11, 2009



JIM PREVOR'S
PERISHABLE PUNDIT

In the July, 2009, issue of *PRODUCE BUSINESS*, Bryan Silberman, President of the Produce Marketing Association (PMA), and the Pundit had an exchange on the issue of traceability, specifically, the Produce Traceability Initiative (PTI). Whereas Bryan pointed out that "Traceability Is Fundamental," we asked "Will Buyers Ante Up For PTI?"

The piece brought this letter from a wholesaler in California:

I read your article, "Will Buyers Ante Up for PTI?" and said to my pop, "This guy gets it," so I am sending you this letter.

I'm 49, my pop is 76, my other partner is 63. They are old school...my father is a legend in the San Francisco Produce Terminal. I told them both a while back that this is the way to go; this is real: traceability, food safety, sustainability — if we do not get on this train in its infancy, we might get run over by it later.

Officially, I am the Vice President of Galli Produce Inc., in San Jose, CA, incorporated in 1956. Unofficially, I'm also the self-proclaimed Food Safety Director!

In order to do business with many national restaurant chains and foodservice distributors, we have had to really take a look at whom we buy from. Every grower from whom we buy direct, for example, Nunes and Boggiatto to name a couple, all have these Recall/Traceability procedures in place, as do our brokers.

We are a relatively small company, yet we conduct mock recalls and reviews each year to ensure our compliance with Good Manufacturing Practices.

I have developed Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOP) for every inch of our warehouse. It's costly, to say the least, and hard to pass the costs on, especially when the playing field is not level in regards to my competition, many of whom skip all these steps.

It used to be that in the summertime, the farmer who has 15 acres in Gilroy, or wherever, would come to my dock with outstanding Roma tomatoes or Cherry Toms. Maybe he wants \$6 in a \$10 market! It's very difficult to pass that up and not put

that extra \$4 in our pocket or pass on the value to our customers simply because I know nothing about this grower, and, so, can't vouch for his food safety efforts!

My 76-year-old father and partner, who has 55 years of farming and wholesale experience, both look at me like I have two heads when I consider passing this up! That \$4 covers a lot of sins, such as what we throw away or lose in repacking. It can also be a powerful lure to attract customers who then also buy other items. And if we do pass up the deal, the farmer is likely to just go down the street and my competition will gain

the advantage. Not inconsequentially, if the product is going to be in commerce anyway, did our refusing to market it make the food supply any safer?

I know my competition is not passing it up! He is putting that \$4 in his pocket or using it for a more attractive price on the price list he's floating around to our customers.

What do I say when a customer calls and says "Hey! Joe's Romas and Cherry Toms are \$4 cheaper than yours. What's up?" I say, well mine are inspected; I have transparency with my growers; I know what I am selling, but many buyers just don't care.

My point is it's tough to tow the line on the wholesale level. If the buyers don't value something, how can a supplier pay extra to provide it? The problem I see with the Produce Traceability Initiative (PTI) is that it includes no

mechanism to bring in these small buyers.

If you travel as much as I think you do, you realize that in Any Town, USA, there is a restaurant on every corner. Chances are it's not a chain, but a single- or family-owner. Chain business is nice, but single-owner or family restaurants are the bedrock of all wholesalers. These independents are probably struggling, or at the very least, feeling the pinch we all are.

And you know what else? Until they get bit by the "I got sick in your restaurant or cafe" pit bull, a Recall/Traceback Protocol in place by their wholesaler is not going to be a priority. Ever. These independents want that Roma tomato from the 15-acre guy that's \$4 cheaper if they can get it.

What makes this even more real to me is that 45 years ago, my grandfather and father were that 15-acre guy! They raised cabbage, radishes, green onions, red leaf, green leaf etc., in the

It's tough to tow the line on the wholesale level. If the buyers don't value something, how can a supplier pay extra to provide it? The problem I see with the Produce Traceability Initiative (PTI) is that it includes no mechanism to bring in these small buyers.

Santa Clara Valley, never seeing any kind of inspector from the FDA or California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR).

What has changed since then for that guy? Should it? The solution I think has to come from the wholesaler, regardless of what the restaurant would like. That being said, every day we have small one- or two-truck wholesalers and purveyors come to our dock and buy merchandise, haggle a bit, drink coffee, etc. They back in with their rickety, non-refrigerated trucks, vans and pick-ups. As I load them up, I have to wonder "Hmm, when was the last time they washed this truck out with a 2 percent chlorine solution and documented it?" — like we do once a week as per GalliSSOP #20.

I guess my point is how are these guys brought into an industry traceability initiative? PACA? Produce Associations? Half of them or more do not have membership in either one. They function completely under the radar screen. A 100 percent solution seems unattainable, yet the whole industry will be vulnerable to its weakest link. I'm glad it's not my job to bring compliance to this side of the industry because it would mean breaking someone's toys.

PTI is also only an "after the fact" tool. Contamination can occur in many places from field to plate. PTI and plant sanitation go hand-in-hand. Who's going to do the leg work on the ground to get everyone involved? And if everyone is not involved, how can wholesalers such as our own compete with those not spending the money and refusing the opportunities that we are?

— Jeff Pieracci, Galli Produce, San Jose, California

This letter strikes us as a particularly poignant and incisive window on an aspect of the industry often ignored in the councils that discuss industry affairs. We've written a great deal about traceability, and while recognizing the value of PTI, we have always seen it as more of a start than a solution. Jeff's letter points to small wholesalers and independent restaurants as just two of the big holes PTI leaves open in the traceability web of the produce industry.

We've recognized this before. In our piece, *Is Produce Traceability Initiative Worth The Investment?*, we ran a classic note from a brilliant wholesaler about "Ken in the red truck" buying down on a terminal market:

Putting in a system to trace product gets more difficult the further down we go in the distribution chain. Stand on the floor on a busy terminal market and try and imagine where the product goes after it is sold by the wholesaler. A customer known as Ken, the guy with red truck, pays cash for a pallet of tomatoes. He puts the tomatoes in his garage where the boxes sit on the floor near cleaning supplies, motor oil and who know what else.

He and his kids (two of whom just used the toilet without washing their hands) dump the tomatoes on a dirty tarp to sort them for color. The green ones sit in the garage for a few days to ripen, during which time some rodents snack on tomatoes. When they finally ripen, Ken delivers the tomatoes to some of the finest restaurants in town for all of us to enjoy.

Somehow, I don't think that Ken — or even a legitimate small wholesaler or purveyor — is interested in investing in a traceability system. They will have to be dragged kicking and screaming to the table. The problem is that the system is only as good as its weakest link, and unless Ken is a part of the system, it doesn't work.

What Jeff Pieracci's letter adds is the day-to-day dynamic — the guy offering to sell tomatoes at a bargain price — that drives these decisions in one direction or another.

We suspect that there will be no "solution" to the problem. Private action is unlikely to drive universal

traceability, and federal regulations are likely to exempt the specific, small-scale players that Jeff wrote about.

The most likely outcome: A bifurcation of the industry. Some companies will operate in a sort of small-scale, unregulated sector and large players will conform to world-class standards. Companies such as Galli Produce will either have to choose segments or they will bifurcate themselves. Perhaps one company buys from the top vendors, maintains total transparency and sells to those buyers who value such efforts. A totally separate company takes advantage of transactional opportunities and sells to companies that have customers heavily focused on price.

It is not an entirely satisfactory solution, but it may be the one we get.

Many thanks to Jeff Pieracci and Galli Produce for sharing their perspective on this important matter.

We suspect that there will be no "solution" to the problem. Private action is unlikely to drive universal traceability, and federal regulations are likely to exempt the specific, small-scale players. The most likely outcome: A bifurcation of the industry. Some companies will operate in a sort of small-scale, unregulated sector and large players will conform to world-class standards.

Hannaford *LEEDS* The Way With First Platinum-Level-Certified Store

With the opening of its Augusta, ME, store, where locally grown and organic produce take center stage, Hannaford sets an example for grocery chains across the country.



BY DAVE DIVER

Dave Diver is the former vice president of produce at Hannaford and a regular columnist for PRODUCE BUSINESS.

There must be something in the water, or perhaps it's the relatively harsh climate that makes Maine people need to endure, look for the latest trends and innovations and act proactively. Maybe it's the overabundance of pine trees, the rugged coastline and rock ledge foundations highlighting the environment. As long as I've known about Scarborough-based Hannaford, the company has always attempted to stay on the cutting edge whenever it was looked like the correct direction to pursue.

Therefore, it was not surprising to learn Hannaford would open what is now being identified as the world's most environmentally advanced supermarket. On July 25, 2009, Hannaford achieved the U.S. Green Building Council's highest standard — a Platinum LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification — with its newest store, in Augusta, Maine.

SETTING AN EXAMPLE

From its earliest conception — soon after the beginning of the new millennium — Hannaford's newest store required a public referendum before the company was allowed to purchase the property. Acquiring the land meant the demolition of a school, the remnants of which were recycled for use in the supermarket, with the total expenditure coming in around \$10 million. At the beginning of 2008, one national cost estimate to build a slightly smaller-size supermarket was just over \$4 million. To make up for the extra \$5 million required to build this environmentally friendly structure, the operating savings would need to be substantial.

Only four days after the store opened, New York, NY-based consulting organization, McKinsey and Company Inc., released an important research report focused on the significant contribution of energy-efficient, green buildings in the creation of strategic energy and climatic solutions. Combined with other non-transportation initiatives, these green buildings have the potential to reduce the nation's energy consumption 23 percent by 2020, saving the economy \$1.2 trillion and reducing greenhouse gasses by 1.1 gigatons annually. A targeted investment of \$50 billion yearly over the next ten years would provide a two-to-one potential savings and also generate 900,000 jobs.

At a time when energy and environment are major topics of discussion, Rick Fedrizzi, CEO and founding chairman of the United States Green Building Council, headquartered in Washington, D.C., says, "As congress debates climate change legislation, these findings make an overwhelming case that we must dramatically strengthen provisions that support and scale green buildings." He adds, "Green building can stimulate the economy at a level one-and-a-half times larger than the Stimulus Bill. In



Photo courtesy of Hannaford

Hannaford's Augusta store is as aesthetically pleasing as it is environmentally friendly.

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For a retail project to be considered LEED-worthy, it must take into account the following areas during the design and build process (This list is only a sample of what LEED considers, and further information can be found online at the U.S. Green Building Council's Web site):

- Construction activity pollution
- Development density and community connectivity
- Bicycle storage and changing rooms
- Protection or restoration of natural habitat during site development
- Water-efficient landscaping
- Innovative wastewater technologies
- Optimized energy performance
- On-site renewable energy
- Enhanced refrigeration management
- Construction waste management
- Use of regional, recycled and rapidly renewable materials
- Indoor chemical and pollutant source control

SOURCE: WWW.USGBC.ORG

terms of climate change, a commitment to energy efficiency would be the equivalent of taking the entire U.S. fleet of passenger cars and light trucks — more than 200 million vehicles — off the roads.”

At the opening of the Hannaford store, Fedrizzi noted it was one of the cleanest, most amazing projects the review team had seen in a while. “This store will use less energy, less water and create less waste. It will do tremendous things. But what it does most is educate. The 50,000-square-foot building will use about 50 percent less energy than one of similar size.”

GREENING THE MARKETING GAME

Taken in the macro context, various market-



Photo courtesy of Hannaford

A close-up shot of the Augusta store shows the numerous solar panels, along with the 7,000-square-foot section dedicated to green and red sedum plants, which reduce water runoff and insulate the store.

ing elements also support the overall mission. To provide shoppers with a wide selection of responsible product choices, the Hannaford store offers more than 3,500 natural and organic items, along with hundreds of local Maine-grown products. During the summer season, locally grown produce, identified by Hannaford as “Close to Home,” peaks. In addition to being fresh and nutritious, its delivery requires less energy and consumers identify with the farmers, many of whom are adding production of organic items. Customers look for Close to Home produce as a priority because they want to support the local economy, reduce carbon footprint and have a strong belief local product tastes better, says Will Wedge, produce director, who points out the upscale Augusta market is approximately 96 percent Caucasian.

Not only is Close to Home identified as produce grown in-state, but all growers who are not already GAP-certified will be required to be by 2010, according to Wedge, who also notes the organic offering at the Augusta store echoes the rest of the larger format stores. The 140-plus SKUs make up about 14 percent of the total SKU mix and account for 4.5 percent of total produce sales. Fifty percent of organic sales come from 15 percent of the items and 30 percent of SKUs provide 90 percent of sales. Organic sales have continued double-digit annual growth since integrating the items throughout the department three years ago.

This first Platinum LEED-certified store is a visible extension of Hannaford's published statement on corporate responsibility: “Consider the farms, the fields and orchards, our suppliers and their factories, Hannaford Associates... you and your families. We are all connected. We are

linked by a shared concern for our earth and a desire for the diverse bounty it provides...We believe that corporate responsibility is our shared responsibility.”

“This store will use less energy, less water, create less waste. It will do tremendous things. But what it does most is educate. The 50,000-square-foot building will use about 50 percent less energy than one of comparable size.”

**— Rich Fedrizzi
United States Green Building
Council**

The construction of the store incorporated systems never before used in supermarkets, with the site work reusing or recycling more than 90 percent of the material procured from the demolition of the school. New systems included drilling two 750-foot-deep geothermal wells for regulating the building's temperature in both

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summer and winter. Additionally, a Green Chill refrigeration system — using 50 percent less refrigerant gas than traditional systems when coupled with doors on most refrigeration cases — provides additional energy savings. Fifty skylights, which dot the roof, welcome natural light into the store and are complemented with motion sensor-controlled lights, so they can dim or brighten based on the number of consumers in a given area.

Water usage is expected to achieve nearly a 40 percent savings by ice-free cases in the seafood department, restroom low-flow faucets, dual-flush toilets and waterless urinals. A 7,000-square-foot section of the roof area is dedicated to green and red sedum plants, which serve to reduce water runoff and insulate the store.

In the store's entryway, an educational display area provides environmental information helpful for the casual shopper, along with those interested in expanding their knowledge of potential ways to save the planet.

All of these innovative, environmental integrations brought praise from Governor John Baldacci. "I know where the First Lady and I are going to be shopping," he said. "We're going to be coming right to this store," an interesting statement, given the Governor's mansion is nearly equidistant from Shaw's, Hannaford's long-time primary competitor, which boasts a

larger and recently remodeled 66,500-square-foot footprint, scheduled for a grand reopening on the same day. This competition, neither conceding anything, has made each better and the consumer the winner. Additionally, a Super Wal-Mart is less than three miles away.

A WALK THROUGH THE NEIGHBORHOOD

My trip to Augusta initially brought me to the recently remodeled Shaw's store, which by most consumer standards is more than acceptable. Being headquartered in West Bridgewater, MA, with stores in all six New England states, a large, approximately, two-by-three-foot sign highlighted photos of a farmer from each of the states. However, as a shopper, it was difficult to comprehend the definition of locally grown.

The price cards over items advertised by competitors, accompanied by Shaw's statement, "We watch over competitor's prices so you don't have to," was an intriguing addition. However, on items advertised by both Hannaford and Shaw's, they did not reduce their retail to match Hannaford's advertised retail. So much for the message being made on the other items.

A visit to a Super Wal-Mart in Augusta, ME, brought no surprises. Adequate produce variety, good pricing on many, but not all, items and some summer fruit and melon displays were



The store lobby provides consumers plenty of opportunities to learn about Hannaford's environmental approach as well as its other initiatives.

overshadowed by out-of-stocks blueberries and restricted allocation of many tree fruit items.

Now in the middle of its second month, the new, green Augusta Hannaford store — produce in particular — was capturing the largest share of the area's food-shopper dollars. Even though the square footage is nearly 25 percent less than Shaw's, the total offering is much more alive and dynamic. Everywhere, con-

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Even though the produce department at Hannaford's new store is nearly 25 percent smaller than the size of its neighborhood competitors, it still captured the largest share of the area's food-shopper dollars.

sumers were enthusiastically purchasing.

The store lobby is not only a bright attention-getter, but provides the consumer the opportunity to learn about each individual environmental and energy-saving approach from dramatically displayed modules. Inside, store lighting automatically adjusts to consumer traffic fluctuations section-by-section. On entry, the surrounding produce department was so busy that the lighting was always maximized

All of the Hannaford associates are extremely pleased with the overall sales and overjoyed with the produce share sales being approximately 20 percent greater than what was originally projected, due to outstanding department management, high quality standards and the store's easy-to-shop layout.

and, as a result, the fresh, colorful presentation was even more vibrant.

A large floor stand sign for locally grown produce, identified as "Close to Home," depicts an outline of the state with names and locations of the various growers written in easily changeable magic marker. Blackboard signs highlight the availability of 150 organic items on this particular day. To emphasize both during the store opening, a half dozen greenhouse-grown climb-

ing tomato plants from Backyard Farms were on display at the department's entry.

As the local program has grown, there are more local growers supplying organic items on a seasonal basis. The balance of the product is procured from Albert's Organics Inc., in Bridgeport, NJ, and Philadelphia, PA-based Procacci Brothers Sales Corp., says Wedge.

All of the Hannaford associates are extremely pleased with the overall sales and overjoyed with the produce share sales being approximately 20 percent greater than what was originally projected. Wedge reports the produce sales share is exceeding that of Hannaford's typical stores due to outstanding department management, high quality standards and the store's easy-to-shop layout, which creates endless shopping efficiencies for the customer. Other raw sales figures are left to everyone's guess, imagination and analysis.

During my time spent in Maine, I had the opportunity to speak with shoppers living within a 30-mile corridor where each company had three sets of stores. Their universal commentary was that while shopping both chain's stores in their respective communities, they found the Hannaford marketing far more acceptable, including personal attention from store employees. Three decades earlier, Shaw's held the greatest market share, which was reversed in less than a decade and has continued ever since. Now that's sustainability.

While the energy-savings and environmental alternatives at Hannaford's new platinum-level LEED-certified store will contribute greatly to sustainability, perhaps the greatest sustainability factor is the associates themselves. I met several whom I had known from 18 to 25 years earlier. It is the associates who implement sustainable programs and enable a company to remain sustainable as they continue being proactive to all the changes occurring on the planet and in the business world.



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Unsustainable Sustainability

Why asking producers to shoulder the burden of buyer-led sustainability initiatives is a step in the wrong direction.

By Jim Prevor

Sustainability, done right, is difficult to argue against. Unlike environmentalism or social activism or the profit motive, the existence of a tripartite system in which the interests of all three concerns must be considered prevents extremism and provides a natural tension to avoid over-investment in a particular area.

The strongest argument against sustainability is the argument for specialization. Rather than having individual companies or institutions struggle to find a balance between the environmental, social and economic responsibilities, society might be better off having specialized institutions devoted to each of these concerns.

No less a luminary than Dr. Milton Friedman, the famous Nobel Prize winning economist, wrote a seminal piece arguing precisely this point in an essay published in *The New York Times Magazine* in 1970, titled "The Social Responsibility of Business Is to Increase Its Profits":

What does it mean to say that the corporate executive has a "social responsibility" in his capacity as businessman? If this statement is not pure rhetoric, it must mean that he is to act in some way that is not in the interest of his employers. For example, that he is to refrain from increasing the price of the product in order to contribute to the social objective of preventing inflation, even though a price increase would be in the best interests of the corporation. Or that he is to make





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expenditures on reducing pollution beyond the amount that is in the best interests of the corporation or that is required by law in order to contribute to the social objective of improving the environment. Or that, at the expense of corporate profits, he is to hire "hard-core" unemployed instead of better qualified available workmen to contribute to the social objective of reduc-

ing poverty.

In each of these cases, the corporate executive would be spending someone else's money for a general social interest. Insofar as his actions in accord with his "social responsibility" reduce returns to stockholders, he is spending their money. Insofar as his actions raise the price to customers, he is spending the customers' money.

Insofar as his actions lower the wages of some employees, he is spending their money.

The stockholders or the customers or the employees could separately spend their own money on the particular action if they wished to do so. The executive is exercising a distinct "social responsibility," rather than serving as an agent of the stockholders or the cus-

Wal-Mart Must Include Adequate Return On Capital In Its Sustainability 'Index' Or It Will Do More Harm Than Good

Excerpted from Jim Prevor's *Perishable Pundit*, August 5, 2009

Wal-Mart announced a major new sustainability initiative by holding a "Sustainability Milestone Meeting" and issuing a statement from Wal-Mart CEO Mike Duke, which is excerpted here:

Today, we're announcing we will lead the creation of a Sustainability Index. The Index will bring about a more transparent supply chain, drive product innovation and, ultimately, provide consumers the information they need to assess the sustainability of products.

If we work together, we can create a new retail standard for the 21st century.

We will roll out the Index in three main steps. Some of the work will start right away. We expect the rest to happen over the next five years.

As Step One, Wal-Mart will ask all of its suppliers to answer 15 simple, but powerful questions on the sustainable practices of their companies. In the United States, we will ask our top-tier suppliers to answer quickly. And internationally, each country will work with its suppliers on developing timelines.

Like our customers, we now expect more of ourselves and our more than 100,000 suppliers around the world.

Wal-Mart also issued a press release, a fact sheet and a copy of the 15-question survey it is sending to vendors around the world.

The gist of Wal-Mart's proposal is to do three things: First, ask 15 questions of suppliers; second, work to establish a consortium of universities that will establish a database of the life-cycle impact of products; and third, make this information available and meaningful to consumers.

We've heard that Mike Duke is a man of integrity, so we accept at face value that Wal-Mart means good for the world by promulgating this initiative.

It is, however, a train wreck waiting to happen and will probably do real harm to the world.

Partly the problem is with the initiative itself: First, sustainability — dealing with three separate spheres of responsibility, the social, environmental and economic — is inherently complex and value-driven. Despite many attempts to posit an analogy between sustainability efforts and accounting balance sheets, there is no "triple bottom-line" that can reasonably be said to represent sustainability efforts.

This means any attempt to create an index meaningful to consumers at large will be inherently deceptive. One product may emit more carbon, but the company producing the product may not treat its employees well and may

WAL-MART SUSTAINABILITY PRODUCT INDEX: 15 QUESTIONS FOR SUPPLIERS

Energy and Climate:

Reducing Energy Costs and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

1. Have you measured your corporate greenhouse gas emissions?
2. Have you opted to report your greenhouse gas emissions to the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP)?
3. What is your total annual greenhouse gas emissions reported in the most recent year measured?
4. Have you set publicly available greenhouse gas reduction targets? If yes, what are those targets?

Material Efficiency:

Reducing Waste and Enhancing Quality

1. If measured, please report the total amount of solid waste generated from the facilities that produce your product(s) for Wal-

Mart for the most recent year measured.

2. Have you set publicly available solid waste reduction targets? If yes, what are those targets?

3. If measured, please report total water use from facilities that produce your product(s) for Wal-Mart for the most recent year measured.

4. Have you set publicly available water use reduction targets? If yes, what are those targets?

Natural Resources:

Producing High Quality, Responsibly Sourced Raw Materials

1. Have you established publicly available sustainability purchasing guidelines for your direct suppliers that address issues such as environmental compliance, employment practices and product/ingredient safety?
2. Have you obtained 3rd party certifica-

tions for any of the products that you sell to Wal-Mart?

People and Community:

Ensuring Responsible and Ethical Production

1. Do you know the location of 100 percent of the facilities that produce your product(s)?
2. Before beginning a business relationship with a manufacturing facility, do you evaluate the quality of, and capacity for, production?
3. Do you have a process for managing social compliance at the manufacturing level?
4. Do you work with your supply base to resolve issues found during social compliance evaluations and also document specific corrections and improvements?
5. Do you invest in community development activities in the markets you source from and/or operate within?

tomers or the employees, only if he spends the money in a different way than they would have spent it.

Dr. Friedman sums up the article by quoting his book, *Capitalism and Freedom*: "...there is one and only one social responsibility of business — to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which

is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud."

When Dr. Friedman was writing, the issue was whether individual corporations should be expected to conduct themselves in a matter influenced by social responsibilities beyond the profit motive.

The issue was hotly contested then and remains so today. Indeed, perhaps the strongest argument for adopting sustain-

ability as a corporate mantra is that the rules have changed and it is not profitable to not be sustainable. In *The Triple Bottom Line*, authors Andrew W. Savitz and Karl Weber introduce the book by telling, at length, the story of how the board of the Milton Hershey School Trust was thwarted in its attempt to sell The Hershey Company. Although legally it had not only the right to do so but was, perhaps, required

engage in tax-evasion... and there is no number or rank that can make those things add up.

Second, the data Wal-Mart hopes to collect literally changes all the time. Harvesting during different times of the day may impact carbon output; this week the vessel carrying the product is a passenger jet, next week it's a freighter. This week orders were low, so the shipment was an LTL that took a circuitous route; next week the orders were better, so they filled a trailer and went direct.

There should be a 16th question on that survey to suppliers. It is the most important question Wal-Mart could ask: "Are you earning a high enough return on capital that you can justify raising new capital to expand your business?"

Third, the focus on the product is itself deceptive. Very often the environmental impact of a product depends on the consumers. Do they drive in an empty car to pick up the item? What about the cooking and storage procedures in the house? It is very common for these things to account for 25 percent or more of the impact of the product on the environment.

Fourth, the initiative is biased against the economic sphere of sustainability, and this will make the world a poorer place. Take a look at the initial 15 questions being posed to Wal-Mart suppliers in the box at left.

Note that there is not one single question devoted to the supplier's prosperity. No concern that capital might be wasted. Yet capital is always the scarcest of resources.

This is a crucial component of sustainability



Photo courtesy of Wal-Mart Inc.

Mike Duke, CEO of Wal-Mart, at the recent Sustainability Milestone Meeting.

and one often neglected.

When we went to Oxnard to see the Gills Onions Advanced Energy Recovery System, we were thrilled but, not insignificantly, we were thrilled because Gills could convert this onion waste to energy and earn a 20 percent-plus return on doing so.

Before they encourage suppliers to waste money to score better on some metrics and thus impoverish the world, we hope that the executives at Wal-Mart would remember this: If Gills Onions had built the EXACT SAME system but it cost ten times as much, it would not be an example of sustainability. It would be a horrible waste of resources that could be used for many beneficial purposes.

Yet there is nothing in the way Wal-Mart proposes to go about this to make us think it would score against a company actively wasting money to get a better "mark" on this index.

In other words, the index, if it ever happens, will not represent some kind of "natural" level of sustainability but, instead, the result of decisions to spend money to achieve a higher ranking. In many cases, however, this higher ranking will be achieved at the horrible, humanity-impoverishing cost of wasted capital.

If Wal-Mart doesn't change this, it will actively make the world poorer as capital is wasted to improve one's grade on the test.

There should be a 16th question on that survey to suppliers. It is the most important question Wal-Mart could ask: "Are you earning a

high enough return on capital that you can justify raising new capital to expand your business?" This also is the question with which Wal-Mart could most directly help its vendors.

Many opinion leaders somehow look at people and only see mouths to feed, when people also have hands with which to build and brains with which to discover. Natural resources are not really natural at all. Oil was a worthless inconvenience until people figured out how to use it. Onion waste was just an inconvenience, too, until some smart folks figured out how to make it into electricity.

We wish Duke had taken a different tack; instead of bemoaning limits we supposedly are living under, he could've directed the initiative toward cultivating the natural resource of intelligence in children wherever Wal-Mart operates.

For the future will be sustainable not because we tread lightly on the earth, but because geniuses yet unborn will find ways to overcome obstacles. We will find ways to make what now looks like useless sea or barren planets a cornucopia of resources for mankind.

Wal-Mart's gift to the world has been to make living easier for many people close to the waterline. We wish it would run a kind of talent search throughout that customer base, not to find the best singers, but to find children with the highest IQs, who could most benefit from a fantastic education paid for by Wal-Mart and who, if given the chance, will build a great, and sustainable, future for us all.

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to do so in order to avoid excess concentration of its portfolio, which would have placed the trustees in the breach of legal requirements to act prudently.

The comeuppance of the story was that political power could be exercised by many who had no specific contractual relationship with Hershey and to whom the foundation owed no obligation. In today's world, with the power of the media and non-governmental organizations and the ubiquitous role of government, it borders on foolishness to not reach out and consider the concerns of those who might oppose your project.

Of course, even back in 1970, Dr. Friedman knew green-washing when he saw it, even if he had never heard the term, and he said that much that would be done under the banner of social responsibility would actually be done for prudent business reasons:

"Of course, in practice the doctrine of social responsibility is frequently a cloak for actions that are justified on other grounds rather than a reason for those actions."

"To illustrate, it may well be in the long run interest of a corporation that is a major employer in a small community to devote resources to providing amenities to that community or to improving its government..."

"In each of these... cases, there is a strong temptation to rationalize these actions as an exercise of 'social responsibility.' In the present climate of opinion, with its widespread aversion to 'capitalism,' 'profits,' the 'soulless corporation' and so on, this is one way for a corporation to generate goodwill as a by-product of expenditures that are entirely justified in its own self-interest."

"It would be inconsistent of me to call on corporate executives to refrain from this hypocritical window-dressing because it harms the foundations of a free society. That would be to call on them to exercise a 'social responsibility!' If our institutions and the attitudes of the public make it in their self-interest to cloak their actions in this way, I cannot summon much indignation to denounce them."

So it goes today. When Tesco decided to open stores in the United States and it

introduced itself to Americans with a declaration that it would install America's largest rooftop solar panel array on top of its new U.S. facility, it was making a judgment about how it wanted to position itself in America. Same thing when it announced that it would give away money to local charities as it opened each store. Although these actions may have been explained as solely altruistic activities, in reality, these



Photo courtesy of Fresh & Easy

According to Tesco, the company has installed America's largest rooftop solar panel array on its new U.S. facility.

efforts were almost certainly analyzed not only from the perspective of what did the most public good, but also from the perspective of what would ultimately pay off for Tesco's shareholders.

There is, of course, nothing wrong with thinking about one's shareholders, and Tesco's management is well trained to evaluate the multifaceted impact of these types of actions. Doing so is complex, as one is weighing the value of a positive reputation against the cost of capital expended. In the case of the solar panels, there is an offsetting savings on electric that has to somehow get factored in as well.

It is the very complexity of weighing these various considerations that instantly illuminates the enormous problem that occurs when buyers attempt to mandate sustainability throughout their supply chain.

GOING FROM DISCUSSION TO DICTATION

There is certainly plenty of low hanging fruit, and so there is no harm in a big buyer sitting down with vendors and looking for opportunities. Perhaps by working together, empty back-hauls can be avoided in some areas — thus saving fuel, reducing carbon emissions and wear-and-tear on trucks — or perhaps more efficient packaging can be identified to reduce wasted space within the trailer and optimize trans-



Photo courtesy of Fresh & Easy

Tesco habitually makes donations to neighborhood charities when a new Fresh & Easy opens.

port, refrigeration and shelf-life.

This is all sustainability as a kind of higher consciousness, in which companies work to avoid inadvertent waste or damage to the environment. It is, for the most part, completely unobjectionable and, in fact, a great idea.

Once companies get beyond the discussion-and-discovery phase and into mandates, very bad things start to happen.

The problem is that all the weighing of different factors that an individual company can do in judging, whether it wishes to

make a charitable donation or build a solar array on the roof, get lost in the necessity for uniformity.

No buyer has the capacity to visit every facility of every supplier and make judgments about the trade-offs that company should make. There is simply no way to know or bring into consideration the fact that company X is not investing in reducing its

carbon footprint because it is spending its money hiring the handicapped and providing special accommodation for their challenges.

Knowing this type of information is not trivial. It is the essence of sustainability to consider all parts of the three responsibilities: environmental, social and economic.

Yet, for simplicity's sake, the world will wind up getting what Wal-Mart has recently proposed: An index that is little more than an arbitrary weighting of highly limited criteria.

Some would say that even with all its imperfections, the very idea of giving out sustainability scores and using the scores to rank suppliers and promote such scores to consumers will help move the world further along the path to sustainability.

Once companies get beyond the discussion-and-discovery phase and into mandates, very bad things start to happen.

The answer, though, is that such sustainability will be unsustainable. The proposed Index not only will fail to provide any useful information to consumers or to trade buyers, it is highly likely to do real damage: Damage to companies, industries, indeed to the world economy with all the implications of that for future employment, investment in research and development and future prosperity.

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PROBLEMS WITH BUYER-DICTATED SUSTAINABILITY

The first problem with such dictates is they prevent the most prudent use of resources. It is notable that the governmental efforts both in Europe and, now, the United States to reduce carbon emissions have coalesced around a cap-and-trade program. Why not just a cap on emissions? Why cap *and* trade? The answer is reducing carbon emissions costs different amounts for different industries, different companies and different locales. The societal goal is not merely to reduce emissions; it is to do so most efficiently.

What cap-and-trade does is that it leads those for whom reducing emissions is very expensive to pay those for whom reducing emission is very inexpensive to do so. The comeuppance of it all is that the societal goal is achieved at the lowest cost to society.

Yet when a big buyer dictates reductions in emissions, water use or any other criteria, it only has leverage over its specific supply chain. The truth is that it may not pay for a produce farm to reduce carbon emissions — perhaps an auto manufacturer can do so for a fraction of the price — but by being concerned only with its own supply chain, the buyer is actively making society poorer than it need be. It is actively requiring that money be wasted.

The second big problem with buyer-dictated sustainability is that, virtually without exception, such plans ignore the economic sphere of sustainability. Buyers who are demanding extensive “life-cycle analysis” of each product and letting vendors know that they won’t be doing business together unless these suppliers obtain either a certain percentage reduction in carbon output or hit a set level decreed appropriate for that item are actively encouraging companies to waste money.

In other words, they are adding into the mix an external factor — the ability to sell to a big buyer, such as Wal-Mart. Now, when a vendor calculates whether it makes sense to install solar panels, Wal-Mart will have its thumb on the scale, saying yes, do so, otherwise you won’t meet the criteria to sell to us.

This, however, actively leads to the wasting of capital — perhaps the scarcest of resources.

The second big problem with buyer-dictated sustainability is that, virtually without exception, such plans ignore the economic sphere of sustainability.

Doing this is inherently unsustainable because in a low margin business such as fresh produce, few companies indeed will survive if they have to devote any appreciable resources to things that won’t earn a



Publix practices sustainability in its three Florida Green-wise stores.

Photo courtesy of Publix Super Markets

legitimate return.

The irony here is that big buyers have an excellent opportunity to really practice sustainability not by dictating to vendors about what the vendors should do but by doing themselves what is well in their power to do: Encourage the strength of the supplier base by making sure payment is adequate to fund the initiatives that the buyer values. Initiatives on food safety, traceability and sustainability are expensive and buyers committed to sustainability have to be committed to maintaining a vibrant supply base.

Perhaps such a concerned attitude is too much to ask, but at the very least we can see retail sustainability efforts as focused on what retailers themselves do, not mostly a matter of claiming credit for what buyers force the supplier base to do.

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Photo courtesy of Gills Onions

Gills Onions received a check for \$2.7 million from Southern California Gas Co. for installing its Advanced Energy Recovery System, which reduces greenhouse-gas emissions by up to 30,000 tons per year.

There is nothing wrong with looking to do business with suppliers who share a buyer's values, but the detailed implementation of dictated specifications is, by its nature, too amorphous, too distant and too complicated to bring about useful progress.

DOING IT RIGHT

Sustainability involves many judgments about the relative importance of different things. These decisions are best made by individual companies, living in individual

communities, working with their own employees.

Recently, Gills Onions, based in Oxnard, CA, provided a perfect example of sustainability done right. It developed a system to convert onion waste into electricity. Significantly, no buyer told them to build such a plant. It grew out of a search for solutions to the problems Gills faced in dealing with excessive onion waste. Put another way, the team at Gills saw this as a compelling opportunity and it was that uplifting enthusiasm that carried the pro-

ject to fruition.

Dictating standards just because those standards are easily measurable is a mistake and can lead to many unintended consequences. It may be a retailer that expressed a prudent sense of wariness best. Back in May of this year, PRODUCE BUSINESS magazine presented its First Annual Retail Sustainability Award to Lakeland, FL-based Publix Super Markets. As part of that event, we did an interview with Maria Brous, director of media and community relations, and Michael Hewitt, manager of environmental services. Maria talked about how Publix viewed Fair Trade initiatives: "We don't like anybody coming into our house telling us how to do business. We don't go into other people's and do that, but we do establish the relationships for the long term."

Well said. If the relationship is long term, then, like members of a family, one would expect each other's values to influence one another and, eventually come into sync. Then it starts to make sense to invest money in pursuit of shared goals.

If sustainability means corporate dictates to vendors who, each day, need to prove their value in an auction, then sustainability, which requires long-term investment, becomes impossible. **pb**



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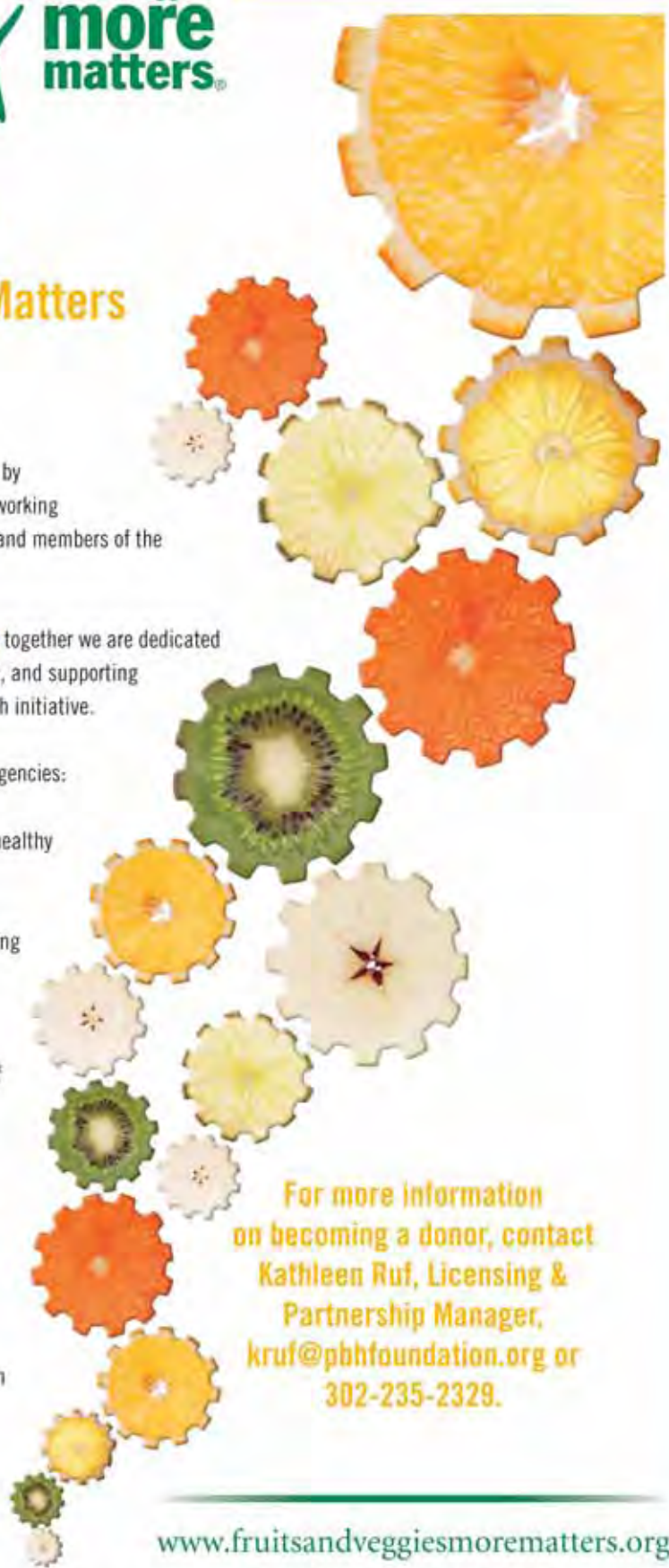
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Fly Through The Fall Season With Smart Merchandising Techniques

Cool weather, a cornucopia of fall harvested fruits and vegetables and copious family-oriented cooking holidays make the fall a ripe time for produce promotions.

BY CAROL BAREUTHER, RD

Karen Caplan, president and CEO of specialty produce supplier, Frieda's Inc., in Los Alamitos, CA, notes, "Every indicator says the economy has hit the bottom of the recession.

I think we'll see an increase in consumer purchasing power. Consumers will be ready to spend more money on food this fall."



ORGANIC HARVEST MONTH: September

The Greenfield, MA-based Organic Trade Association (OTA) started Organic Harvest Month in 1992 as a widespread way to promote organic food and agriculture. According to Simcha Weinstein, director of marketing for Albert's Organics Inc., based in Bridgeport, NJ, "Organic Harvest Month was primarily initiated by the natural foods industry. However, in the past several years, we have seen strong participation from conventional mass-market retailers. Both organic and conventional retailers see it as an opportunity to broaden the educational scope of organics, as well as to promote themselves as the community destination for organic fresh food."

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Metropolitan Markets Celebrates Organic Harvest Month

An organic-themed, bi-weekly ad and special displays mark Organic Harvest Month at Metropolitan Markets, a 6-store chain based in Seattle, WA. Ed Laster, produce specialist, says, "Instead of the regular weekly ad where we have one banner and three sub-features on organic produce and 15 to 18 conventional items promoted, we'll flip this around and make the ad all about organic. The organic items featured are a blend of fruits and vegetables, depending on availability, along with a packaged salad, salad dressing and juice. We try to choose ad items that encourage customers to traverse the entire produce department."

Signage highlighting organic farmers is also a feature of produce displays. "Earthbound Farm is a big supplier of ours and we've featured them the past two years," details Laster. "They have a good story to tell. However, we're careful about how much story-telling we do on the signage because what customers want to know most is the price." **pb**

Survey, U.S. sales of organic foods reached \$22.9 billion in 2008, an increase of 15.8 percent over 2007 sales, despite tough economic times.

Weinstein contends organic consumers are sacrificing expensive luxury items for everyday staples. "Therefore, retailers should focus on stocking everyday products at excellent pricing rather than expanding into new, specialty items and exotic varieties of produce."

Tonya Antle, vice president of organic sales for Earthbound Farm, located in San Juan Bautista, CA, notes, "Salads, of course, are plentiful. The most abundant fruits for us are grapes, apples, sliced apples, dried fruits, blueberries and melons. Plus, all of our top vegetable items are in season at this time, including celery, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower and broccollette."

Maureen Royal, director of sales at CF Fresh, headquartered in Sedro Woolley, WA, adds, "Organic apples, most root crops, potatoes and nectarines are most plentiful this time of year."

To celebrate Organic Harvest Month, Antle advises, "Promotions should be complemented with abundant, eye-catching displays. Offer recipes and sampling to induce conversation and trial for these promoted organic products."

Royal advises, "Tell stories about your growers and develop a personal connection between them and your consumers."

"Even though Organic Harvest Month is a national holiday, it's really nice to promote the local nature of your own celebration," adds Weinstein. "Bring in speakers; coordinate workshops; sponsor events. All of these should involve key people from your local community. If you take advantage of local resources it can be a very exciting, dynamic and inexpensive celebration."

Organic produce suppliers can provide a variety of materials to help retailers pro-

mote this in-store. For example, Albert's Organics offers a 24"x48" banner that can be hung in-store announcing, "September is Organic Harvest Month." The company also offers a "Specials" POS sign that can spotlight organic fruits and vegetables on sale.

"Promotions should be complemented with abundant, eye-catching displays. Offer recipes and sampling to induce conversation and trial for these organic items."

**— Tonya Antle
Earthbound Farm**

FRUITS & VEGGIES — MORE MATTERS MONTH: September

The Wilmington, DE-based Produce for Better Health Foundation's (PBH) *Fruits & Veggies — More Matters* is a theme incorporated into promotional activities by retailers throughout the year, especially in September as kids head back to school. Last year, for example, Weis Markets, a Sunbury, PA-based chain, used the *Fruits & Veggies — More Matters* logo and information about produce in the Weis HealthyBites Kid's

Korner section of its newsletter, providing fun facts and nutritional information.

This year, Bryant Wynes, PBH's senior executive of retail marketing, reports, "We have prepared a 'toolkit' of information and materials that will be distributed to each state's *Fruits & Veggies — More Matters* program coordinators. They are always willing to work with retailers on outreach and educational events."

Additionally, PBH is offering two September events that retailers can use to create a customized promotion. PBH's World's Biggest Healthy Foods Treasure Hunt empowers children ages four to eight to make healthy food choices, including eating more fresh produce. The program comes with an interactive Munch Crunch Bunch Treasure Hunt-themed book/game containing 45 Foodle (food riddle) cards that can be used in the supermarket's produce department as a treasure hunt for fresh produce.

The second event, and part of a yearlong partnership between PBH, American Greetings and its global licensing agent, Cookie Jar Entertainment, is an update of the Strawberry Shortcake character and her friends who now prefer fruit to fruit-flavored desserts. A themed toolkit includes ads with text and graphics of the title character and her friends, short consumer columns, a recipe with photo, sign templates that can be customized, activity sheets and an activity booklet.

NATIONAL APPLE MONTH: September - November

Over 900 retailers and military commissaries participated in National Apple Month (NAM) this past year. In September and November, entrants in the apple industry's annual generic promotional contest build in-store displays that prompt consumers to buy more apples and apple products. The winner receives \$10,000 in cash prizes.

Kay Rentzel, the Dillsburg, PA-based NAM director, explains, "Apple marketers use the promotion to kick off the harvest season and boost early-season shipments. Retailers use it to increase consumer sales and awareness, yield additional profits for the produce department and creatively merchandise throughout the store."

The contest is successful for retailers who participate. For example, the single-unit Oregon Dairy Inc., in Lititz, PA, sold more than 129,000 pounds of apples last year, including 20 varieties, and experienced a lift of more than 22 percent in apple sales during its 30-day display and promotion.

The fall is an ideal time to promote apples. Roger Pepperl, marketing director

for Stemilt Growers Inc., in Wenatchee, WA, says, "As soon as the frost hits the pumpkins, people think of apples." This season, Stemilt will offer a new one-piece bin with no moving parts that makes it easy to pop-up into a freestanding display. The bin, which has a Back To The Land theme with the tag line, "Fresh, Flavorful & Family Farmed," can hold matching 4- to 5-pound tote bags filled with apples or 3-pound bags.

Pepperl adds, "The crop is sizing up smaller than last year, but with a bigger percentage of large apples. This offers an opportunity for bulk ads. October is great time for line-priced Apple-ramas since there's a full variety of apples available."

The Fishers, NY-based New York Apple Association (NYAA) will offer a full-service promotional support program for retailers promoting new crop apples, tying in with the huge buy-local produce trend. Jim Allen, NYAA president, says, "We're going all out to push fresh, local fruit." A key component of the program is newly designed POS signage promoting new crop McIntosh, new crop Empires and other, more generic new crop signs. Other in-store display support includes POS variety cards that detail characteristics and flavor profiles of New York apple varieties.



Photo courtesy of National Apple Month

National Apple Month is the industry's annual generic promotional contest to build in-store displays encouraging consumers to buy more apples.

TAILGATING TIME: Football Season Begins September 10

Sports, snacking and fresh produce go hand-in-hand in the fall. Jose Luis Obregon, managing director of the Irvine, CA-based Hass Avocado Board (HAB), says, "We have found that retail has responded well to sport-themed merchandising during the fall

period. As baseball comes to a close and football goes full-steam ahead, it makes perfect sense to promote healthful snacking during game-day parties. It also provides the retailers with great opportunities to cross-merchandise various products."

Regarding avocados, which are available from Chile and Mexico this time of year,

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Obregon suggests, "Put all the fresh ingredients to make guacamole — avocados, limes, onions, tomatoes, cilantro — in the same display and have tortilla chips, beer, peanuts and other snacks nearby to draw people into the produce department."

Another good tactic, Obregon adds, is secondary large displays as people enter the store or enter the produce department. "This helps capture additional impulse sales. It is all built upon the foundation of having enough ripe fruit on display to satisfy consumer demand. Many consumers wait until the day of their tailgating event to go and buy the ingredients. If the store doesn't have ripe avocados then the consumer either goes somewhere else, buys processed product and doesn't serve fresh guacamole."

This season, the HAB, Mexican Hass Avocado Importers Association (MHAIA) and Chilean Avocado Importers Association (CAIA) will jointly launch a comprehensive, multi-discipline marketing campaign tied to the professional baseball 2009 playoff season that runs late September through late October. The campaign, called The Big Hit, will be promoted via a national, multi-million dollar partnership with a major cable sports network, featuring 30-second TV spots and sponsorship billboards. There will

National Apple Month At Foodland

The winning concept for a National Apple Month display at Foodland, a single-store based in Lebanon, PA, came about as a way to generate empty boxes for a local church's Thanksgiving food drive, explains produce manager, Keith Fetterolf. "The church group gets turkey and canned goods from us each year and brings the items to New York City to donate to needy families. This past summer, the group approached us to find out how they could get 500 empty boxes to distribute the food, so my idea was to order a lot of apples, build a big display and save the boxes."



Fetterolf used a locally grown theme of From Our Farms to Your Family and built a 22-foot-long by 13-foot high display with over 12 varieties of eastern-grown apples, including Red Delicious, Golden Delicious, Cortland, Rome, Stayman Winesap, Ginger Gold, Macoun, Jonathan, Crispin and Honeycrisp. He advertised the apples at 99-cents-a-pound, sold in bulk and in totes that held four to five pounds each, for a 1½-month period from October 2-November 29. The result? "We sold 20,640 pounds of apples, or a little over a ton and saw apples sales lifts of 35 percent over the previous year," says Fetterolf. "And, we generated nearly 600 empty boxes."

pb

also be a national sweepstakes where consumers can win prizes such as a \$5,000 home entertainment package.

The CAIA will use a variety of marketing

programs. One retail-oriented program is the Grab Some For the Game Display Contest, which runs from September through February. POS available to retailers includes

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Beyond avocados, grab-and-go snack produce such as fresh-cut fruit, single-serve salads and party platters are ideal for sports related promotions. Ali Leon, director of fruit, vegetables and corporate communications for Ready Pac Produce Inc., in Irwindale, CA, says, "The produce snacking category is approaching \$500 million. Fresh snacking continues to grow with adults and children, with fresh produce ranking Number One and Two in popularity."

Leon continues, "The key to capitalizing on tailgating-themed sales of fresh-cut produce is driving awareness via highly visible displays and compelling merchandising. Retailers should consider bringing football-

"On average, Hispanics spend 47 percent more on produce than non-Hispanics annually, or about \$228 on both fruits and vegetables."

**— Robert Schueller
Melissa's/World
Variety Produce Inc.**

related POS materials to the produce department and include team-oriented meal suggestions and recipes. End-cap displays in high visibility locations with multiple tailgating-themed items and signage can capitalize on impulse purchases."

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH:

September 15-October 15

Robert Schueller, director of public relations for Melissa's/World Variety Produce, based in Los Angeles, CA, wants retailers to create colorful displays with fresh chiles, squash, corn husks, cilantro, jicama, yucca, plantains and more for this month-long period, which begins just before Mexican Inde-



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pendence Day, on September 16. "Chile strings and wreaths, piñatas and streamers will add to this festive promotion," he adds. "A crucial point to remember is that Mexican Independence Day is more of a traditional, family-oriented Hispanic holiday compared to Cinco de Mayo, which is more Americanized. This means stocking up on and promoting traditional Latin staples."

Retailers that take advantage of this time frame will benefit at the register, as Hispanic customers are valuable ones. "On average, Hispanics spend 47 percent more on produce than non-Hispanics annually, or about \$228 on both fruits and vegetables compared to others that spend \$157 and \$152, respectively," reports Schueller.

Freshness is crucial when marketing to the Latin consumer and so are massive, bulk displays. Schueller continues, "As for pricing, Hispanics want to know the cost of an item prior to checkout. Keep pricing clear and simple. By the "each" works better than "per-pound" or multiple pricing, such as 2/\$1."

Last year, Stop & Shop Supermarket Co., a Quincy, MA-based chain, celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month by offering customers a free, 8-page, bilingual book with authentic recipes from Central America, South America, Spain and the Caribbean. Produce-oriented recipes included Roasted Yellow Plantains with Balsamic Vinegar, Stuffed Bell Peppers with Green Chile Spanish Rice and Chicken Tacos.

ROSH HASHANAH: September 18

Rosh Hashanah marks the start of the Jewish New Year. Schueller notes, "It's a family food occasion that features traditional ingredients such as dried fruits, honey, apples, figs, celery root, squash, onions, leeks, carrots, pomegranates, quince and fresh herbs."

This year, the NYAA is offering POS sign cards featuring McIntosh apples. It reads, "Nosh a 'Tosh, The Big Apple's Apple." Peter Gregg, NYAA spokesperson, notes, "Rosh Hashanah is a big holiday in New York and all along the East Coast. It falls at the same time we're harvesting McIntosh apples."

According to an NYAA-sponsored survey of retail sales data in five Northeast and Mid-Atlantic markets between November 2006 and October 2008, the McIntosh apple is the Number One selling apple in Boston and the third favorite apple behind Red Delicious and Granny Smith in New York City. Macs are the biggest variety of apple grown in New York.

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Halloween-Theme Spurs Produce Sales At Bigg's

In late October, oversized bins of pumpkins and fall mums greet customers as they enter Bigg's, an 11-store chain located in Milford, OH, and a subsidiary of Eden Prairie, MN-based Supervalu, Inc. Produce director, Marvin Lyons, discloses, "In-store, we'll build a big display of all the hard squash, such as butternut, spaghetti and turban, along with more bins of pumpkins, and decorate them all with orange and black crepe paper."

When it comes to pumpkins, the new challenge this year will be the economy. "The price point for the pre-painted pumpkins range from \$6 to \$8 depending on size, whereas ready-to-carve pumpkins sell for less, about \$3 to \$5 on average," Lyons reports. "At the same time, consumers are time rushed and may want the convenience of a painted pumpkin."

A Guess-the-Weight contest is something Lyons likes to run when pumpkins in the 150-pound range are available. In addition to pumpkins, fruit and vegetable platters are something Lyons promotes. "All the Halloween parties make these popular," he says. **pb**

HALLOWEEN: OCTOBER 31

Think Halloween and pumpkins come to mind immediately. John Carl, sales manager at Dan Schantz Farm & Greenhouse LLC, in Zionsville, PA, remarks, "If fall is anything like spring, people will be staying in and decorating their homes, and that means mums and pumpkins. Pre-painted pumpkins are a star in the category and a great way to push margins and sales. We market to kids, meaning we sell pumpkins with bright colors and funny faces. Kids don't like scary designs and parents don't buy them." For adults, Carol recommends, "Heirloom-type pumpkins, squash and gourds are popular this year for decorating."

Some shippers offer Halloween-theme packaging and display pieces for fresh produce. For example, The HMC Marketing Group Inc., located in Kingsburg, CA, offers its Goblin Grape program, a 1-pound holiday-oriented clamshell of black, seedless grapes with a matching box display. Similarly, Stemilt Growers offers a black- and orange-colored, display-ready carton with spooky eye designs for its apples.

Pear harvest in the Pacific Northwest is also in full swing by the end of October. Dennis James, director of marketing for the Pear Bureau Northwest (PBN), in Milwaukie, OR, says, "All varieties of winter pears are available by Halloween."

Once again, the PBN will run its Halloween PEARade promotion, which takes place in more than 20 markets nationwide and runs throughout the month of October. Three community events that focus on USA Pears, Halloween safety and nutrition are held in conjunction with Radio Disney as part of the promotion. In addition to a retailer banner displayed at each event and retail-tagged ads running on radio display throughout the month, POS featuring Pear



Photo courtesy of Stemilt Growers Inc.

Stemilt offers this black- and orange-colored, display-ready carton with spooky eyes for its apples.

Buddies clad in Halloween costumers is available to decorate the fresh pear display.

THANKSGIVING: November 26

Thanksgiving marks the start of the "Big Family Dinner" season, according to Larry Narwold, business development director for Nationfresh LLC, headquartered in Lakes Littleton, CO. "All these meals deserve to start with a salad, with the key ingredient of tomatoes. Grape and cherry tomatoes, TOVs (tomatoes on-the-vine) and Romas are items for promotion."

Vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage and collard greens are also big promotional items for Thanksgiving, says Lee Anne Oxford, marketing director for Raleigh, NC-based L & M Companies Inc. "In some areas, there's a locally grown appeal that makes these items even more popular." She adds, "Onions and potatoes are typically on ad, too. For example, some retailers will advertise, buy a 5-pound bag of russets and get a 3-pound bag of onions free."

George Wooten, owner/president of Wayne E. Bailey Produce Co., in Chadbourne, NC, contends Thanksgiving is the biggest

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Reader Service #108

Turkey Day At Kings Super Market

Thanksgiving is a great holiday to promote produce, contends Paul Kneeland, vice president of produce and floral for Kings Super Markets Inc., a 25-store chain based in Parsippany, NJ. "We push two things. One, items with a high gross profit and secondly, items with a high ring at the register." Kneeland continues, "Asparagus is a component of a traditional Thanksgiving meal, and so are broccoli and celery, so we'll rotate and promote these items. We'll also promote the mainstays, such as potatoes, because our competitors do. All items on ad are merchandized in a high traffic area in the produce department."

Fresh cranberries are another favorite seasonal ad item. "We'll use them as a color break and cross-merchandise them next to green beans and broccoli," says Kneeland. "It makes a striking display." **pb**

holiday for sweet potato sales. "We move about 20 percent of the crop at this time," he reveals. "Retailers can start to promote mid-October." For Thanksgiving, build big displays, include bulk as well as 3- and 5-pound bags, and put sweet potatoes on ad, recommends Wooten. "There's no need to run sweet potatoes as a loss leader or with a deep discount since people are going to buy them anyway this time of year."

As for fruit, promote berries and pears for desserts and centerpieces, says Megan Schulz, marketing assistant for the Giumarra Bros. Fruit Co. Inc., in Los Angeles, CA. "We have blackberries and blueberries from

the Southern Hemisphere. The Comice pear makes an especially elegant dessert due to its sweet taste and creamy texture."

Gordon Robertson, vice president of sales and marketing for Sun World International LLC., located in Bakersfield, CA, remarks, "Red Globe grapes are great for snacking and have an ornamental appeal as well, due to their large size."

Don't forget the cranberries — one of the few truly seasonal fruit, and they happen to be available fresh only in the fall. For Thanksgiving promotions, Keith Benoit, senior director of special markets for Ocean Spray Cranberries Inc., in Middleboro, MA,

maintains, "The rule of thumb is to have cranberries in store by November 1 — no later. Customers like to stock up because cranberries can be frozen. Retailers can encourage this with multi-bag promotions."

The 12-ounce plastic bag remains the standard unit of sale for cranberries, reports Bob Wilson, principal partner/managing member of Wisconsin Rapids, WI-based Cranberry Network LLC. However, the company is introducing new packaging. "We are offering the club stores 3-pound, zip-top bags. A few have tried clamshells, but this is a more expensive unit. No matter what the pack, it's important to keep cranberries cold for best quality and shelf-life."

To coincide with its Bogs Across America events, this past fall, Ocean Spray set up freestanding bog exhibits at select Kroger grocery stores in Ohio and Kentucky in October and November. Consumers at these and other local Kroger banners in the western United States, including Fred Meyer, Fry's, King Soopers and Ralphs supermarkets, had the opportunity to learn about the taste, health and heritage of the cranberry. "Last year, we test-marketed a promotion where we affixed coupons for \$1-off fresh cranberries on bottles of Ocean Spray cranberry juice. The promotion was successful, so we'll do again this year," says Benoit. **pb**



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New York Apples Provide A Big Boost To Fall Produce

Empire State to produce a greater volume of bigger, better-than-ever apples.

BY AMY SHANNON

Heavy rain in the heart of New York's growing season is set to produce a large volume of pleasantly plump apples at least as big as this past year's crop — possibly even larger.

"Fresh-picked local fruit will be abundant this fall," reports Jim Allen, president of the New York Apple Association (NYAA), a Fishers, NY-based, non-profit agricultural trade association that represents 695 growers. "Consumers will be delighted with the fresh taste and bigger size of this season's new crop apples."

New York's apple season runs from September through early November. Ranking second in the nation in apple production, the state grows apples on 44,916 acres, according to NYAA.

At press time, growers expected early-season varieties, such as Ginger Gold and Paula Red, to

begin in mid-August, according to NYAA. Considered the traditional kickoff to the apple season, the McIntosh harvest is scheduled to begin the first week of September.

The crop is expected to come within the state's 5-year average of 29 million bushels. "New York apples will meet or exceed our 5-year average of close to 3 million bushels," says Allen. "It is expected to be a large-sized crop due to ample rainfall."

"This year's crop looks very good with a plentiful supply of all the popular Eastern varieties," states John Russell, manager of Lake Ontario Fruit, a subsidiary of Lake Ridge Fruit Co. LLC., an Albion, NY-based packinghouse that stores and packs fresh apples. "Great fruit size and flavor should highlight this year's crop."

Lee Peters, vice president of sales and marketing for Fowler Bros. Inc., based in Wolcott, NY, notes, "The 2009 apple crop is sizing nicely and has awesome quality." At press time, he expected to harvest the third week of August.

Sandy Cohen, president of Cohen Produce Marketing, located in Aspers, PA, adds, "As of now, the crop looks very good. It's sizing nicely. The crop is fairly clean. The volume is clearly that with little or no shortages." Cohen works with all fresh apple products from most of the major producing states.

RISING DEMAND

Consumers are rapidly purchasing New York-grown apples known for their home-grown appeal. Many of the state's orchards are within one tank of gas to 30 million consumers, according to NYAA. "Because local demand is so strong, we're relieved we should have enough new crop apples for everyone," explains Allen.

According to the NYAA, new scan data reports New York-grown varieties are dominating the marketplace in major markets located along the East Coast. McIntosh ranks third in popularity in New York and first in Boston. Empire and Honeycrisp varieties also rank high.

Allen points to an increase in production and a



Photo courtesy of New York Apple Association

New York Apple Association's Apple Country marketing material will be available to retailers this fall.



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Reader Service # 119



Plantings of new apples varieties, such as Gala, are on the rise.

growing number of packing and storage facilities as major trends emerging in the industry. "Plantings of new varieties, such as Honey Crisps, Seetango, Gala and others, are on the rise."

BIG ON SIZE, QUALITY

Heavy rains produced larger segments of the popular apple varieties, such as Honey Crisp, since more recently planted trees come into bearing production this season, notes Allen. Traditional New York-grown varieties, such as McIntosh and Empire, look promising, as well. To offset the rains, growers will be searching for sunshine in the season's remaining weeks. Sunshine generates sugar content in the apples, giving them the flavor consumers love.

"Retailers love larger apples because they sell by the weight," points out Allen. "Consumes are mixed, as they want different sizes for different purposes."

Cohen expects retailers to move to larger sizes, and "hopefully promote more bulk, local apples. The opportunity exists with larger apples to do promotions in No. 8 or No. 10 bags," he says.

Despite larger-sized fruit due to added rainfall, Fowler's Peters notes, "We still need the heat that has been lacking."

TOP GROWING PRACTICES

For New York growers, food safety is a critical issue. "It's always at the forefront of anything our growers, and we as packers, do," stresses Russell of Lake Ontario. "Our growers undergo food-safety audits at the farm level, and we do the same at the pack-

ing facility level."

Lake Ontario's growers constantly strive for producing apples that suit consumers' needs. "Managed varieties have become — and will continue to be — one of the important elements of our business as we continue to find new varieties with the flavor profile and eating experience that our customers demand."

"Place new selling stations in the deli department or prepared food area to encourage apples at meal time, rather than chips and other snacks."

**— Jim Allen
New York
Apple Association**

Likewise, Cohen of Cohen Produce ensures all of his company's growers and packers are either GAP-certified or will be by the end of the year. "Most — if not all — packers have food safety plans in place," he

Back by popular demand

There's a good reason why the new school year coincides with a spike in New York State apple sales - thousands of school-age children looking to get on the good side of their teachers - searching for that little edge that can help turn C's into B's, and B's into A's when those first report cards come home.

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Reader Service # 98



Photo courtesy of New York Apple Association

Merchandising tote bag apples plays off a farm-stand feel and is a great way to draw attention to the fruit.

states. "Produce traceability is also another issue that packers are moving towards if they are not there already."

Certified by Cologne, Germany-based GlobalGAP, Fowler Bros. has also been USDA-audited for several years. "Food safety

is not new," explains Peters. "We have had trace-back since 1987."

PROMOTIONAL ASSISTANCE

To best highlight the benefits of this season's apples, NYAA's Allen suggests cross-

merchandising New York apples with related items, providing retail price points to move the crops, increasing displays and keeping them rotated. "Place new selling stations in the deli department or prepared food area to encourage apples at meal time, rather than chips and other snacks."

Peters concurs, adding, "Most customers want to cross-merchandise and sell apples in great volume. By tying in other departments throughout the store, they will achieve maximum sales and profits."

Cohen recommends promoting the locally grown aspect of New York apples, along with apple club packs and tote bags.

"Feature as many varieties as possible," advises Peters. "A flavor for every taste will send home the message that consumers need to buy local, eat well and live well."

The NYAA supports profitable growing and marketing of New York apples by building demand for apples and apple products; representing the industry at state and federal levels; and serving as the primary information source on New York apple-related matters. It plans to offer its full-service Promotion Support Program for retailers promoting the state's new crop Apples. The program focuses on the 'Buy Local' produce trend. "We're going all out to push fresh, local fruit," explains Allen. "This fall, our

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“Feature as many varieties as possible. A flavor for every taste will send home the message that consumers need to buy local, eat well and live well.”

**— Lee Peters
Fowler Bros. Inc.**

can request banners, display wraps and health card POS signage. NYAA also offers a new poster highlighting New York apples using a star-burst sticker that reads “New Crop.” Additional in-store display materials, such as POS variety cards that include detailed characteristics of New York apple varieties, are also available. Each of the POS product variety cards includes a colorful illustration of the apple and a list of the apple’s flavor characteristics. Other popular marketing materials include the Apple Country and the Hispanic apple variety guides, which will both be available to retailers again this fall.

The NYAA will continue with its successful in-store display program, touted as one of the most effective ways to promote apples. In 2008, the NYAA sponsored approximately 1,500 in-store demos throughout the country. A \$600,000 television and radio advertising campaign geared toward promoting the taste and health benefits of New York-grown apples is also on the horizon for the organization.

“We will be hitting the trade early with new crop promotions themed around the fact that apples are the original comfort food, as well as the significant consumer interest in homegrown apples,” notes Allen. “We can be in the most major markets in



Photos courtesy of New York Apple Association

The New York Apple Association distributes various POS material through its Apple Country marketing campaign.

hours and less than one to two days.” He recommends using POS materials to educate consumers, advertise homegrown or locally produced New York apples and emphasize new crop apples

Fowler’s Peters expects retailers to respond positively to this season’s promising crop. “They will merchandise what we harvest, so their consumers have the advantage of taking home a healthy snack.” **pb**

apples will be coming straight from the orchard — not from storage.”

The NYAA’s Promotion Support Program includes newly designed POS signage for new crop McIntosh and new crop Empire, along with generic new crop signs. Retailers

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Make Room For Michigan Apples

Environmentally conscious state offers top promotional efforts to showcase this season's voluminous apple crop.

BY AMY SHANNON

Michigan growers are promising a plentiful fall apple harvest — high on quality and quantity.

Weather in the Great Lakes State has been close to ideal with ample precipitation in most areas and a lack of severe storms.

Yield is expected to be high, since most trees are also carrying heavy loads of apples, according to Denise Donohue, executive director of the Michigan Apple Committee (MAC), in DeWitt, MI. "Not only is it a very large crop for our state, but it is also one of great overall quality. We're thrilled to have an outstanding crop in the making and look forward to rewarding retailers who advertise these

highly anticipated first apples of the season."

Holly Whetstone, MAC communications and marketing specialist, projects this year's crop to be one of the best in recent history. "Apples are sizing up very well and there are lots of them," she reports. "The cooler summer temperatures and plenty of rain have really helped develop the flavor and size of the apples."

"It's absolutely wonderful," agrees John Schaefer, president of Jack Brown Produce Inc., a packer based in Sparta, MI, that stores and sells approximately 14 varieties of fresh Michigan apples. "Growers are planting new and improved existing varieties, as well as new varieties, such as Honey-crisp."

MAC forecasts a 25- to 27-million bushel crop with excellent taste and good size. The third-largest apple-producing state in the country, Michigan produces more than 20 varieties for the commercial market.

Small family-owned and operated farms continue to dominate the Michigan apple landscape. According to Whetstone, about 65 percent of Michigan apple orchards are less than 200 acres. "Apple orchards are trending toward high-density plantings in order for growers to bring more desirable varieties to market faster."

One factor that sets Michigan apples apart from those grown elsewhere has to do with the state's distinct growing climate. "Surrounded by the Great Lakes, Michigan's unique geography with the lake effect provides ideal conditions for growing apples," emphasizes Whetstone.

"We're the ultimate just-in-time shipping mechanism. We're close to major customers and we pack to order," stresses Schaefer.

Popular Michigan apple varieties include Honeycrisp and Jonagold, according to blind taste tests conducted in fall 2008 and early 2009. "Consumers preferred these varieties to others grown elsewhere," reports Whetstone. "Galas also continue to grow in consumer appeal."

"We've had substantially more Galas than other



Photo courtesy of Michigan Apple Committee

The Michigan Apple Committee organizes a number of promotional efforts on behalf of the state's apples.

eastern production areas," adds Don Armock, president of Riveridge Produce Marketing Inc., a Sparta, MI-based packer, shipper and marketer of 20 different varieties of Michigan apples. "We've also seen a big increase in volume in Honeycrisp."

"Honeycrisp is the most recent phenomenon," agrees Schaefer of Jack Brown Produce. "There's a lot of consumer buzz about them, and we get many customer calls."

New strains are also being developed with consistent eating quality, notes Armock. "Growers are adapting to what the consumer is looking for."

PROMOTIONAL EFFORTS

As more Michigan growers begin to plant Honeycrisp, MAC is rolling out a new campaign featuring a new Euro carton. "Despite being a difficult variety to grow, this is one that customers can't seem to get enough of," states Whetstone. "We also have some exciting new rebate offers in the works," she adds. "We're bringing back the Early Season Rebate and introducing great, new offers for retailers on tray-pack apples and holiday baking varieties."

Now through October 15, the Michigan Apple Early Season Rebate is a series of offers for retailers who advertise early-sea-

son Michigan apple varieties in an effort to push this year's plentiful crop. To participate in the rebate series, retailers must publish a minimum of three ads on at least one of the following: Paula Red, McIntosh, Ginger Gold, Gala or Jonamac. They can also choose to mix and match varieties within their ads. Participating retailers will be eligible for 25 cents per-case of Michigan apples sold, allowing them to earn up to a \$2,000 rebate made payable to their store. To qualify, advertisements must include MAC's registered logo along with the words, "Michigan Apple" or "Michigan Apple Committee."

"We're gearing up for an aggressive selling season with expectations that Michigan could bring more fresh apples to the table than ever before," reports MAC's Donohue.

The rebate series is a first for MAC, but the organization hopes to design additional rebates focusing on tray-pack apples and baking varieties. "This year, we're also bringing back our Locally Grown campaign bigger and better in the Midwest, where retailers and consumers have expressed a preference for locally grown produce, knowing that they're supporting farmers and the local economy," Whetstone explains. The promotion will include Kwik-Lok bag closures and billboards.

FOCUS ON FOOD SAFETY

This fall, more than 300 Michigan apple growers are expected to meet GAP (Good Agricultural Practice) certification, the on-farm certification program with the U.S. government's seal of approval, according to Whetstone of the MAC. "In light of the relatively recent recalls on peanuts and tomatoes, food safety is definitely in the forefront for all growers."

Decreasing the state's carbon footprint is another important factor, as retailers and consumers are becoming more aware of the danger of excessive fuel usage and carbon output that results from both packing plants and coast-to-coast shipping of produce. Michigan's central location means it can supply apples to many parts of the country with minimal impact on the environment.

For Jack Brown Produce, keeping its apples fresh and safe is critical. One of the largest packers on the state's ridge, Jack Brown is building 17 controlled-atmosphere rooms as part of a \$2 million expansion. "We're adding 30,000 square feet in storage capacity," Schaefer says. The controlled-atmosphere rooms will allow the grower to harvest apples during the fall at their peak ripeness and store them through the winter without spoilage. **pb**

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Chilean Avocado Crop Bounces Back

Retailers can expect larger volumes of this top profit producer, along with elevated marketing support from trade organizations, growers and suppliers.

BY AMY SHANNON

While fresh avocados arriving from Chile have been light in the past couple of years due to freezes, the industry anticipates a larger crop this season and plans to help push sales with increased marketing and promotions.

"The season began early this year as the maturity of the fruit was ready to ship in July," reports Maggie Bezart, marketing director for the Chilean Avocado Importers Association (CAIA), based in Washington, D.C. "However, it was perfect timing as the California crop was shorter than expected."

Favorable weather should make for good quantity and volume, and growers are gearing up for a profitable peak season, which should run from October into December. Chile has many boats arriving to ports throughout the United States. "Just in

time for Labor Day ads," remarks Bezart, who anticipates 310 million pounds of Chilean avocados to be exported to the United States.

"The supply of avocados this year will be significantly higher than this past year," according to Bruce Dowhan, general manager of Giumarra Agri-com International LLC, located in Escondido, CA. "This past year, there was approximately 160 million pounds, and projections are approximately 300 million pounds." Dowhan says harvest will begin in the northern regions of Chile where the avocados are most mature.

In terms of boxes, "We estimate this Chilean import season to be 10 to 13 million boxes for the United States," notes Rob Wedin, vice president of fresh sales for Santa Paula, CA-based Calavo Growers Inc. Chilean avocados account for about 5 to 10 percent of Calavo's business. "Demand for Hass avocados in the United States continues to grow at about 15 percent per year."

Demand continues to increase during the fall and winter months, when "there should be 18 to 24 million pounds of product, which builds strong consumer demand," explains Bezart. "Avocado consumer purchases increased five percentage points over the previous year. Consumers in the West are still the strongest purchasers, but the East and Southeast are having significant growth, and the Midwest is not far behind."

COMPLEMENTARY SEASON

Typically arriving in July or August and running through February, Hass avocados dominate the Chilean avocado season. "Every season is different based on a blending of Chilean crop size and U.S. opportunity," says Wedin. "But, with the exception of Florida and Dominican greens, which produce very different avocado species, 99.9 percent of the avocados in the U.S. market are the Hass variety."

Plus, "There are several varieties of other avocados available primarily from California throughout the year," adds Dowhan.



This year's expected crop of roughly 300 millions pounds of Chilean avocados is practically double that of last year's.

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Chile's harvesting season peaks when California's harvest reaches its lowest point. "This complementary situation provides sufficient volume to promote avocados throughout the year," notes Dowhan. "Chile is unique as it provides high quality avocados at times in the year where there is limited availability."

Bezart of CAIA agrees, adding, "Fresh avocados from Chile are the perfect complement to the California season." She notes both California and Chile adhere to strict population and harvesting guidelines. "Chile has the highest food safety standards with GlobalGAP and the highest voluntary standards on maturity level of 23 percent. Our importers are primarily California growers and shippers."

SMART MARKETING

Affordable prices and ample quantity are important for building avocado sales, but they'll only help retailers so much if displays aren't vibrant, neat and plentiful. "Keep displays fresh through merchandising ripe avocados," suggests Wedin. "Require dependable displays and promote often."

Consumers prefer riper Chilean avocados as opposed to overly firm avocados, so displaying ripe fruit will entice impulse buy-

ers. Nonetheless, it's important to display a variety of avocados, including those that are firm, breaking and ripe. Produce employees who are educated on the ripening process will also help consumers

Explaining the growing process and a little about the regions where Chilean avocados are grown is another option. "POS material that tells the story of growing avocados in South America has proven to be effective," notes Giumarra's Dowhan. "The Chilean Avocado Import Association has been successful in working with retailers to promote more often, provide demos and creatively merchandise the product. These will be critical elements in moving increased volumes from Chile this year."

Bezart agrees, adding, "Feature Chilean Hass avocados at their peak of season, introducing new consumers to them at the height of flavor, while simultaneously driving consumption with existing customers."

CAIA recently launched a new, in-store produce display bin to help retailers attract attention to Chilean avocados. "It's a great way to add additional avocado selling space at the front of the department or by complementary items, including garlic, onions, tomatoes and sandwich features, such as lettuce," Bezart notes. When featured at or

near the checkout aisles, the bins create impulse sales. The bins can also be cross-merchandised in other departments, especially in the chip aisle with dips and other dry complementary items, she adds.

CAIA is also encouraging retailers to enter its in-store Grab Some For The Game choose-your-theme display contest, which will be featured in a minimum of 25 retail chains across the United States. The contest allows retailers to select one of several themes that fit into their store and produce department goals. "This retail display contest is so easy to enter, produce managers would be crazy not to do it," Bezart states. A retail produce director in each of CAIA's four regions selects first-, second- and third-place winners, who will each be recommended for United Fresh Produce Association's Produce Manager of the Year Award.

BUILD EXCITEMENT

From highlighting the nutritional benefits involved with consuming avocados to organizing promotions with a sports-related theme, CAIA offers multiple programs geared toward building Chilean avocado profits. "This year's in-store promotional opportunities will give our valued retailers an effective in-store approach throughout

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Reader Service # 62

Joint Marketing Efforts

our selling season in key ways, including produce team incentives, consumer contests, philanthropic programs, POS consumer outreach and education on avocados, — all of which are completely customizable by the retailer,” reports Bezart.

“CAI considers its supermarket retail partnerships to be the cornerstone of its marketing efforts that are focused on successfully increasing U.S.-based consumer demand and consumption of Chilean Hass avocados,” Bezart adds.

Approximately 186 Grand Rapids, MI-based Meijer Inc. locations; 115 Schenectady, NY-based Price Chopper Supermarkets; and 193 Matthews, NC-based Harris-Teeter Super Markets Inc. locations will feature Chilean Hass avocados from October 4-31 as part of its Pink Ribbon Produce program, an in-store cause marketing promotion uniting the produce industry in the fight against breast cancer. “It focuses on educating consumers through in-store signage, product ads and public relations,” explains Bezart of CAIA.

CAIA is also running a 30-second television commercial with creative focused on strong nutrition that delivers messaging in an active, energetic and family-friendly way, details Bezart. “In addition to using cutting-edge, 3-D titling, television creatives also reflect CAIA’s commitment to youth soccer.”

Additionally, the CAIA has a 30-second radio ad centered on nutritional messaging, presented in an upbeat, friendly and trustworthy manner. Additionally, the organization announced a new outdoor billboard that promotes consumption of Chilean avocados by emphasizing the healthful active lifestyles associated with them. “We also have new POS to support joint baseball pro-

With a large Chilean crop on the horizon, the avocado industry is gearing up to launch a comprehensive, multi-discipline marketing campaign tied to the professional baseball 2009 playoff season that runs late September through late October. The Big Hit is the first collaborative marketing effort organized by the Irvine, CA-based Hass Avocado Board (HAB), Mexican Hass Avocado Importers Association (MHAIA) and the Chilean Avocado Importers Association (CAIA), located in Washington, D.C.

“The Big Hit is a best-in-class example of how multi-origin avocado marketing organizations can work together to promote the category as a whole,” states Len Francis, HAB chairman. “The program aligns avocados with the excitement building around the professional baseball play-offs, while benefiting in-season avocados.

The purpose of the campaign is to increase avocado sales during the fall by positioning the Hass avocado as a must-have ingredient for baseball playoff party menus. “The convergence of multi-origin

Hass supply in the fall months creates a terrific opportunity to promote Hass avocados to baseball fans,” reports Mike Browne, MHAIA chairman. “By channeling marketing resources, messaging and strategies into one cohesive campaign, we are determined to strengthen Hass avocado consumption.”

The groups plan to promote The Big Hit using a national, multi-million dollar partnership with a major cable sports network, featuring 30-second TV spots and sponsorship billboards, estimated to generate more than 147 million impressions. “Fully integrated programs give us the capacity to reach consumers in all of our key markets,” states Jorge Covarrubias, chairman of CAIA. “Working together on a program tied to the professional baseball playoffs will allow us to leverage the excitement around the sporting event and promote Hass avocados to those consumers that are already planning to watch the games.”

The campaign also includes a national sweepstakes that gives consumers the chance to win prizes including a \$5,000 home entertainment package. **pb**

motions along with sports and nutrition themes in the produce department,” notes Bezart. “It’s easy-to-implement, in-store POS that provides tips on selection, handling and storage of fresh, Chilean Hass avocados.”

Beginning September 1, CAIA will launch the Chilean Avocado Lovers Club and ask consumers to enter the “So Good. So Many Ways.” contest for a chance to win \$250 in free groceries or a free official soccer ball. CAIA will select 260 consumer winners throughout the country. The contest will run through February 15, 2010. “We will promote the club and sweepstakes through extensive media relations outreach and special Facebook and Twitter groups and pages on the Internet,” explains Bezart. Consumers will also have the opportunity to sign up for Avocado Love Letters, e-newsletters containing recipes, usage ideas, nutritional information and promotional initiatives.”

CAIA also offers retailers a complete kit for in-store demonstrations to increase excitement about sales of this season’s crop. The kit includes “Ask Me About MUFAs” buttons to encourage consumers to ask and demonstrators to explain the nutritional benefits of monounsaturated fats and avocados. It also contains a complete guide on

Chilean avocado demonstrations; a 4-color recipe leaflet with nutritional information, recipes and facts about Chile’s growing areas; an easel-backed sign announcing the Chilean Avocado Lovers Club consumer contest; and 50 ripening bags that fit on the back of the sign.

All Cincinnati, OH-based Kroger Co. divisions will feature Chilean Hass avocados from October 11 through November 7, 2009, and January 3 through 30, 2010, as part of CAIA’s Make the Most of Your Produce program, which focuses on educating consumers through in-store events, signage and multimedia. “It’s important to educate and entice consumers about the benefits of eating fresh produce year-round, specifically, Chilean Hass avocados, as well as teaching consumers how to handle, store and select Chilean Hass avocados, thus bringing new and more frequent purchases,” states Bezart.

Bezart suggests retailers feature Chilean Hass avocados at their peak of season, introducing new consumers to them at the height of flavor, while simultaneously driving consumption with existing customers. “The program offers Kroger consumers the opportunity to get educated on the proper selection, use, handling and preparation of fresh produce.” **pb**



Photo courtesy of Chilean Avocado Importers Association

CAIA’s “So Good. So Many Ways.” contest is an integral part of the Chilean Avocado Lovers Club, launched on September 1, 2009.

Make California Grapes The Star Of Fall Produce

Mixed displays with ample room and seasonal, smart promotions will keep California grapes at the top of consumers' minds.

BY CAROL BAREUTHER, RD

Grapes aren't just a summer fruit. Even though California, which supplies 98 percent of domestic grapes, begins harvest in May, half of the state's crop ships after September 1, according to the Fresno, CA-based California Table Grape Commission (CTGC).

Ed Laster, produce specialist at Metropolitan Markets, a 6-store chain based in Seattle, WA, says, "Grapes are an important category in terms of volume and dollar sales in the fall. However, there are some challenges. Prices aren't as good as during the summer and there's some competition from new crop apples."

QUANTITY & QUALITY

The CTGC projects a 2009 total volume of 97.4

million 19-pound boxes of grapes, slightly less than last year's record 98.5 million pound crop.

Nick Dulcich, sales manager at Sunlight International Sales Inc., headquartered in Delano, CA, reports, "Overall, volume is expected to be less than last year. We should see less Red Globes, Autumn Royals and Thompsons, which could substantially shorten the shipping season that typically ends in early January."

Yet on the quality front, Rick Eastes, vice president of sales and marketing for Fruit Patch Sales LLC, in Dinuba, CA, contends, "Most varieties look to have excellent quality, with perhaps Flame seedless having a little less berry size as an average."

Jim Llano, sales manager at Castle Rock Vineyards, headquartered in Delano, CA, adds, "What we are looking at going into September and October is that all varieties appear balanced and there's good balance within each variety. This is relative to last year, when Crimsons suffered from quality issues, such as appearance and berry size throughout the season."

Weather can ultimately affect how California's grape crop will play out in terms of quantity and quality. According to Dave Parker, director of marketing for Scattaglia Growers & Shippers, located in Traver, CA, "You don't want rain, even drizzle, on the grapes due to the risk of rot and mold. Rains typically come in October. The industry now routinely covers the vines with light, permeable sheet plastic at the slightest suggestion of rainy weather to prevent these problems."

The fall and winter marketing window for California grapes has shifted over the years. Grower/shippers once shipped California grapes into February and March, says Steve Kenfield, vice president of marketing and business development



Merchandising more than one color of grapes will boost sales volumes.



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for The HMC Group Marketing Inc., headquartered in Kingsburg, CA. "Then Chile entered the market, and now Peru and Brazil come in with grapes during November and December."

Andy Kampa, a sales associate at Eden Prairie, MN-based C. H. Robinson Worldwide Inc., notes, "Last year, California's harvest was later and good quality grapes were available into December. This put pressure on imports from Brazil and Peru. But, as late-season varieties from California are available, I personally see the Brazil and Peru deal shrinking."

When to transition from domestic grapes to imports at retail depends on quality, says Marvin Lyons, produce director at Bigg's, an 11-store chain based in Milford, OH, and a subsidiary of Eden Prairie, MN-based SuperValu, Inc. "It doesn't happen at a certain date on the calendar. We might shoot for a certain date, but in reality, when the quality slips on the California end, then we move on to Chile."

At the same time, according to a March 31, 2009 release from the CTGC, 93 percent of U.S. consumers prefer California grapes to all other grape regions. Therefore, there's a marketing advantage to sticking with domestic grapes as long as possible.



*Flame, Thompson,
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Reader Service # 120

Grape Fall & Winter Promotional Tips

The California Table Grape Commission, in Fresno, CA, recommends the following strategies for promoting grapes specifically in the fall and early winter season, based on research conducted by The Perishables Group in 2007:

- **A Small Discount Can Go A Long Way.** A discount of between 40 to 49 percent will maximize average category volume lift. However, even a small promotional discount (less than 10 percent) can drive positive lift of grape promotions.
- **Get Grapes Out The Door In Bulk.** Consumers may need a reminder that fresh grapes are readily available in the fall. Therefore, it's a good time to run deeper promotions. For example, 10 (pounds of grapes)-for-\$10 promotions generate both positive volume and dollar lift.
- **Three Promotions Per Month Is the**

Magic Number. Three grape promotions per month translates into an average category lift in volume by nearly 50 percent and in category dollar impact by more than 20 percent.

• **Four Ad Items Is Best.** A multi-item ad, or promoting four grape items at once, garners the best volume and dollar impact for the category. For example, advertising two varieties produces a 36 percent category volume lift, while four generates a 59 percent lift.

• **Front Page News.** Nearly 50 percent of shoppers look at store ads or specials for fresh produce before they shop. Front-page ads generate nearly double the volume and dollar lift of back-page ads.

• **Feature Grapes.** Feature ads outperform sub-feature ads by 209 percent in volume and 190 percent in dollars. **pb**

LATE-SEASON VARIETAL TRENDS

The CTGC reports there are over 60 varieties of grapes grown in California, of which 15 are most abundant in production.

Kenfield adds, "In the last five to seven years, there has been both public and proprietary varietal development. This has impacted eating quality and visual appearance, with the production of big, tasty, crunchy grapes. The varietal development hasn't necessarily been aimed at extending the California window, but to build quality into the window we have."

The advent of several new early and late-season varieties "is leveling out in what used to be a bell-shaped curve of production," asserts Jim Howard, vice president of the CTGC. "Now, there is more consistent availability through the season."

Scattaglia's Parker agrees, adding, "We're now able to keep grapes longer on the vine. There's no rush to harvest the grapes, and with excellent cold storage capabilities, we can now offer a planned harvest schedule, and barring any weather issues, follow it."

Jon Zaninovich, vice president of Jasmine Vineyards Inc., based in Delano, CA, remarks, "For retailers, this offers a more reliable supply without interruptions and the ability to promote later into the year."

Sunlight's Dulcich notes, "Most retailers concentrate on three colors, and some like to promote grower proprietary varieties on special occasions to set themselves apart

from their competitors. Seeded Red Globes sell well into Asian communities, while seedless varieties work well everywhere."

For the fall, Dulcich expects Autumn Royal (black), Crimson (red) and two new green varieties — Autumn Kings and Luisco. "There will also be Scarlet Royals, Magentas and Majestics available in September and early October."

At Metropolitan Markets, Laster reports red grapes outsell green. "Red grapes are always sweet and don't have as much shrink because their dark skin doesn't show imperfections, such as shadowing or an amber color as in green grapes. Green run second and black grapes are third. Black grapes are tough to get consumers to buy and require a lot of education."

Red Grapes: Flame and Crimson "are the two major red varieties in the fall," according to Parker.

C. H. Robinson's Kampa admits, "The Crimson crop was short last year due to a freeze. Newer red seedless varieties, such as the Scarlet Royal, helped to fill this gap."

Scarlotta Seedless is a 2005-introduced proprietary, late-season red grape variety developed by Sun World International, located in Bakersfield, CA. Gordon Robertson, vice president of sales and marketing, says, "This is a large, full premium grape that we'll have in significant volume. Last year, we shipped it into January. It's great for snacking and has an ornamental element, too, due to its large berry size."

The Vintage Red, available from Septem-

ber through December, is a small, profitable variety. Tim Dayka, managing member at Reedley, CA-based Dayka & Hackett LLC, believes, "It should make significant gains during this marketing season."

Green Grapes: Kampa of C.H. Robinson maintains green, seedless Thompsons "have fallen by the wayside in the last few years as heartier varieties of green grapes emerge. There's heated discussions in the industry about whether Thompsons will remain in significant production."

Princess, harvested from July through November, and Pristine, available from September through December, are two varieties of very large, green, seedless grapes that have nearly doubled and tripled, respectively, in production out of California during the last three years.

Likewise, Autumn King, a large, green, seedless grape harvested in October and available through December, has increased from just over 11,000 million 19-pound box equivalents in 2007 to nearly half a million boxes in 2008.

Black Grapes: "Black seedless grapes are third in popularity after red and green, but we do see the blacks growing in popularity," says Bigg's Lyons. "Black grapes have had a history of being seeded. Customers are start-

ing to recognize that the majority of black grape varieties today are seedless and this increases their appeal."

Don Goforth, director of marketing for Family Tree Farms Marketing LLC, headquartered in Reedley, CA, shares, "We'll have some late-season Autumn Royals like we did last year." The Autumn Royal is a large blue-black grape harvested in August and available through January.

Columbine Vineyards, located in Delano, CA, offers its proprietary Black Globe. Though the variety is seeded, its extra-large, sweet, crunchy fruit is creating demand.

Seeded Grapes: Americans prefer seedless grapes. Nonetheless, Jasmine's Zaninovich notes, "Sales of seeded Red Globes pick up in the fall."

Bigg's Lyons agrees. "Red Globes hold up well in holiday fruit baskets and are popular for table decorations due to their size."

Organic Grapes: Sun World's Robertson notes, "Organic grapes are not nearly the volume of conventional. However, we do see strong consumer demand for them."

Rob O'Rourke, senior vice president of business development for RJO Produce Marketing, in Fresno, CA, adds, "Organic varieties of grapes available tend to mimic core varieties such as Flame and Crimson. The

best supply is July through October. You tend to lose the organics in the late deal."

C.H. Robinson introduced its Welch's brand organic grape program last year. "We packed clamshells and bags of Flame and Crimson, Princess and Pristine, and Summer and Autumn Royals," details Kampa. "They're not flying off the shelf in comparison with conventional, but they do add an additional layer for incremental sales."

Scattaglia will enter the organic grape market this year, reveals Parker, beginning with Flame and Crimson.

"One reason why nearly 80 percent of California grapes are packed in bags is that it's a cheaper type of packaging and allows a better price point."

**— Jon Zaninovich
Jasmine Vineyards Inc.**

Selling Grapes By Variety

Will California's grape industry go the way of the apple category, where retailers sign and promote and consumers buy individual varieties by name? Or, will grapes follow on the heels of tree fruit, where two to three varieties are available for two-week windows and consumers simply know a peach as a peach?

Advertising new, flavorful varieties of grapes can prove beneficial to customers who are only familiar with "Red" or "Green" grapes, says Nick Dulcich, sales manager for Sunlight International Sales Inc., based in Delano, CA, he says. "A new eating sensation, such as a mid-season Magenta or late-season Autumn King, will intrigue customers to purchase more grapes and continue to support the category well after the traditional varieties have run out."

On the other hand, John Pandol, vice president of special projects for Pandol Bros. Inc., based in Delano, CA, points out, "I don't see a lot of retailers offering two red or two green seedless at the same time, even though PLU stickers have allowed us to do this for the last 10 years. It's all about SKU rather than PLU."

Steve Kenfield, vice president of marketing and business development for The HMC Group Marketing Inc., in Kingsburg, CA, agrees. "Consumers don't remember varieties. On the shipper side, there is a complex varietal mix. To consumers, there's just a generic commodity description — red, green, black. Produce marketers may have a special variety they want to promote, but actually translating this to the consumer is a significant leap."

While it is nice to have new varieties, it can go too far, like it has in the case of tree fruit, notes Blair Richardson, CEO of FreshSense, headquartered in Parlier, CA. "Apples are unique in that they can store. Grapes can store for a little while, but tree fruit don't store. To go the variety route, there has to be a large enough window for consumers to recognize the individual variety and find it week after week."

"It's too early to tell where grapes are headed and I hope it's away from the tree fruit model," Richardson adds. "However, I'd love to see the merchandising of grapes built around flavor profile. Consumers know color first, flavor profile second." **pb**

BAGS VS. CLAMSHELLS

Nearly all of the grapes grown in California are packed either in plastic bags or rigid containers. At Bigg's, "We offer all bags," says Lyons. "We have done some 3-pound clamshells with two to three colors of grapes. Customers seem interested and like the variety, but we haven't seen significant growth in this item."

Bags are also the predominant packaging used for grapes at Metropolitan Markets. Laster states, "The only time we use a clamshell pack is for the organic grapes as this helps to isolate and highlight them."

Fruit Patch's Eastes reveals, "The poly PLU bag will continue to be the primary pack style, with a number of clamshell packs following suit in 1.5-, 2-, 3-, 4-, and 5-pound styles in master containers."

Vineyard's Zaninovich believes, "One reason why nearly 80 percent of California's grapes are packed in bags is that it's a cheaper type of packaging and allows a better price point on the product."

C. H. Robinson's Kampa agrees. "Retailers are seeking ways to lower costs, and packaging is one way they can do this." Cost is also a reason why some retailers are moving away from slider top bags and even minimally less expensive bags with zip closures.

Promotions: Not Just For the Holidays

Red, green and black grapes are line-priced and promoted in fall ads at Metropolitan Markets, a 6-store chain based in Seattle, WA. Ed Laster, produce specialist, reports, "We'll occasionally run a black-only ad in order to highlight the grape's uniqueness."

Fall is a great time for a grape-arama or promoting multiple varieties at once, says Rob O'Rourke, senior vice president of business development for RJO Produce Marketing, in Fresno, CA. "This time of year, retailers can run two reds and two greens of different sizes and shape, along with a black and a seeded."

According to Don Goforth, director of marketing for Family Tree Farms Marketing LLC, headquartered in Reedley, CA, "Stone fruit volume was off 30 to 35 percent this summer due to two unseasonably cold days in the middle of the bloom. Retailers interested in playing catch-up on lost sales opportunities from summer tree fruit can promote grapes in the mid- to late-season," he explains.

John Pandol, vice president of special projects for Pandol Bros. Inc., based in Delano, CA, warns, "We need to get away from 99-cents per-pound pricing, and 88-cents per-pound, too. The everyday low price should be in the range of \$1.49 to \$1.99. Retailers need to be open to buying off the market and the chance for last minute deals."

Seasonal holidays are ideal themes for grape promotions. For example, The HMC Group Marketing Inc., based in Kingsburg, CA, offers its Goblin Grape program for

Halloween. The program offers black grapes packaged in a 1-pound holiday-themed clamshell with matching display-ready box. Steve Kenfield, vice president of marketing and business development, says, "It's a great way to push sales of black grapes."

Holiday fruit baskets is another popular way of including grapes in end-of-year purchases. Specifically, Red Globes are the preferred grape in holiday fruit baskets. Pandol points out, "A less favorable exchange rate combined with a 45 percent tariff on U.S. grapes going into Mexico will mean good promotional opportunities, especially for Red Globes from September to December."

This fall, the CTGC will offer a variety of promotions. One is a season-long short advertising message airing during radio traffic reports. Fall-themed tags highlight tailgating and the holiday season. A second promotion utilizes Starlite billboards — small billboards located in retail parking lots, which entice consumers to buy more grapes via eye-catching, graphics.

Also, from June through mid-December, consumers who buy six pounds of California grapes can send in their receipt and receive a free copy of the *Best Life Diet Cookbook*, written by Oprah Winfrey's personal trainer, Bob Greene. Online banner ads for the CTGC and market-specific retailers will run in September and October on browser sites, such as Yahoo, providing consumers the opportunity to enter and win a spa vacation and the chance to spend the day with Greene. **pb**

However, John Pandol, vice president of special projects for Pandol Bros. Inc., in Delano, CA, asserts, "If you're not closing the bag at retail, it makes sense to go back to the old-school bag without a slider or zip-top." One problem with merchandizing bagged grapes unclosed is the risk of them rolling free and creating slip-and-fall situations. A closed bag or clamshell solves this liability problem.

HMC's Kenfield contends "Clamshells are where the market is headed, but it's not going to be overnight."

Dayka of Dayka & Hackett agrees, adding, "The grape industry is currently going through what the strawberry industry went through in terms of packaging. For us,

clamshells now represent about 32 to 35 percent of our year-round business and we foresee significant growth. Ten to 15 years from now, we believe the clamshell business will be about 80 percent. There is a cost associated with using clamshells over bags, but the difference is less than 10 percent on a per-pound basis."

According to the CTGC's Distribution Books 2004-2008, the amount of clamshell packed grapes shipped to the United States and Canada in 2008 was 8.9 million boxes, or less than 10 percent of the 2008 crop.

"For retailers, benefits of a clamshell pack are that the shelf-life is better and there's the ability to stack them and build a nicer looking display," explains Kenfield.

"For grower/shippers, it's a question of field-versus-shed pack, the need to have scales, and zero tolerance for underweight since these are fixed-weight packs."

Over the last year, Castle Rock Vineyards has begun packing 2-pound clamshells instead of 3- and 4-pounders, says Llano. "We're not sure if it's the economy. Calls are coming from all over for the smaller clams, so it doesn't seem to be region-specific."

Retail price points can play a big role in the success of clamshell packs. Pandol points out, "Some retailers have found they can't sell a 2-pound clam for \$4, but they can sell an open bag of grapes for \$2 per-pound. It's an identical value, but I think the problem is sticker shock." On the other hand, Pandol advises, "Merchandise a 3- to 5-pound clamshell of grapes and give it a sharper advertised ad price than the club stores. This can get consumers' attention."

Bi- and tri-color clamshell packs of grapes are gaining in popularity, says Jasmine Zaninovich. "It is a more expensive pack than regular clamshells because we have to bring the two or three varieties into a central location to pack them. But, it's a great marketing tool. Retailers can use the pack to distinguish themselves from competitors. It also offers an opportunity to let consumers try black grapes."

C.H. Robinson's Kampa adds, "Since organic displays are often smaller than their conventional counterparts, a tri-variety clamshell provides the opportunity to offer all three colors of grapes in a smaller display space."

Regarding cost, Dayka contends, "This will come down as the industry becomes more efficient in packing these multi-variety grape packs."

DON'T SHRINK THE DISPLAY

Grapes are among the highest dollar generators per square foot in the produce department. However, Sun World's Robertson says, "Display space typically decreases in the fall. This is a missed opportunity."

According to Perishables Group data from 2005, the most recent available supplied by the CTGC, grapes generate \$96 per-square-foot. A display of at least 27 square feet is recommended in the fall and early winter. Scattaglia's Parker knows the advantages of large displays. "They provide a big visual presence and this means more impulse sales, and grapes are certainly an impulse purchase."

Robertson adds, "The recommendation is to allocate about 40 to 45 percent of the display for red and green grapes and 10 percent for black grapes." **pb**

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NNZ INC.
Lawrenceville, GA

NNZ Inc. introduces Spud Shade anti-greening potato bags. Spud Shade uses a patented co-extruded opaque film to help keep out the UV light present in a retail environment. Using Spud Shade material on the front of the bag provides a large print area for marketing, while regular poly on the back of the bag allows the produce to be viewed.



AISLE 800

Booth #739

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PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

Booth #848

LAKESIDE PRODUCE
Leamington, ON

Known as the exclusive producer of Stramato, the original strawberry tomato, Lakeside Produce has added organics and Rubies to its diverse product line-up, all produced and packaged with our "green focus" mandate.



Booth #856

INTEREX CORP
Irving, TX

Since 1999, Trechas has been adding spice to life with its line of flavorful fruit toppings: Trechas Chile Powder, Trechas Spicy Powder, Trechas Salimon, Trechas Chamoy and Trechas Liquid Chile. Our fruit toppings line will enhance the flavor of your favorite fruit or vegetable.



Booth #871

CHERRY CENTRAL COOPERATIVE INC.
Traverse City, MI

Cherry Central is a grower-owned agricultural cooperative that was formed in 1973 with 14 member cooperatives across the United States. Today, the company represents 500 cherry and apple growers across the country. Our member-grown fruit serves the foodservice, industrial and retail markets — both private label and branded.



AISLE 900

Booth #902

SAMBAZON
San Clemente, CA

Sambazon® is the global market leader in açai — a delicious and powerfully nutritious purple berry that grows on palm trees in the Amazon Rainforest. Visit our booth to experience our full line of organic açai beverages, including new açai juice flavors and multiserve sizes, Amazon Energy® drinks and Antioxidant Elixir™ — a completely new and positively refreshing açai beverage from Sambazon.



Get with the purple berry.

Booth #920

COLORFUL HARVEST
Salinas, CA

Colorful Harvest grows premium, quality, fresh berries, and colorful, heirloom-style produce including strawberries, bush berries, melons, Rainbow Crunch Carrots™, orange, purple and green cauliflower, sweet red corn, violet broccoli and seasonal green beans.



Booth #934

MIXTEC GROUP
Pasadena, CA

MIXTEC Group is the #1 executive search firm in the produce world. We provide exceptional executive recruitment and leadership consulting to the "who's who" of the industry.



Booth #938

DPRODUCE MAN SOFTWARE
Half Moon Bay, CA

dProduce Man Software is the most up-to-date, integrated accounting software for the produce industry since 1980. Our services include internet order placement, Country Of Origin Labeling (COOL), lot tracking, inventory control, growers accounting, routing, drop shipment, bar code/RFID, consignments and broker's module, just to name a few.



Booth #952

WILCOX MARKETING GROUP
Rexburg, ID

Wilcox Marketing Group is a premium quality grower and shipper of Idaho Potatoes. We offer the best-in-class category management and retail programs. Our Good Agriculture Practices (GAP) result in industry-leading sustainability, freshness verification and enhanced nutrition.



Booth #953

ROCKET FARMS
Salinas, CA

Rocket Farms is an industry leader in growing potted plants. Our potted plants range from orchids and poinsettias to organic herbs and tomatoes. Come by our booth and see what we have for you.



AISLE 1000

Booth #1002

D'ARRIGO BROTHERS OF CALIFORNIA
Salinas, CA

D'Arrigo Bros (Andy Boy®) is a family-owned company specializing in broccoli rabe, broccoli, shrink-wrap broccoli, cactus pears, cauliflower (white, green, orange and purple), romaine hearts, romaine green leaf, red leaf, butter lettuce, iceberg lettuce, fennel and nopalitos. Stop by, check out our new booth and view our Andy Boy® premium quality fruits and vegetables.



Booth #1010

GIORGIO FRESH COMPANY
Tempe, PA

Stop by our booth at PMA to sample delectable mushroom hors d'oeuvres and cappuccino, accompanied by fresh insights into our great approach to sustainability, food safety and quality management systems. You will learn how our SQF (Safe Quality Food) and MGAP (Mushroom Good Agricultural Practices) certifications benefit our customers and their demanding consumers.



Booth #1030

HYDROSERRE MIRABEL INC.
Mirabel, Quebec, Canada

HydroSerre Mirabel will once again exhibit its very popular Living Boston Lettuce at this year's PMA. In addition to its flagship product, new varieties and packaging will also be presented to attendees during the show.



Booth #1060

NATURESEAL INC.
Westport, CT

NatureSeal is the solution to maintaining the taste, texture and color of fresh-cut, fresh-frozen or dried produce. These vitamin and mineral blends were developed and patented with the USDA.



Booth #1065

TO-JO MUSHROOMS
Avondale, PA

Family-owned and operated since its inception 75 years ago, To-Jo is a full-line producer of white and specialty mushrooms, as well as fully prepared, value-added products for the retail and food service markets. Stop by our booth to check out our 2008 PMA Impact Award-Winning, value-added On-The-Spot Gourmet line and its extensive offerings of fresh retail products.



Booth #1070

IPPOLITO FRUIT & PRODUCE LTD.
Burlington, Ontario, Canada

Visit North America's leading brussels sprouts grower, shipper and packer to see our new microwaveable package. We also offer a vast array of spinach packs, along with over 200 SKUs of bulk and packaged produce items.



Booth #1082

TRACEGAINS
Longmont, CO

TraceGains turns PTI from a cost center into a profit center. Our positively assured traceability enables item-level recalls at the ingredient level and makes sure there is no disintermediation in the food supply chain.



✓ Fresh
✓ Frozen
✓ Microwaveable



FULFILLING YOUR PACKAGING NEEDS: Packaging is all we do!

American Packaging specializes in:

- Superior 10 color Flexographic and Rotogravure printing of roll stock, lidding, and preformed pouch applications
- Breathable specifications to extend product shelf life
- Anti-fog films & registered anti-fog coatings for excellent product visibility
- Laser micro-perforation for high respiration products, easy package opening, and self venting during microwave cooking
- Registered pressure sensitive re-close tape and registered coupons for product promotion



*To view our full-service capabilities, visit us online at
www.ampkcorp.com*

*777 Driving Park Avenue * Rochester, NY 14613
(585) 254-9500*



PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

AISLE 1100

**Booth #1130
BROOKS TROPICALS**
Homestead, FL

Brooks Tropicals grows, packs and ships quality tropical produce from sunny South Florida and the Caribbean. Caribbean Red and Caribbean Sunrise papayas, SlimCado avocados, star fruit and limes are our specialties.



**Booth #1138
PEAR BUREAU NORTHWEST**
Milwaukie, OR

USA Pears, grown in Washington and Oregon, represent 84 percent of the U.S. fresh pear crop. With several varieties and nearly year-round availability, USA Pears are a fresh and profitable choice to carry in produce departments from fall to summer. Stop by our booth to learn more about varieties, pre-conditioning programs and other new merchandising opportunities.



**Booth #1146
DRAGONBERRY PRODUCE INC.**
Clackamas, OR

Dragonberry Produce is a boutique specialty company, marketing unique fruits and vegetables from the Pacific Northwest.



**Booth #1161
BEACH STREET FARMS**
Watsonville, CA

Beach Street Farms, a premier grower and shipper of conventional and organic berries, is committed to providing the highest quality of berries available. Grown in the heart of the California strawberry-growing regions of Northern and Southern California, supplies are available nearly year-round.



**Booth #1165
YUCATAN FOODS**
Los Angeles, CA



Yucatan Foods proudly presents Cabo Fresh, a new lifestyle brand made with fresh, vine-ripened produce. All Cabo Fresh items come in clear, re-sealable and recyclable 12-oz. tubs with bright, vibrant labels. The new Cabo Fresh produce line includes: Authentic and Mild-Organic Guacamole, Mild and Medium Salsa, Bruschetta and NEW Avo-Hummus. 50 percent Hass avocado mixed with 50 percent classic, creamy hummus.

**Booth #1168
RED BLOSSOM SALES**
Los Olivos, CA

It's what's inside that counts! Stop by Red Blossom's refreshment center at PMA to see what's happening behind the scenes at Red Blossom Farms. Take a break, refresh and recharge at Red Blossom.



**Booth #1174
PROWARE SERVICES INC.**
Plant City, FL

AgWare is an affordable solution designed for small to medium growers, packer, shippers, brokers and distributors. Integrated components include: receiving, packing and re-packing, warehouse management, sales, grower accounting, A/R, AP and GL.



**Booth #1191
FOODLOGIQ**
Durham, NC



FoodLogiq is an industry leader in providing food safety and traceability software to the food industry in the United States and Canada. FoodLogiq's software platform combines traceability, quality management, food safety compliance and consumer mobile applications into one single, easy-to-use application. The company offers its software to customers as a web-based service, tailor-made to meet the clients' wants and needs.

AISLE 1200

**Booth #1208
CURRY & COMPANY**
Brooks, OR

Curry & Company markets and distributes fresh onions, sweet onions, blueberries and potatoes from North and South America through multiple shipping locations across the country. Since 1967, we have sustained long relationships with our customers with precise quality, great service and unique programs.



**Booth #1218
TURBANA CORPORATION**
Coral Gables, FL

The leading importer of Fair Trade bananas and plantains, Turbana is also the fourth largest importer of bananas in the United States. Turbana also imports gold pineapples in the United States. Our commitment to product quality and personal customer satisfaction is second to none.



**Booth #1226
GREEN GIANT FRESH (SHOLL GROUP II)**
Eden Prairie, MN



Convenience, kid-friendliness and value have reached new heights at Green Giant Fresh. Highlights include new, healthful and microwave steam items, such as potato blends and sweet potatoes. Mushrooms feature special promotions and carrots and tree fruit feature new packaging.

**Booth #1226
WAYNE E. BAILEY PRODUCE CO.**
Chadbourne, NC



Wayne E. Bailey Produce Company has been exceeding customers' expectations for over 70 years. We pride our company on its ability to meet any sweet potato need. Ask us about our new processing plant.

**Booth #1238
DURAND-WAYLAND INC.**
Lagrange, GA



Durand-Wayland and Greefa are U.S. partners combining advanced technology with expert sales, service and support. Our complete lines of produce-packing equipment include electronic grading by weight, dimension, shape, color and blemish; bin sanitizers, tote dumpers, volume fillers and other peripheral equipment. We are leading the way in high-tech, labor and cost-reducing grading solutions for produce packers.

**Booth #1248
SUNNYRIDGE FARM**
Winter Haven, FL



SunnyRidge Farm Inc., family-owned and operated since 1993, is a grower, packer, shipper and marketer of blueberries, raspberries, blackberries and strawberries. SunnyRidge's standards of flexibility, reliability and innovation drive the company from all aspects of the business. You can count on SunnyRidge to deliver the latest and best berry varieties available, on time, and in the pack size that meets your needs.

**Booth #1252
MAXCO SUPPLY INC.**
Clovis, CA



Maxco's LTS Green System Clamshell Container is the sustainable, recyclable long-term cold-storage alternative to waxed, EPS or hard plastic containers. Engineered to safely deliver fresh produce without non-recyclable materials.

**Booth #1260
DULCINEA FARMS**
Ladera Ranch, CA



Dulcinea Farms™ created a new category of premium produce that guarantees an exceptional taste and eating experience. With a unique solution-based approach to providing the freshest and best quality produce year-round, Dulcinea® is committed to product development, innovation, quality marketing and consumer satisfaction.

**Booth #1274
ATAGO USA INC.**
Bellevue, WA

ATAGO is an industry leader in refractometers, distinguished by unsurpassed quality, durability and accuracy. Stop by our booth to see our latest invention, the new digital Dip-Type PEN-PRO refractometer, as well as our most popular digital hand-held refractometers, the PAL-Series.



AISLE 1300

**Booth #1302
WELL-PICT INC.**
Watsonville, CA

Well-Pict's latest developments include: a re-engineered, two-pound strawberry clamshell, reduced shipping costs, a redesigned Web site and new winter strawberries from Florida. Visit us to learn more!



**Booth #1314
ORCHID ISLAND JUICE CO.**
Fort Pierce, FL



Natalie's Orchid Island Juice Company makes the world's "Best Tasting Orange Juice" according to NBC's *Today Show*, *Real Simple Magazine* and *Cook's Illustrated Magazine*. Family-owned and operated, the company has been squeezing Florida grown citrus year-round since 1989 to produce a wide range of fresh-squeezed, gourmet pasteurized, fresh-frozen and organic citrus juices.

**Booth #1338
IMAGINATION FARMS**
Whitefish Bay, WI



Disney Garden is increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables among children, with over 250 SKUs of fruits and vegetables, including favorites such as Foodles, My Size Mini's and Pixie Sweet.



The DOLE brand is synonymous with high quality and safety standards for fresh fruit and vegetables.

Dole leads the way
in nutritional education,
helping consumers to
achieve a healthy lifestyle.

Visit us at
PMA Booth
#2038





PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

**Booth #1348
FARMER'S BEST
INTERNATIONAL
Nogales, AZ**

Visit our booth to see our fully-certified, award-winning produce, packed using the latest technology and distributed with top-level service.



**Booth #1352
COASTLINE
Salinas, CA**

Coastline Produce and RedLine Solutions announce the successful launch of a pilot project this summer to enable PTI compliance across Coastline's product line. The pilot solution provided by RedLine allows Coastline to generate PTI case labels based on their weekly and daily harvest planning.



**Booth #1362
SUNRISE GROWERS
Placentia, CA**

Sunrise Growers is one of the largest producers and marketers of high-quality, fresh strawberries and an exceptional line of red bell peppers. We offer a variety of innovative marketing programs throughout the year to drive higher sales for our customers. We are fully vertically integrated from source to market, ensuring quality throughout the supply chain.



**Booth #1368
ECORIBE TROPICALS
Fort Lauderdale, FL**

Offering a full line of papayas from multiple growing regions, Ecoribe Tropicals proudly introduces our Belicious Papayas from Belize, Panafruit Solo Papaya from Panama, and Maradol Papaya from Mexico. We are also introducing LaFinita Rambutan from Guatemala.



**Booth #1402
FRESH GOURMET
COMPANY
Commerce, CA**

We are proud to introduce eight salad toppings inspired by salad trends and consumer choices when dining out. Four sliced almond flavors include Toasted, Garlic Caesar, Bold Ranch and Honey Roasted. Two nut toppings include Honey Roasted Pecan Pieces and Glazed Walnut Pieces. Two fruit toppings are Dried & Sweet Cranberries and Plump & Sweet Golden Raisins.



**Booth #1410
MISSION PRODUCE INC.
Oxnard, CA**

Mission Produce is a global player in the avocado and asparagus market. The company has nationwide DCs. New from Mission is our fresh guacamole product line branded Mr. Avocado. The fresh guacamole products will complement Mission's fresh avocado program.



**Booth #1438
PRIMUSLABS.COM
Santa Maria, CA**

Through PrimusLabs.com, our clients and supporters will be provided with the most effective means of maximizing their return on safety and quality investments, subsequently aiding their attempt to distinguish their products in the eyes of the buyers.



**Booth #1442
CALIFORNIA SUN DRY FOODS
Danville, CA**

California Sun Dry Foods dries California tomatoes in the summer sun for seven to 10 days. This slow, sun-drying process allows partial rehydration at night, which produces a bright red, sweet, fully plump dried tomato.



**Booth #1448
PANDOL BROTHERS INC.
Delano, CA**

For over 70 years, Pandol has been providing the world's finest produce and service that is second to none since 1941. We are a family-owned and operated year-round grape supplier, grower and owner. With newly branded packaging, fresh and innovative ideas, we can pack any style including multi-color.

**Booth #1452
OSO SWEET ONION
Charleston, WV**

OSO Sweet is an importer of onions from Chile and Peru sold under the OSO Sweet brand name. OSO Sweet also grows domestic onions in Texas, which the company exports to Europe.



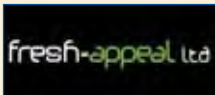
**Booth #1464
MATIK NORTH
AMERICA - BOIX
MACHINERY
West Hartford, CT**

Matik Inc. introduces a new combination tray erector, called the Boix "DUAL" machine, manufactured by Boix Maquinaria in Spain. Features include: the unique ability to switch the machine quickly and cheaply from Bliss 3-piece boxes to common footprint 1-piece, open-top trays; and a combination hot melt and cold glue optional.



**Booth #1469
FRESH APPEAL
Keene, NH**

Fresh Appeal, an innovative leading-edge provider of UV disinfection and shelf-life extension technology is pleased to demonstrate its technology, which will establish the new standard in healthy and safe produce.



**Booth #1469
PLANT & FOOD
RESEARCH
Auckland,
New Zealand**

Plant & Food Research, a New Zealand-based company providing research that adds value to fruit, vegetables, crop and food products, will be showcasing its capabilities at this year's convention. This year's convention will be the first the new company will attend, introducing its combined capability to the global fresh produce industry.



**Booth #1470
GFF INC.
City Of Industry, CA**

GFF Inc. is introducing a Sweet Red Onion Vinaigrette made with a blend of gourmet sweet red onions, vinegar and fresh herbs for a unique flavor profile.



**Booth #1480
ITAUEIRA
AGROPECUARIA S A
Fortaleza, CE, Brazil**

Itaueira will be sampling a new melon variety with green skin, white flesh and a delicious taste, specially developed to be a great commercial success for its sweetness. Itaueira melons are never out of season. Stop by our booth to taste these amazing melons.





INDISPUTABLE PROOF THAT OUR CELERY IS TASTIER.



BOOTH # 3912

Duda Farm Fresh Foods, the global leader in celery innovation, has recently been awarded patents for two new commercial celery varieties developed from more than 12,000 lines to create the best flavor, texture, nutrition and appearance. We have also adopted an innovative DNA "fingerprinting" technology that ensures you're getting what you want: only the tastiest varieties of Dandy® brand celery products from Duda. So what's next? Look to Duda, where fresh ideas keep on coming. For proven marketability, contact Duda at 866-792-DUDA or duda.com



Duda Farm Fresh Foods, Inc. a wholly-owned subsidiary of A. Duda & Sons, Inc. Distributed exclusively by Duda Farm Fresh Foods, Inc. duda.com



PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

AISLE 1500

**Booth #1514
SUN-RYPE PRODUCTS**
Kelowna, BC, Canada

Sun-Rype's 100 percent fruit snacks make it easier for today's busy families to incorporate healthful eating into their active lives with no preservatives, no artificial flavors and no colors.



**Booth #1516
PRODUCE MAGIC SOFTWARE**
Escondido, CA

We offer inventory and accounting software for growers, farm management, packers/re-packers, processors, shippers, brokers, import/export, floral, organics, fresh-cut, consignment, distribution centers, and "iTrade." We have user-defined menus, interfaces to Excel, QuickBooks and other accounting packages.



**Booth #1534
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND POTATO BOARD**
Charlottetown, PEI, Canada

From the rich, red soil of beautiful Prince Edward Island, we are Canada's largest producer of potatoes. PEI ships to over 30 countries and has been a supplier to the United States for many years. Our varieties include round white, russet, yellow, red, organic and other specialty varieties.



**Booth #1539
M & M FARMS**
Mulberry, FL

M&M Farms is tropical! We grow and market over 40 of the finest tropical roots, fruits and vegetables. From avocados to yucca, M&M Farms harvests quality and reliability.



**Booth #1575
DELEON'S BROMELIADS**
Miami, FL

DeLeon's mission is to provide the highest quality orchids and bromeliads, offering exemplary value and customer service at competitive prices. By controlling the climate we provide consistent availability year-round. Stop by our booth to see our extensive color assortment.



**Booth #1584
WEST PAK AVOCADO INC.**
Temecula, CA

West Pak specializes in sourcing, packing and marketing avocados from California, Mexico and Chile. We offer custom ripening programs, creative retail, food service promotion and merchandising support.



AISLE 1600

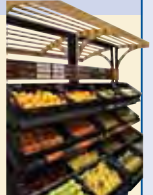
**Booth #1602
KPG SOLUTIONS INC.**
Longwood, FL

KPG Solutions is the premier provider of software, including food safety and traceability solutions for the worldwide food industry. Let us show you how to save and grow your business by 1-2 percent.



**Booth #1612
ALCO DESIGNS**
Gardena, CA

Alco Designs is a manufacturer of merchandising fixtures perfect for your produce department. We strive to provide the best quality displays and service with competitive prices. We pride ourselves on helping you create beautiful, abundant-looking displays that will drive sales using less product, minimizing shrink and ultimately, increasing your profits.



**Booth #1615
T.R. TURONI SRL**
Forli, FC, Italy

T.R. Turoni SRL will present a new, non-destructive fruit ripeness tester. The DA Meter is a very promising tool for both practical and scientific applications because it can monitor the ripeness level of fruit, while still on the trees. This accurately establishes the optimal harvest time. It can be used in a cool retail environment to detect maturity changes as well.



**Booth #1634
FAMOUS SOFTWARE LLC**
Fresno, CA

Famous Software will be featuring new, advanced repacking, report administration and other recent enhancements. Representatives will be available to answer your PTI traceability and food safety questions.



AISLE 1800

**Booth #1714
CALIFORNIA STRAWBERRY COMMISSION**
Watsonville, CA

Visit our booth to learn about the California Strawberry Commission's priorities — food safety, trade relations, research, nutrition, public policy and marketing communications for an industry that produces over 88 percent of the country's strawberries.



**Booth #1810
CHILEAN FRESH FRUIT ASSOCIATION**
Sonoma, CA

The Chilean Fresh Fruit Association has added many new elements to its promotion plan that will raise sales of various Chilean fruits. Stop by our booth to sample ice cream and pastries that feature the many "Flavors of Chile."



**Booth #1818
HAWAII PAPAYA INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION**
Hilo, HI

Hawaii produces the finest papayas with perfect flavor and complete nutrition. Visit our booth to sample our "Goodness With Aloha."



**Booth #1824
SAGE FRUIT COMPANY**
Yakima, WA

Sage Fruit Company is a high quality grower, packer and shipper of Northwest Tree Fruits specializing in apples, cherries and pears.



**Booth #1830
TANIMURA & ANTLE INC.**
Salinas, CA

Tanimura & Antle's NEW Artisan™ Lettuce offers more variety, color, flavor and texture than the spring mix. Our hydroponically grown Living Lettuce is packed with roots attached for optimal freshness and extended shelf-life. Stop by our booth to find out more about all of our premium vegetables including iceberg, romaine, Broccoflower®, cauliflower, broccoli and peppers.



**Booth #1838
CALAVO GROWERS**
Santa Paula, CA

Calavo Growers is the world's leader in growing fresh avocados. It is also a multi-commodity packer, shipper and processor, supplying both the retail and food-service industries. Ask us how you can get fresh avocados and hand-prepared guacamole during any season. Our other products include pineapples, papayas, mushrooms, tomatoes and organics.



**Booth #1839
CATALYTIC GENERATORS LLC**
Norfolk, VA

In 1973, Catalytic Generators invented and patented the on-site process of ethylene production to initiate the controlled ripening of various fruit. Today, we manufacture eight types of generators which convert our Ethy-Gen® II Ripening Concentrate into ethylene, a natural plant hormone.



**Booth #1839
QA SUPPLIES**
Norfolk, VA

We have recently upgraded our website, making it easier to navigate, find product information and order supplies. Please take a look at our product reviews or customer testimonials. If you don't see something you need, just let us know.



**Booth #1847
CEI — NICARAGUA**
Managua, Nicaragua

The Center for Exports and Investments Nicaragua (CEI) is a private, non-profit corporation whose goal is to promote the products of the micro-, small- and medium- scale enterprises, as well as organized or individual producers in international markets, in an effort to contribute to growth in the national export base.



**Booth #1849
ETHYLENE CONTROL INC.**
Selma, CA

For over 23 years, Ethylene Control's proven technology continues to be used worldwide to extend the shelf-life of produce and floral products with our sachets and filtration systems.





PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

Booth #1850
THERMAL TECHNOLOGIES INC.
Blythewood, SC

Stop by to discuss solutions for your ripening needs with the company that has installed more ripening rooms for more Top-10 Retailers than all other companies combined.



Booth #1883
WAVERLY PLASTICS
Waverly, IA

Tug & Tote Produce Bags manufactured by Waverly Plastics dispense one-at-a-time from a box that integrates beautifully into your produce department. They are also available in biodegradable plastic formulation.



Booth #1902
NATIONAL WATERMELON PROMOTION BOARD
Orlando, FL

Through research, communication and marketing initiatives, the National Watermelon Promotion Board is finding new ways to enhance market opportunities for farmers and to promote the nutritional, culinary and convenient benefits of watermelon.



Booth #1922
HERBTHYME FARMS INC.
Compton, CA

HerbThyme Farms is America's largest fresh, organic herb grower. We ship from regional facilities coast-to-coast, delivering fresh from our USA Farms to your shelves.



Booth #1928
EDIBLE SOFTWARE
Houston, TX

Edible Software is a comprehensive Windows-based inventory control and accounting software package that was coded from inception specifically for the wholesale produce distribution industry. Many of our clients report increases of between 1-3 percent of gross margin after the installation of Edible Software.



Booth #1954
FOWLER FARMS
Wolcott, NY

Apples, apple cider, point-of-sale material, merchandising ideas and a great sales team that wants to help you raise your apple sales is what our company is all about. Stop by our booth and we'll help you put value in front of your customers!



Booth #1988
PURFRESH INC.
Fremont, CA

Purfresh's clean solutions purify, protect and preserve the world's food and water. The company's crop applications, wash systems and cold chain technologies effectively safeguard fresh produce before and after its harvest.



Booth #1996
DEL REY AVOCADO
Fallbrook, CA

We are proud to present our growers' fruit — some of the finest conventional and organic avocados grown in the world. We are the largest packer of California-grown, organic avocados. Stop by for a quick update on the world of avocados.



Booth #2002
CALIFORNIA ASPARAGUS COMMITTEE
El Centro, CA

The California Asparagus Commission (CAC) is a statewide commodity organization representing the state's fresh and processed asparagus industry interests. The Commission, created in 1990, funds varietal research, domestic and international promotion programs, as well as public relations efforts on behalf of the 150 California asparagus production entities.



Booth #2002
CALIFORNIA FIG ADVISORY BOARD
Modesto, CA

Both the California Fig Advisory Board and the California Fresh Fig Growers Association can be found in the California-grown produce pavilion. Stop by to gain the latest industry and product information on fresh and dried figs.



Booth #2002
CALIFORNIA LEAFY GREENS
Sacramento, CA

LGMA (California Leafy Green Products Handler Marketing Agreement) members are working to protect public health by reducing potential sources of contamination in California-grown leafy greens. LGMA-accepted food-safety practices are verified through regular and random audits conducted by USDA-trained government inspectors.



Booth #2003
YAKIMA FRESH
Yakima, WA

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 all your Northwestern apple, cherry and pear needs!



Booth #2018
WASHINGTON STATE PRODUCE PAVILION
Moses Lake, WA

You're invited to experience the finest produce from Washington State at our pavilion. This year, Executive Chef Charlie Baggs will be demonstrating culinary dishes utilizing the finest potatoes, onions, asparagus and Walla Walla sweet onions from the Evergreen State.



Booth #2019
PRODUCE BUSINESS
Boca Raton, FL

This marks the 24th anniversary of PRODUCE BUSINESS, the No. 1 publication reaching produce buyers around the world. Covering marketing, merchandising and procurement issues that affect sales of produce and floral items, PRODUCE BUSINESS uniquely "initiates industry improvement" in each issue.



Booth #2019
PERISHABLE PUNDIT
Boca Raton, FL

There is nothing quite like Jim Prevor's Perishable Pundit. The founder and editor-in-chief of PRODUCE BUSINESS magazine takes a lifetime of industry experience into cyberspace, allowing readers to learn things not found anywhere else, in a context that puts information into perspective and explains its significance to you and your organization. Access the Pundit at www.PerishablePundit.com and see for yourself. Or come by our booth and meet Jim Prevor and the whole staff. Come talk to us about your views on issues confronting the industry, about interesting things your organization is doing and learn how an affiliation with the Perishable Pundit can return big benefits to you and your business in the years ahead.



Booth #2026
SUNKIST GROWERS
Sherman Oaks, CA

The Sunkist brand is an international icon that stands for premium, fresh citrus and great tasting beverages and products. As one of the world's most trusted brands, the Sunkist brand is a promise of fresh taste, premium quality and satisfaction.



Booth #2027
PACON NETTING INC.
Baldwin Park, CA

Pacon offers both tubular extruded and woven plastic mesh packaging solutions. Custom printing in up to eight colors for mesh packages from 1 to 20 lbs. Pacon also blows film and offers printed poly bags.



PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

Booth #2038
DOLE FOOD COMPANY
Westlake Village, CA

As the planet's largest produce provider, Dole's fruits and vegetables provide the nutrients and vitality people need to pursue a healthy lifestyle. The Dole® brand conveys the highest standards in fruit, vegetables and nutrition education. It's this unwavering commitment to fulfill its customers' needs and consumers' expectations that has earned Dole the reputation as the "gold standard" in produce.



Booth #2041
BC HOT HOUSE FOODS INC.
Langley, BC, Canada

BC Hot House growers have been committed to producing premium greenhouse-grown produce for over 35 years. Tomato, pepper and cucumber varieties have been carefully selected for consistent quality and unsurpassed flavor.



Booth #2045
BARD VALLEY MEDJOOL DATE GROWERS
Bard, CA

The Bard Valley Medjool Date Growers Association is comprised of family-owned and operated date gardens that focus strictly on growing dates — "The Fruit of Kings." Visit our booth to see our complete line of retail packs for the world's finest Medjool dates.



Booth #2050
BABE FARMS INC.
Santa Maria, CA

Babe Farms will exhibit select items from its year-round harvest of over 30 varieties of baby lettuces and specialty greens, colorful root veggies and baby cauliflowerer.



Booth #2051
AMPORT FOODS
Minneapolis, MN

Our full line of dried fruits, mixed nuts, trail mixes, sunflower seeds, soy nuts and sun-dried tomatoes are available in several unique styles of packaging: Ziplocs, stand-up bags, lay-down bags, cups and clamshells. We are the private-label leader in dried fruits.



Booth #2068
COAST TROPICAL
San Diego, CA

First established in 1947, Coast Citrus, along with its DBA, Coast Tropical, has become an international fresh fruit and vegetable importer, exporter and distributor with worldwide locations. The company places a strong emphasis in providing consumers with safe, wholesome fruits and vegetables. Our goal is to bring our customers superior quality, service and price without sacrificing honesty.



Booth #2072
MUCCI INTERNATIONAL MARKETING INC.
Kingsville, ON, Canada

Mucci Pac offers a variety of products, including bell and mini peppers, English and mini cucumbers, eggplant, zucchini (seasonal), and tomatoes (Beefsteak, Saporì Tomatoes-on-the-Vine and Roma).



Booth #2096
PEAKFRESH USA
Anaheim, CA

Peakfresh® is a modified atmosphere packaging (MAP) film specifically developed for the packaging of fresh fruit, vegetables, plants and cut flowers. When used with refrigeration at correct temperature levels, Peakfresh® will extend the life of your product and maintain its freshness.



Booth #2097
REDLINE SOLUTIONS
Santa Clara, CA

Redline provides complete solutions that enable whole-chain traceability for growers, packers and shippers. We have over a decade of experience integrating barcode and wireless technologies. Redline can deliver the appropriate hardware and software to meet your PTI requirements from start to finish.



AISLE 2100

Booth #2102
CALIFORNIA AVOCADO COMMISSION

Insist on California avocados. Visit the California Avocado Commission booth to learn about the powerful, integrated marketing support of the California avocado grower campaign. Hear about the value that the California avocado season brings to retailers and get data on avocado pricing and consumer preference for California Avocados.



Booth #2172
BONIPAK PRODUCE CO.
Santa Maria, CA

Bonipak is a multi-commodity grower, packer, shipper and processor supplying the retail and foodservice industries. Bonipak offers products of the highest quality and freshness with year-round availability. Primary products include broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce, celery, spinach, mixed-leaf vegetables and cilantro. Our Cut-To-Cool Program ensures that fresh-harvested products are cooled and ready to ship in 24 hours.



Booth #2180
PARAMOUNT FARMS
Los Angeles, CA

Paramount Farms is the world's largest vertically integrated supplier of pistachios and almonds, with 30,000 acres of pistachio orchards located in central California. Paramount Farms' pistachios are sold nationwide under the Wonderful®, Everybody's Nuts!® and Sunkist® brands. Paramount is the developer of www.PistachioHealth.com, the leading source of information on pistachio health.



Booth #2190
HONEY BEAR BRANDS
Elgin, MN

Honeybear Brands is a leader in providing fresh fruit programs for retail and foodservice partners. Honeybear is one the largest growers of Honeycrisp apples and features a full line of domestic and imported varieties. Visit our booth to sample some of the world's finest apples!



Booth #2191
AURORA PRODUCTS INC.
Stratford, CT

Aurora Products Inc. packages only the highest quality organic dried fruits, nuts, granolas, veggie chips and trail mixes. The company maintains a commitment to encourage customers to "Eat Healthy!" Not only is Aurora a leader in providing new, all-natural items, but we strive to keep a sustainable environment.



Booth #2197
DREAM FOODS INTERNATIONAL LLC
Santa Monica, CA

Dream Foods International LLC, a manufacturer of not-from-concentrate, organic citrus juices, proudly announces the introduction of its new football season shipper displays. Convention attendees may view the displays and sample the company's acclaimed products at our booth.



AISLE 2200

Booth #2218
FRESH SOLUTION NETWORK
Moses Lake, WA

The Fresh Solution Farms Network is a partnership of five multi-generational potato and onion companies that own production acreage and processing facilities across North America. The company is committed to driving profitable category growth through leadership in innovation, category management, state-of-the-art operations and sustainable agricultural and supply chain practices.



Booth #2224
CHEP
Orlando, FL

CHEP is the global leader in pallet and container pooling services, serving many of the world's largest companies. Combining superior technology and an asset base of over 300 million pallets and containers, CHEP offers its customers exceptional value, a platform that enables reduction in customer product damage and an environmentally-sustainable logistical solution.



A new way to
eat fruit.™

Get to know us and
try a sample: Booth 843

All natural
No sugar added
110 - 120 calories
2 servings of fruit*



Shelved in the produce section!

fruit2day.com

Hero
WhiteWave™

**Fruit
2day**®

real fruit bits
in 100% juice blend
Strawberry Orange



PLEASE VISIT OUR SPONSORS' BOOTHS



Booth #3945

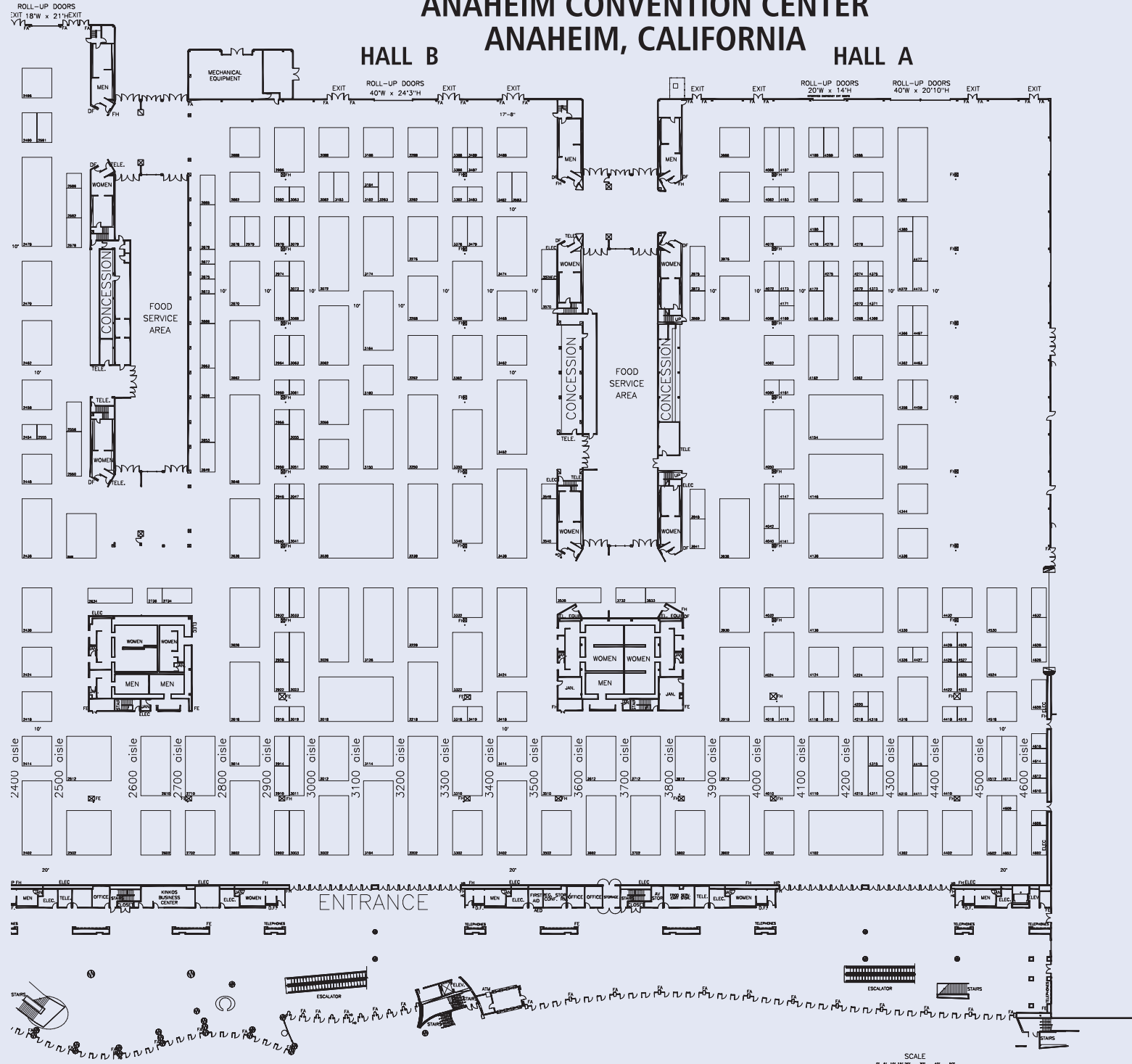


Booth #2038



Booth #3912

**PRODUCE MARKETING ASSOCIATION
OCTOBER 2-5, 2009
ANAHEIM CONVENTION CENTER
ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA**



Booth #843



Booth #2168



Booth #1362



Booth #2019



PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

Booth #2244
SPICE WORLD INC.
Orlando, FL

Spice World has been in the garlic business and serving American supermarkets for 59 years. We are growers, processors and shippers of the No. 1 jarred garlic in America's supermarkets today.



Booth #2250
EDINBURG CITRUS ASSOCIATION
Edinburg, TX

The Edinburg Citrus Association has been growing and packing quality Texas red grapefruit and oranges since 1932. We pack a wow-factor in every carton of our deliciously sweet and juicy fruit. Customer participation in our different programs increases our relationship with our costumers.



Booth #2272
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, as well as hybrid red, white and yellow onions. We also supply southern peaches, eastern apples and asparagus.



AISLE 2300

Booth #2302
FRIEDA'S INC.
Los Alamitos, CA

Started in 1962 by Frieda Caplan, Frieda's Inc. was the first wholesale produce company in the United States to be founded, owned and operated by a woman. Once a small produce stand at the Los Angeles Produce Market, Frieda's has emerged as the nation's premier marketer and distributor of specialty produce and offers more than 600 specialty items to grocery stores and foodservice distributors in the United States and Canada.



Booth #2332
BASKET EASE
Prior Lake, MN

Fruit baskets are fast and easy to make using our patented plastic, wicker and bamboo containers. Supplies are available throughout the year to wrap, enhance, and promote your fruit gifts.



Booth #2339
RED RIVER VALLEY POTATOES
East Grand Forks, MN

The Red River Valley of North Dakota and Minnesota is the largest red potato growing region in the country. The Red River Valley of the North has some of the darkest and richest soil in the world and the temperate northern climate provides plenty of natural rainfall, providing the deep red color and robust flavor only non-irrigated potatoes can provide.



Booth #2350
NORTH CAROLINA DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE
Raleigh, NC

At the North Carolina Department of Agriculture pavilion, you will have the opportunity to visit growers, packers and shippers of a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, peanuts, peanut products and nursery crops. North Carolina growers, packers and shippers offer consistent, high-quality products that are graded, packed and cooled with the latest technology.



Booth #2360
MAF Industries
Traver, CA

MAF Industries manufactures complete fresh fruit and vegetable packinghouse systems for packers throughout North America, including Canada, the United States and Mexico. We offer automation, integration and system controls.



Booth #2368
WADA FARMS MARKETING GROUP LLC
Idaho Falls, ID

Wada Farms Marketing Group LLC is an Idaho potato grower and shipper that also handles the sales for Dole potatoes, onions and sweet potatoes.



Booth #2388
REICHEL FOODS INC.
Rochester, MN

Reichel Foods produces Dippin' Stix: a value-added, fresh-cut snack with extended shelf-life. Dippin' Stix are packaged in a USDA serving size and are favorably priced.



Booth #2396
VISION IMPORT GROUP
Riveridge, NJ

Vision Import Group welcomes you to our booth to experience all of our branded items, including Mango Maniacs, Mojito Limes and Mr. Squeeze limes and lemons. Mr. Squeeze Mexican Lemons are Primus Lab-certified. Keep a lookout for Miss Easy Peel clementines from Spain for the holiday season.



Booth #2396
TAVILLA SALES CO.
Los Angeles, CA

Tavilla is a grower/shipper/packer where vertical integration allows for lower prices, while maintaining higher quality. Stop by our booth to check out our exclusive brands, including Pinicola pineapples, Mango Magic mangos and chiles and Latin produce from the Chile Company.



AISLE 2400
Booth #2402
DEL MONTE FRESH PRODUCE
Coral Gables, FL

Del Monte Fresh offers retailers and foodservice operators an array of innovative solutions to address the changing tastes and lifestyle needs of today's consumers. Our extensive distribution network allows just-in-time deliveries of our premium-quality, fresh products to your doorstep.



Booth #2414
SENSITECH INC.
Beverly, MA

Is your cold chain up to par? Sensitech Inc. combines electronic monitoring with data management and statistical analysis to deliver end-to-end cold chain visibility. Ask for a demo to see how cold chain visibility throughout the entire supply chain can improve the quality and shelf-life of your temperature-sensitive perishables, while reducing process-related costs and inefficiencies.



Booth #2438
C. H. ROBINSON COMPANY
Eden Prairie, MN

C.H. Robinson started over 100 years ago in the produce industry, providing fresh fruits and vegetables to the settlers of Minnesota and the Dakotas. Today, C.H. Robinson sources the highest quality products while integrating value-added logistics, distribution and information reporting services. We provide our customers with a full-line of supply chain solutions that meet each company's individual needs.



Booth #2454
DELTATRAK INC.
Pleasanton, CA

FlashLink VU is DeltaTRAK's newest electronic data logger. It features a large LCD display and downloads data via a USB adapter. The LCD panel shows when the logger is active, stopped or in DeltaTRAK's patented ShadowLog® mode. Numerous trip statistics are available for viewing on the LCD display.





PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

Booth #2458

CONWED GLOBAL NETTING SOLUTIONS
Minneapolis, MN

Conwed introduces Vexar® netting with Ecocycle™ Technology, a safe, earth-friendly packaging solution that has a reduced lifetime, compared to standard plastic netting. Conwed exclusively makes netting with Ecocycle Technology for all automated produce packaging equipment including form fill and seal machines, soft net automatic welding machines and clipping machines.



Booth #2490

GOURMET TRADING
Los Angeles, CA

Gourmet Trading offers fresh asparagus and blueberries year-round. Visit our booth to learn about Gourmet's new offerings and to meet our dedicated sales staff.



AISLE 2500

Booth #2512

TEMPLE-INLAND INC.
Austin, TX

Temple-Inland excels in the production of corrugated and specialty packaging solutions. From commodity brown-boxes and bulk harvest bins to common footprint die-cut containers and intricate multi-color Point of Purchase displays — we deliver!



Booth #2550

MIATECH
Clackamas, OR

Miatech Inc. manufactures equipment for better control and management of perishable products. We offer produce misting, cold room and warehouse humidification, ethylene and pathogen control systems, ambient cooling systems for packing rooms and much more.



Booth #2582

POTANDON PRODUCE LLC
Idaho Falls, ID

As an exclusive marketer of Green Giant® Fresh Potatoes and Onions, including exclusively owned varieties, Potandon is your one-stop shop for all your potato and onion needs. Visit our booth to see our new products.



AISLE 2600

Booth #2602

Ready Pac will feature new ideas in fresh-cut salads — with and without protein, fresh, nutritious snacks, fresh-cut fruit, vegetable cups — with and without dips — and party platters at PMA 2009.



Booth #2610

IDAHO-E. OREGON ONIONS
Parma, ID

Idaho-Eastern Oregon produces beautiful yellow, red and white storage onions in all sizes — from boilers to super colossal. Whatever you're looking for, we have it, along with experienced shippers ready to meet your special transportation and packaging requirements.



AISLE 2700

Booth #2710

In the past, the Idaho Potato Commission brought you the cast of *Gilligan's Island*, the star of *I Dream of Jeannie*, a wild Texas rodeo and those crazy dancing heads. At this year's PMA show, the IPC promises to deliver another unforgettable booth experience. Come by and check out the action.



Booth #2734

LOWRY COMPUTER PRODUCTS
Brighton, MI

Lowry's Secure Visibility is an inventory control software application that captures case-level traceability information in real-time. Built around GS1 standards, Secure Visibility is designed to help companies comply with the Produce Traceability Initiative (PTI) case-level standard for external traceability.



AISLE 2800

Booth #2802

Litehouse has always been known as a leader in fresh and natural products. Stop by and see our innovative new products and consumer programs.



Booth #2814

HURST'S BERRY FARM INC.
Clavis, CA

Hurst's Berry Farm offers the finest berries year-round, from blueberries, blackberries and raspberries to specialty berries such as currants, gooseberries and our popular Kiwi berries.



Booth #2818

MANN PACKING COMPANY
Salinas, CA

See what's new in the fresh-cut vegetable category as Mann Packing Company celebrates its 70th anniversary. Visit our booth on Saturday, October 3, and meet Hungry Girl, Lisa Lillen. This is Lisa's second PMA appearance with Mann where she will be signing free copies of her new book.



Booth #2838

SETTON FARMS
Commack, NY

Producer of "America's Best Tasting Pistachios," Setton Farms offers a full-line of pistachios, nuts, dried fruits, seeds, trail-mixes, chocolates, candies, organic and all-natural products available in bulk and retail packaging.



Booth #2862

DESERT GLORY
San Antonio, TX

Desert Glory is the leading grower of NatureSweet vine-ripened tomatoes. NatureSweet tomatoes are grown from specially selected seeds that are cultivated to deliver the sweetest, home-grown flavor ever. The NatureSweet portfolio of products includes vine-ripened cherry tomatoes, Cherubs — a sweet snacking tomato — and D'Vines — a super-sweet strawberry tomato.



Booth #2877

ORANGE ENTERPRISES INC.
Fresno, CA

PET Tiger-Payroll Employee Tracking and Traceability provides Produce Traceability from the field to the consumer, PET records data and creates barcodes (or assigns pre-printed barcodes) electronically tying the data to the product's field GPS location, employee-handling and equipment information. With one system, the user can manage Produce Traceability Initiative issues and payroll data.



Booth #2878

NORTH SHORE GREENHOUSES INC.
Thermal, CA

North Shore Greenhouses provides innovative products to the retail market. We specialize in living herbs and European cucumbers. Living herbs are the freshest, longest-lasting herbs available. Stop by and see our new living potted basil.



Booth #2879

SUMMERIPE
Dinuba, CA

Summeripe provides ready-to-eat peaches, plums and nectarines. Through years of research, we have mastered the all-natural process to condition our tree fruit. Our complete and comprehensive program is centered on dedicated teams and great tasting fruit.



Booth #2950

SAMBRAILO PACKAGING
Watsonville, CA

Sambrailo Packaging is a third-generation, family-owned company that has served the produce and floral industries since 1923. With locations in California and Mexico, we have built a reputation on service, quality and innovation. Visit our booth to see our revolutionary Snap-Flap Container and new line of RunRite Blueberry Clamshells.



Booth #2968

BEDFORD INDUSTRIES INC.
Worthington, MN

Our ElastiBand® works well for bundling and labeling products and is a great way to reduce your packaging. It is ideal for lettuces, melons, celery, bananas, cabbage and clamshells. They are available in lengths of up to 12.5 inches and widths starting at 1/2-inch. Our printing options include digital or flexor.



Booth #2979

HOLLANDIA PRODUCE
Carpinteria, CA

Hollandia Produce, home of the award-winning line of Live Gourmet living lettuces, cress and arugula, invites you to stop by our booth and experience for yourself the difference freshness can make.





PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

AISLE 3000

Booth #3041
CHRISTOPHER RANCH LLC
Gilroy, CA

Our new bags extend the shelf-life of our garlic. They offer better cooling, improved freshness, 80 percent less packaging and are 100 percent recyclable.



Booth #3051
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. We offer sealed-in "peak-season flavor" and freshness in each package utilizing vacuum-sealed technology. In addition to our Vac Pack line, we offer Stand-Up Bag presentations.



Booth #3062
STEMILT GROWERS INC.
Wenatchee, WA

Stemilt Growers Inc. is a leading tree-fruit growing, packing, and shipping company. Owned and operated by the Mathison family, Stemilt is one of the nation's leading shippers of sweet cherries and one of the largest suppliers of organic tree fruits.



Booth #3069
DADE SERVICE CORPORATION
Daytona Beach, FL

Dade Service Corporation designs and builds pressurized ripening rooms, cooling rooms and distribution facilities for the produce industry. Products include ripening rooms, pressure coolers, freezers, cooler rooms and CA rooms. We also offer DASERCO Brand pressurized ripening systems, pressure coolers, produce refrigeration systems and computer control systems



Booth #3072
NEW MEXICO DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE
Las Cruces, NM

Visit the New Mexico Pavilion where you will find 10 companies offering a variety of products including green chiles, sweet onions, watermelon, pumpkins, pecans, peanuts, pinto beans, potatoes, new machinery, technology and more.



Booth #3079
SHENANDOAH GROWERS INC.
Harrisonburg, VA

Shenandoah Growers offers a year-round supply of organic, living culinary Herbs.



Booth #3082
GILLS ONIONS LLC
Oxnard, CA

As the nation's largest fresh-onion processor, we are pioneers in sustainable practices. Stop by our booth to learn how we are converting our onion waste to renewable energy, eliminating greenhouse gas emissions and more. You can also view our retail fresh-cut onion products. We look forward to talking to you about your sustainability concerns.



Booth #3083
HMC
Kingsburg, CA

2009 marks the 30th anniversary of our Lunch Bunch grapes. Building on a tradition of investing and innovating for quality, HMC offers year-round supplies of value added grapes in all forms. The holy grail of fruit is being delivered from our orchards in California.



AISLE 3100

Booth #3160
EAGLE EYE PRODUCE
Iona, ID

Eagle Eye Produce Inc. and Champion Produce are Tier One growers, shippers and processors with locations across the United States that are dedicated to providing excellent customer service. We grow, sell and ship a full line of premium produce year-round.



Booth #3164
SOUTHERN SPECIALTIES INC.
Pompano Beach, FL

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 based in Florida, Texas and California.



AISLE 3200

Booth #3228
APEAM A.C.
Uruapan, Michoacan, Mexico

Ranked as the world's largest avocado producer and the top provider in the U.S., avocados from Mexico follow stringent quality measures that ensure year-round production of the world's finest avocados.



Booth #3268
COAST PRODUCE COMPANY
Los Angeles, CA

Discover retail solutions at the Coast Produce Company booth. Coast Produce Company features comprehensive retail programs, such as the Coast Snacking Line, Farmer's Select, Coast Asia, Coast Caliente and Coast Organic, which highlight our dedication to our customers and valuable relationships with our growers.



Booth #3276
ALLEN LUND COMPANY INC.
La Canada Flintridge, CA

Specializing as a national, third-party transportation broker, the Allen Lund Company works with shippers and carriers across the nation to transport dry, refrigerated and flatbed freight, specializing in produce. Additionally, the Allen Lund Company has an international division, ALC International, which is licensed by the FTC as an OTI-NVOCC, and a logistics division called ALC Logistics.



Booth #3282
TIMCO WORLDWIDE INC.
Davis, CA

Offering mini-watermelons, seedless watermelons, cantaloupes, honeydews and organics, Timco is one of the leading melon shippers in North America. In the last 25 years, we have established a year-round production program that spans 12 U.S. States, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico and Panama and include the MelonUp! and Sundia labels.



Booth #3283
PRODUCE PRO SOFTWARE
Woodridge, IL

Produce Pro's comprehensive, all-in-one software is designed specifically for distribution of produce and other perishables. We can help you achieve complete and accurate product traceability — just ask us how!



Booth #3288
POLYMER LOGISTICS
Riverside, CA

The Advantages of the Polymer RPC — Active Locking Mechanism include ease of folding for the store personnel, reduction of time to remove empty RPC's from shelf, and reduction of hand and wrist stress for store personnel. Our products are compatible with corrugated and other RPC's, ribs and sockets to stack with common-footprint corrugated.





PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

AISLE 3300

Booth #3322
APIO INC.
Guadalupe, CA



Apio Inc., the leading manufacturer of branded, fresh-cut vegetables, markets a complete line of bags and trays for club and retail stores under the Eat Smart® brand featuring Breatheway® membrane technology. Apio will be showcasing a variety of new products at PMA, including bagged salad kits, single-serve cups, new cut vegetables products and party trays.



Booth #3340
HOLLAND FRESH GROUP
Den Haag, Zuid-Holland
OTC USA is a young and dynamic organization, specializing in the import, export and distribution of organic vegetables and fruit. With offices in Europe and our team in South America, OTC offers a broad range of organic products.

Booth #3350
PERO VEGETABLE COMPANY LLC
Delray Beach, FL



The Pero Vegetable Company LLC is a vibrant, 100-year-old, privately owned business. We specialize in the retail and wholesale of high-quality produce as a grower, packager, marketer and distributor.

Booth #3368
KINGSBURG ORCHARDS
Kingsburg, CA



Kingsburg Orchards is more committed than ever to flavor. We are consistently exploring new ways of producing the best and most unique eating experience for consumers with our more than 200 varieties of fresh fruit.

Booth #3378
SILVER CREEK SOFTWARE
Boise, ID



Visual Produce, an accounting program targeted to the fresh produce industry, offers unique capabilities for produce wholesalers, distributors, packers, brokers and grower settlements, including customer menus, contract pricing, lot control, route accounting, visual internet, landed cost, traceability and much more.

Booth #3388
J & C TROPICALS
Miami, FL



J & C Tropicals is a vertically integrated tropical produce grower, importer, shipper and packer. The company's distribution chain spans throughout the United States, Puerto Rico and Canada. Key products include boniato, yuca, malanga, chayote, mango, plantains and our newest — the sweet tamarind.

AISLE 3400

Booth #3402
OPPENHEIMER GROUP
Coquitlam, BC, Canada



With a vertically-integrated base of growers from over 25 countries, The Oppenheimer Group is a valued supplier to retailers, wholesalers, and foodservice customers. We deliver year-round volumes of preferred items, as well as custom packaging, category management, quality assurance, e-commerce and transportation solutions.

Booth #3418
MARIANI PACKING COMPANY
Vacaville, CA



Mariani Packing Company is the largest family-owned global producer of dried fruits. Mariani leads the industry in unique offerings and innovation through the development of new dried fruit concepts, such as their Enhanced Wellness line of dried fruits with added supplements.

Booth #3438
SUNSWEEP GROWERS
Yuba City, CA



Sunsweet offers a variety of 100 percent fruit snacks that are highly nutritious, delicious and very convenient. Products include dried plums, antioxidant blend, Philippine pineapples, Philippine mangos, cherries and apricots.

Booth #3452
CHELAN FRESH MARKETING
Chelan, WA



Chelan Fresh Marketing serves as the link between growers and retailers to move fresh fruit. Chelan Fresh Marketing provides vehicles for over 419 growers to market all of its fresh-fruit products under one roof.

Booth #3474
DOMEX SUPERFRESH GROWERS
Yakima, WA



Domex is a tree-fruit leader for conventional and organic apples, pears and cherries. Located in the heart of central Washington state, Domex offers you merchandising support, regional reps, year-round category planning and more. Put us to the test today; you'll love our high-quality fruit, our customer service and our attention to detail.

Booth #3479
KEYES FIBRE CORP.
Wenatchee, WA



Keyes is a leading packaging company whose products and services are primarily focused in the food and beverage industries. Keyes has been following environmental and sustainable practices for over 50 years.

Booth #3482
PRIMARY PACKAGE INC.
Tulare, CA



Primary Package can help you cut production costs with a customized fresh produce packaging system including single machines or fully automated packing lines, Flowpack, graders, sorters, palletizers and more.

Booth #3487
ATLAS PRODUCE & DIST. INC.
Bakersfield, CA



Atlas Produce & Dist. Inc. is the grower and shipper of the popular Caramel Natural™ Medjool Dates and Date Coconut Rolls. We are excited to introduce three new additions to our product line, including the Caramel Natural™ Date Almond Rolls, Jumbo Red Dried Grapes and Jumbo Golden Dried Grapes. All three items are produced in California.

AISLE 3500

Booth #3502
MARZETTI COMPANY
Columbus, OH



Marzetti will be featuring hummus veggie dips for the produce department and veggie tray applications. Marzetti Refrigerated Dressings, Marzetti and Chatham Village Croutons will also be showcased along with Marzetti Fruit Dips.

Booth #3510
CARLSON AIRFLO
Brooklyn Park, MN



Carlson AirFlo proudly works hand-in-hand with produce managers throughout the retail industry. We focus on developing products tailored for easy produce merchandising and dramatic visual appearance.

Booth #3536
ALLIANCE RUBBER COMPANY
Hot Springs National Park, AR



Alliance has had 86 years of experience manufacturing rubber bands to meet your packaging needs. We offer custom-printed bands to brand and promote your produce, stock PLU bands to aid check and meet COOL requirements and ProTape® to combine the attributes of PLU Bands with bar coding capability.

Booth #3546
SCS (SCIENTIFIC CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS)
Emeryville, CA



Enhance your competitive edge with Scientific Certification Systems. Be on the frontline of food safety with SCS risk management services cost-effective programs, which guarantee flavor and high nutrition.

Booth #3574
MISSISSIPPI SWEET POTATO COUNCIL
Mississippi State, MS



The Mississippi Sweet Potato Council invites everyone to come by our booth and satisfy your need for sweet potatoes.

Booth #3583
PACIFIC ORGANIC PRODUCE/PURITY
San Francisco, CA



Pacific Organic Produce has been packing, shipping and marketing organic fruit grown by high-quality organic farmers since 1994. We are now one of the largest marketers of organic tree fruit in the United States. We offer year-round programs out of multiple shipping points throughout the United States.

PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

AISLE 3600

Booth #3612
BOSKOVICH FARMS INC.
Oxnard, CA

Since 1915, the Boskovich family has grown produce that is safe and wholesome. Today, Boskovich Farms produces nearly 30 different varieties of fruits and vegetables. Our processing division specializes in fresh-cut and value-added produce. We distribute to retail, wholesale and foodservice industries throughout North America and Europe.



Booth #3918
MONTEREY MUSHROOMS INC.
Watsonville, CA

Monterey introduces mushrooms with vitamin D. Monterey's vitamin D mushrooms deliver 100 percent of the daily value of vitamin D, which is good for the immune system, insulin production, a powerful antioxidant boost and essential for bone development and health.



Booth #3941
CF FRESH
Sedro Woolley, WA

CF Fresh will be unveiling a new look for its popular Viva Tierra brand of organic fresh produce. The highlight of the new packaging is the GS1 Databar PLU stickers, which feature both a human-readable PLU number as well as a machine scanable 14-digit GTIN barcode. The launch of the redesigned brand will be accompanied by a new Web site.

Booth #3976
BEACHSIDE PRODUCE LLC
Guadalupe, CA

Beachside Produce LLC is one of the leading producers and marketers of commodity packed broccoli in the United States. Along with having the exclusive marketing rights to the Lyon variety of artichoke, Beachside Produce provides a full-line of vegetable consolidation for its customers year-round.



AISLE 3700

Booth #3732
GOURMET GARDEN
Folsom, CA

Gourmet Garden herbs and spices make fresh herbs and spices easy for every-day cooking. Make sure to drop by our booth and discover the latest new and exciting innovations happening at Gourmet Garden.



Booth #3930
SEALD SWEET INTERNATIONAL
Vero Beach, FL

Seald Sweet proudly celebrates a century of service to the produce industry, growing and shipping fresh citrus, grapes, pears and more from the finest growing regions around the world.



Booth #3945
AMERICAN PACKAGING CORPORATION
Story City, IA

American Packaging specializes in breathable specifications to extend product shelf-life. Anti-fog films and registered anti-fog coatings are included for product visibility. Features such as laser micro-perforation for high respiration products, easy-package opening and self-venting during microwave cooking are also available. We have registered pressure sensitive re-close tape and registered coupons for product promotion.



AISLE 4000

Booth #4010
MARIE'S
Dallas, TX

Marie's® Produce Dressing originated in Seattle at Marie's Café. Since then, Marie's has grown to be the No. 1 brand in the refrigerated-produce dressing category. Today, Marie's continues the tradition of creating delicious dressings, dips and glazes with the homemade taste consumers appreciate. Homemade flavor, freshness, quality and variety are all part of the Marie's difference.



AISLE 3800

Booth #3812
CALIFORNIA GIANT BERRY FARMS
Watsonville, CA

We are a grower and shipper of premium strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and blackberries. Be sure to visit us at PMA to hear more about our products and high-quality customer service.



Booth #3938
COPEXEU
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Come to our booth and increase your off-season business by meeting Argentine growers and exporters of fresh pears, apples, blueberries and cherries.



AISLE 3900

Booth #3912
DUDA FARM FRESH FOODS INC.
Wellington, FL

It will be a show to remember as Duda Farm Fresh Foods unveils its latest product innovation. Give-aways, drawings and promotional items will be showcased throughout the day starting at 12 p.m. on Saturday, October 3. Our customers enjoy the convenience of working with Duda Farm Fresh Foods as their single source solution for fresh produce. Duda Farm Fresh Foods is one of a select few producers to use a state-of-the-art celery-cutting system, which extends shelf-life and decreases pitting and strings. Our Dandy® fresh-cut celery is available year-round.



Booth #3973
EXPORTADORA DE PLASTICOS AGRICOLAS

Zapopan, Jal, Mexico
Do you want to obtain better production in your crops? Do you want to harvest fruits with better quality? We are the leading Mexican company in production and marketing of agricultural plastic film.



Booth #4042
POTTER INC
Bryan, OH

Potter Inc.'s Fruit and Gourmet Gift Baskets pair healthful, conventional fruits with delectable gourmet snacks for the perfect ready-to-sell gift. For labor and space-savings, our Half-Pallet Shipper Display is a win-win for the retailer and consumer. And for those who have yet to finalize holiday fruit baskets for 2009, Potter Inc. can create a program to fit your immediate needs.





PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

Booth #4050

CRUNCH PAK
Cashmere, WA

Crunch Pak has new packaging! We are still No. 1 in sliced apples.



AISLE 4100

Booth #4110

GRIMMWAY FARMS
Bakersfield, CA

Grimmway Farms is a grower/shipper of fresh and processed conventional and organic carrots and carrot juice.



Booth #4118

CHURCH BROTHERS LLC.
Salinas, CA

With over 40 years experience in innovation, quality and food-safety, Church Brothers is your fully vertically-integrated, one-stop shop for all your produce needs. Operating under the Church Brothers umbrella today are our own farming, harvesting, processing, food-safety, consolidation and trucking entities that will secure the highest quality of delivered produce.



Booth #4119

PRIMA BELLA PRODUCE
Clovis, CA

Prima Bella ships fresh, super-sweet corn year-round. We offer white, yellow, and bi-color corn with or without husks, in a variety of cobb sizes and packs including microwaveable trays.



Booth #4130

EARTHBOUND FARM
San Juan Bautista, CA

Earthbound Farm began 25 years ago in a small backyard garden with a big commitment to organic farming. Today, we work with 150 dedicated farmers to offer innovative, healthy and delicious certified-organic products year-round. In 2009, our organic farming on 33,000 acres will keep about 10.5 million pounds of conventional agricultural chemicals out of the environment.



Booth #4138

OCEAN MIST FARMS
Castroville, CA

Ocean Mist Farms will debut commodity-wide new packaging at PMA Fresh Summit. The new packaging has many consumer benefits, including greater product visibility and a consistent graphic design to enhance the product and make it easier for shoppers to find on store shelves.



Booth #4141

SAN MIGUEL PRODUCE INC.
Oxnard, CA

San Miguel Produce, makers of Cut 'N Clean and Jade, introduces new organic and Asian value-added cooking greens for retail, wholesale and foodservice.



Booth #4146

MASTRONARDI PRODUCE
Kingsville, ON

Mastronardi Produce/SUNSET® is a family-owned pioneer and industry leader in the gourmet greenhouse industry that grows and markets nationally recognized brands such as the Campani® Tomato, Splendido™ Grape Tomatoes and Champagne Cocktail Tomatoes™ under its SUNSET® label.



Booth #4154

MINISTERIO DE AGRICULTURA
Lima, Peru

The Peruvian coast is the largest natural greenhouse in the world, where crops are bountiful and produce high-quality harvests. Peru's focus on GAP/GMP has attracted many investors to Peruvian agriculture. Peruvian companies are equipped with state-of-the-art technology to better handle their exports and compete in the world markets.



Booth #4162

COLORADO POTATO ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE
Monte Vista, CO

Visit our booth and see why our unique varieties of Colorado potatoes are favorites in homes and in restaurants. Only our potatoes are grown in a healthy alpine environment.



Booth #4183

AFS TECHNOLOGIES
Phoenix, AZ

AFS Technologies provides software solutions for the food and beverage industry that are guaranteed to improve the bottom line. AFS offers the industry's only complete end-to-end software suite utilizing service oriented architecture (SOA) and the Microsoft .NET framework.



AISLE 4200

Booth #4210
INGERSOLL-RAND INDUSTRIAL REFRIGERATION INC.
Bridgeton, MO

Ingersoll Rand's Environment Management System (EMS) Surface and Air Sanitation Technology reduces food safety risks and minimizes cross contamination of your fresh, perishable products. EMS is 100 percent organic, operates 24/7/365, and minimizes mold, bacteria and viruses within a defined refrigerated environment.



Booth #4218

KES SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Kennesaw, GA

For over 20 years KES® Science & Technology has provided the perishables industry with quality assurance, food safety and enhanced freshness equipment solutions. Our NASA-developed food safety air sanitation technology, the AiroCide PPT system, is recognized globally as an established proven solution against airborne contaminants.



Booth #4219

CAVENDISH PRODUCE
Winter Garden, FL

Cavendish Produce is your fresh potato specialists! Russets, whites, reds, yellows, blues, fingerlings, organics — we have what you're looking for. Retail or food-service, we bring you value through premium products and packaging.



Booth #4224

GR PRODUCE INC.
McAllen, TX

GR Produce Inc. is one of Mexico's largest producers in the agricultural industry. Our primary products include: Roma tomatoes, jalapeño peppers, onions, potatoes — in open weave sacks or in boxes — cucumbers and pecans. Our brands are recognized nationally and internationally.

AISLE 4300

Booth #4315
EPIC ROOTS LLC
Salinas, CA

Epic Roots California grows Mâche Rosettes and Mâche Rosette Mixes, which are unique, delicious, extremely nutritious and versatile. They add excitement to your salad case. Our new products should not be missed!



Booth #4318

RAINIER FRUIT COMPANY
Selah, WA

Rainier Fruit Company's legacy of farming experience drives our commitment to quality in the apples, pears, cherries and blueberries we produce. Our solid horticultural foundation, paired with state-of-the-art facilities and unfaltering customer service, has positioned us as the leader in the Northwest fruit industry. Stop by to discuss starting a pre-ripened pear program.



Booth #4330

BONITA
Staten Island, NY

For over 50 years, Pacific Fruit Inc., the sole distributors of Bonita premium bananas from Ecuador, has taken great pride in maintaining our commitment to quality, consistency and service. Along with bananas, we also offer plantains, reds, ninos, limes and sun-ripened pineapples. Organic bananas are always available.



Booth #4344

EUROPEAN FLAVORS
El Portal, FL

The European Flavors project aims to promote the extraordinary flavors and characteristics of both fresh and processed Italian fruits and vegetables in the United States. Inspired by the simple yet healthful Mediterranean cuisine, our fruits are produced in compliance with strict European directives — safeguarding the environment, health and safety of the consumer and grown in accordance with low-impact production regulations.



Booth #4350

VEG-LAND INC. — J.B.J. DISTRIBUTING
Fullerton, CA

We are growers, packers and shippers of fresh organic produce. We offer programs for retail and foodservice, including consolidation. Please visit our booth, featuring our organic fresh-cut items and current list of other locally grown produce.





PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

Booth #4372

WHOLLY GUACAMOLE
Fort Worth, TX

Wholly Guacamole is America's No. 1-selling guacamole. All of our Wholly products are consistent in taste and texture year-round. The HPP process locks in flavor and provides a great, fresh-tasting product with unparalleled food safety. Today, Wholly Guacamole and Fresh-erized Foods is the world leader in avocado and guacamole.



AISLE 4400

Booth #4402

COLUMBIA MARKETING INTERNATIONAL (CMI)
Wenatchee, WA

One of the largest growers, packers and shippers of premium quality conventional and organic apples, pears and cherries in Washington, CMI offers a full selection of the finest quality Washington and imported fruit.



Booth #4410

SARGENTO FOODS INC.
Plymouth, WI

Sargento® is bringing even more news and excitement to produce with Sargento Salad Finishers® and Potato Finishers®! We've paired our natural cheeses with chef-inspired combinations of premium meats, dried fruit, nuts, croutons and cheese sauces, allowing consumers to turn ordinary salads and potatoes into tasty sensations.



Booth #4418

DISCOVERY GARDEN'S
Oakdale, CA

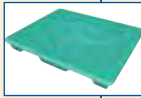
Discovery Garden's specializes in proprietary variety potatoes — Sierra Gold, with a russet skin and Sierra Rose, with a shiny red to dark mahogany skin. Samples will be available at our booth. Discovery Garden's now has distribution points across the United States, year-round.



AISLE 4500

Booth #4428
AIRDEX INTERNATIONAL INC.
Henderson, NV

Worldwide patented AIRDEX pallets, known as the "world's lightest pallets" are sanitary, shock-absorbing, thermal insulating, repairable, ISPM-compliant and free after a single airfreight journey. They weigh only seven to 10 pounds, carry 3,500 pounds and dramatically reduce CO2 emissions with no deforestation, all while also slashing cargo costs.



Booth #4525

GARDEN PROTEIN INTERNATIONAL
Richmond, BC, Canada

Gardein is a tasty and meaty plant-based protein made from a blend of nutritious and natural ingredients including soy, wheat proteins, pea proteins, vegetables and grains, including quinoa, amaranth, millet and kamut. Gardein is currently sold in the fresh section of grocery stores and a new, frozen line will launch in the fall.

Booth #4527

WILDWOOD ORGANICS
Fullerton, CA

As a leading provider of innovative soy products, Wildwood offers real food for healthy indulgence. We offer the only tofu made from sprouted soybeans and PastaSlim, the versatile low-carb, low-calorie, fully-cooked noodles made from tofu and certified gluten-free.



AISLE 4600

Booth #4529
ELIOS FOODS LLC
San Leandro, CA

Korfi salad dressings from Elios Foods are made from all-natural, gluten-free ingredients for an authentic Mediterranean experience. Korfi dressings are now offered for your fresh produce department or restaurant.



Booth #4602

NORTH BAY PRODUCE INC.
Traverse City, MI

North Bay Produce Inc. is a globally operated, grower-owned marketing and distribution cooperative. The company grows and distributes a continuous and diverse range of fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the year from U.S. and Latin American farms. NBP is dedicated to adding value, guaranteeing quality, and ensuring customers we are operating under safe, ethical conditions.



Booth #4603

MOONEY FARMS
Chico, CA

Mooney Farms offers a full line of premium sun dried tomato products for the retail industry. Our Bella Sun Luci products are packed in 100 percent pure olive oil and contain only the highest-quality ingredients. Come by and taste the best at our booth.



Booth #4606

TRIUNFO-MEX INC
City Of Industry, CA

Triunfo-Mex is showcasing its Jovy Fruit Rolls in ten great flavors. These Jovy Fruit Rolls have an extended shelf-life of 18 months from date of manufacture. They are gluten-free and Kosher. Jovy Fruit Rolls are fortified with vitamin C and sold at a suggested retail price of \$.59 each.



Booth #4610

MAKOTO DRESSING INC.
Melbourne, FL

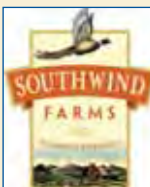
Makoto Dressing has created special blends of dressings, sauces and marinades using the freshest ingredients possible. The Makoto line includes Ginger Dressing, Honey Ginger Dressing, Ginger Slaw, Vegetable Sauce and our newest flavor, Orange Ginger Dressing.



Booth #4612

SOUTHWIND FARMS
Heyburn, ID

Located in the Snake River Valley, we have been farming for the last four generations. Our products are pure, natural, and handpicked, ensuring that the very best crops make it to your table.



Booth #4613

BOZZANO OLIVE RANCH
Stockton, CA

Bozzano Olive Ranch's award-winning California-certified Extra Virgin Olive Oils are very fresh and so versatile that they are used in the finest restaurants in the country and also sold in fresh-produce departments.



Booth #4628

HALIBURTON INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION
Ontario, CA

From the fields of Baja Mexico, California's Central and Imperial Valleys, we receive vine-ripened tomatoes and tomatillos, fresh peppers, garlic, onions and cilantro, all hand-harvested and selected for color and freshness. for our Salsa Fresca.



Booth #4632

WOODLAND FOODS
Gurnee, IL

Woodland Foods offers a complete line of specialty-dried ingredients in the following categories: mushrooms, chiles, grains, beans, rices, herbs, spices, fruits and nuts.





Floral Aisle-by-Aisle Booth Review



AISLE 500

Booth #543

HOSA INTERNATIONAL

Doral, FL

Hosa International will showcase our spring 2010 floral selections, which feature spray roses, lilies and roses from our 200-hectare Rainforest Alliance- and VeriFlora-certified farms in Colombia and Ecuador.



AISLE 600

Booth #647

NATURE'S FLOWERS

Doral, FL

Nature's Flowers, an award-winning grower and shipper of premium, fresh-cut flowers and bouquets to the grocery store floral industry, is your ultimate resource for quality flowers and exceptional service. Our product lines include private label flowers, hand-tied bouquets and customized marketing programs created to increase your sales and profits.



AISLE 800

Booth #873

B AND H FLOWERS INC.

Carpinteria, CA

B and H Flowers produces a variety of commercial, VeriFlora-certified, organic flower crops for mass market retail. We also produce innovative merchandising tools. We guarantee to provide our nationwide customers with sustainably grown, vibrant, long-lasting California-grown flowers.



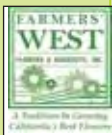
AISLE 900

Booth #957

FARMERS' WEST FLOWERS & BOUQUETS INC.

Carpinteria, CA

Farmers' West grows premium California-cut flowers and turns them into lovely European-styled, hand-tied bouquets and bunches. Designed to sell, Farmers' West brings eco-friendly flowers to marketplaces. Stop by to see how we can increase your floral sales.



Booth #980

ASB GREENWORLD

Valdosta, GA

For more than 30 years, ASB Greenworld has been a supplier to the floral industry. We are producers of peat and related mixes, including potting soils, mulch and bark items. Our own peat bog is in New Brunswick, Canada, with locations in Mt. Elgin, ON; Valdosta, GA; and Virginia.



AISLE 1000

Booth #1039

FLORALIFE INC.

Walterboro, SC

Floralife Inc., a division of Smithers-Oasis Company, is a manufacturer of specialty products for the post-harvest care and handling of fresh-cut flowers and potted plants. Products include Floralife® cut-flower foods, hydration solutions, EthylBlock™ technology ethylene action inhibitor, greenhouse cleaning products, automatic dosing systems, adhesives, cutlery and protective flower-finishing sprays.



AISLE 1200

Booth #1214

TEMKIN INTERNATIONAL

Payson, UT

Extend the life of your produce with Temkin's controlled-atmospheric packaging and independent shelf-life testing. Zipper pouches, header bags, sleeves, sheets and rolls are all available. Choose from hundreds of trending stock prints for floral applications or build your brand with custom printing in up to eight different colors.



AISLE 1400

Booth #1458

AERIAL BOUQUETS

Chesterfield, MO

Aerial Bouquets is one of the largest balloon manufacturers and distributors in the country. Stop by our booth and find out how to "Get with the Program!"



AISLE 1900

Booth #1978

MICKY'S MINIS FLORA EXPRESS

Millstadt, IL

Micky's Minis grows fun, profitable, miniature plants for all occasions. Winner of PMA's 2008 prestigious Impact award for packaging excellence, we blend our unique size plants with simple, yet tasteful, accessories to bring your customers value and great prices! We're launching the year-long celebration of our 20th anniversary. Come help us celebrate and see our imaginative new items.



Booth #1990

ENCORE FLORAL MARKETING INC.

Grand Rapids, MI

We specialize in fresh-cut flower bouquets and arrangements. Importing nationally and internationally allows us to include products from different countries in our unique creations. Our facilities in Miami, FL, and Dallas, TX, allow us to enhance our production and distribution opportunities nationwide.



AISLE 2000

Booth #2009

THE SUN VALLEY GROUP

Arcata, CA

The Sun Valley Group brings the concept of earth, wind, water, bloom to our PMA booth, which imaginatively uses the crates our flowers are grown in to provide the booth's structure. Flowers are surrounded by opaque blue curtains representing the all-encompassing sky and the nourishing rain that waters Sun Valley flowers.



Booth #2011

HIGHLAND SUPPLY CORPORATION

Highland, IL

Operating since 1937, Highland is the world's leading manufacturer of decorative floral packaging. Product lines include: Speed Covers® plant covers, Clearphane® film, Plastifoil® florists foil, Picture Perfect™ flat plant covers, Monza™ and Tessera™ plant wrapping sheets, wire and design tools, sleeves, Easter grass and more.



Booth #2015

NURSERYMEN'S EXCHANGE

Half Moon Bay, CA

With over 65 years of experience, Nurserymen's Exchange is one of the largest wholesalers of indoor plants, tropical foliage and decorative accessories in the nation. Offering a broad range of innovative products year-round to retailers nationwide, we pride ourselves on our horticultural excellence and inspired design.



Booth #2063

BAY CITY FLOWER CO. INC

Half Moon Bay, CA

The family-owned Bay City Flower Co. Inc will celebrate 100 years of business in 2010! Known for growing the most diverse assortments of unique-quality flowering plants in the United States, our aim is to keep our customer's floral displays fresh and colorful.



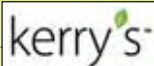
AISLE 2700

Booth #2702

KERRY'S NURSERY INC.

Homestead, FL

We create demand with the most fashion-forward products featuring the highest quality orchids, bromeliads and eye-catching pottery from around the world. Visit our booth and discover how our compelling, value-minded living arrangements can be the solution you have been looking for to grow your floral department.



AISLE 4200

Booth #4338

A-ROO COMPANY

Strongsville, OH

A-ROO has several new packaging products being introduced for the produce and floral departments this year. The Petal Pouch™ is one of these items offering an innovative way for floral department customers to carry out plants and flowers. A true grab-and-go gift sleeve, the Petal Pouch™ will make the flower-buying experience easier for all customers.





LGS Specialty Sales, Ltd.

718-542-2200 • 800-796-2349 • Fax: 718-542-2354

www.lgssales.com

Visit us at the PMA Booth #2168 Hall C



Relationships And Longevity Impart Value in Philly

As the Philadelphia Regional Produce Market celebrates an historic 50 years, long-lasting relationships sustain and motivate the merchants and their customers.

BY JODEAN ROBBINS

Rooted in 50 years of history and looking toward a new era of produce distribution, the Philadelphia Regional Produce Market (PRPM) continues to play a valuable and relevant role in the northeastern produce scene. With multi-generational companies still standing strong and the addition of newer players, Philly market vendors and buyers note the importance of relationships and longevity in this business.

"In the produce business you're only as good as your word, so relationships are obviously key," says Chip Wiechec, president of Hunter Bros. Inc. "In the corporate world, relationships have become less important because of changing personnel and ownership. However in our world, relationships are incredibly important."

"For us, relationships have been very important and are probably one of the most important aspects of the business," remarks Mark Levin, owner of M. Levin & Co. Inc. "We're working on 104 years in 2010. I'm told family businesses don't usually last more than two gen-

erations, but we're into our fourth. Over those years we've established good relationships, and it's not just because of the quality of our fruit."

Ken Hurst, president and CEO of Hurst Produce Inc., based in Ephrata, PA, has been doing business with the PRPM for 32 years. "I think it means a lot to customers to know the Market has been around for a long time and will continue to serve us in the future," he says. "We hope our customers would say the same about our company, which is celebrating 32 years."

The value of a good relationship is true for both the customer and the shipper sides of the market. "Relationships are very important," states Jimmy Storey, Jr., president of both Quaker City Produce Co. and PRPM's Board of Directors. "Without our good customers and shippers we don't have a business."

"My shippers keep me in business and the relationship with them is extremely important," agrees Anthony Stea, CEO of Stea Bros. Inc. "Some of these relationships go back 15 years or more."



Mark Levin, M. Levin & Co. Inc.



Mike Maxwell, Procacci Brothers Sales Corp.



Dan Vena, John Vena Inc.



Marty Roth, Coosemans Philadelphia Inc.



Nelson Gonzalez, Coosemans Philadelphia Inc.



Richie Routhenstein, Coosemans Philadelphia Inc.

The very nature of business on a wholesale market spurs relationships and even friendships. Jeff Lerro with M & C Produce Co. Inc. believes, "Nobody can develop relationships like we can here. It's the nature of the market business. We're all about relationships, relationships with the customer and relationships with the supplier."

Relationships are not only integral to the inner workings of the market, but a favorite aspect of the business for many of those who are involved in it. "What I really enjoy about the business is going beyond relationships and establishing friendships," says Joe Procacci of Procacci Brothers Sales Corp. "I have relationships that go back 50 to 60 years. I enjoy the friendships I have with people in the industry."

A MATTER OF TRUST

Trust forms the foundation of the produce business and has become increasingly vital in today's topsy-turvy economy. "Our business is

Setting The Bar In 1959 And 2010

The Philadelphia Food Distribution Center was started in June of 1959, and celebrated its 50th anniversary just a few months ago. At the time, it was the first of its kind in the world. It accomplished a feat that had never been done before — gathering the entire wholesale, fresh-food industry together in one 450-acre area of the city. The first tenant to occupy the new center was the Philadelphia Regional Produce Terminal, set on 24 acres.

"Prior to this move, the fresh-food industry was scattered along Dock Street near the Delaware waterfront," says Sonny DiCrecchio, executive director of the Philadelphia Regional Produce Market. "After the move to the new center, the area previously occupied by the vendors was used to erect the Society Hill Towers, kicking off the development of the waterfront community and expansion



of center city projects, shaping the Philadelphia skyline we see today."

In 1992, the market underwent a \$22 million dollar face-lift and expansion including 72 new 2,500 square-foot, state-of-the-art, walk-in refrigerators, eight new ramps for cross-docking capabilities and the repaving of the entire 24-acre site. In 2001, the market's Board of Directors approved a feasibility study to retrofit the 42-year-old market. "After a year of working with professionals, it was determined

that retrofitting the old market would not be affordable, nor would the businesses survive the construction phases," DiCrecchio explains. "This started a seven-year quest to build a new market at a turnkey site."

In September of 2008, after four site location changes and seven years of grueling and intense negotiations with the state of Pennsylvania, the market broke ground on a 48-acre site just seven miles from its current location. The site includes an additional 15-acre site eight blocks away for overflow parking of trucks and tractor-trailers. "Just as in 1959, Philadelphia once again will set the bar for excellence in the produce industry by opening the first-of-its-kind in the world fully refrigerated terminal market," says DiCrecchio. "The main refrigerated building housing the 27 produce businesses alone is the size of 14 professional football fields. Completion of the new terminal market will be in the fall of 2010."

pb



Where Old World Values...



*Mural by Kids of Ogontz Avenue Art Company, 2002.
As seen on the wall of Unit #60 at the Philadelphia Regional Produce Market*

...Forge Lasting Relationships

T. M. KOVACEVICH - PHILADELPHIA, INC.

Celebrating 25 Years of Excellence

Reader Service # 18

built on trust and relationships and that is still true today," says Marty Roth, secretary/treasurer for Coosemans Philadelphia Inc. "It's more important now because of the economy. Money is tight and buyers are relying on their established relationships to help them out."

Fred Penza, vice president of Pinto Bros. Inc., agrees, adding, "Since we're all in the same position economically, relationships are more important than ever. If the customer trusts you and has faith in what you do, it's going to be a successful exchange."

Working together is a vital element of the

produce business. "When times get tough, people work together," points out Mike Maxwell, president of Procacci Brothers Sales Corp. "In our business, we're all pretty fraternal. We have the same work ethic. We're recession-resilient. We dig down together and get through whatever changing dynamic we have, be it weather problems or the economy. We're use to living in a changing business."

One thing remains certain. "Relationships are steady during all economic times, good and bad," declares Ron Milavsky, president of B.R.S. Produce Co., T/A Frank Leone. "Rela-

tionships give you a better rapport with customers. They have more confidence in you, which benefits their buying. We have relationships going back 40 years."

"In this type of work, product cost and quality can change drastically in a short amount of time," states Hurst of Hurst Produce. "I have come to trust and respect the men and women in this business who stay true to their word. A wise author of an old book once wrote, 'A good name is better than great riches.'"



"In our business, we're all pretty fraternal. We have the same work ethic. We're recession-resilient. We dig down together and get through whatever changing dynamic we have, be it weather problems or the economy. We're used to living in a changing business."

*— Mike Maxwell
Procacci Brothers
Sales Corp.*

Time invested in nurturing business goes back decades for some. "This is definitely a relationship business," admits Tom Leonardi of Fresh Taste Produce U.S.A. & Associates Inc., which imports fruit from 22 countries and does business with the Philly market. "I walk the market. It's important to maintain that face-to-face contact and see what's going on."

And that face-to-face continues to be of the utmost importance. "People come in to do business with a person," asserts John W. Waleski, president of John W. Waleski Produce Inc. "Of course, everyone is always concerned about quality and price, but so much is built on personal relationships. We go back 30 or more years with some shippers."

"Relationships have always been our primary focus," says Michele Carfagano, controller for T.M. Kovacevich-Philadelphia Inc.

Reader Service # 59

Organics are bigger than ever and now eco-friendly **Earthcycle** packaging supports the "greening" of your produce department in a whole new way. **Four Seasons Organic** offers an extensive line of certified organic produce pre-packaged in Earthcycle palm fiber trays. Palm fiber is a renewable resource that naturally biodegrades when composted, reducing landfill waste and supporting a cleaner environment.

And, they look great too!

Certified organic produce in biodegradable trays — a natural partnership to put more green in your produce department.

For more information about the benefits of Earthcycle packaging go to: www.fsproduce.com/earthcycle or www.earthcycle.com

Palm fiber is a renewable resource!




Four Seasons Produce, Inc.
800-422-8384
fsproduce.com

“Nurturing relationships is the core of our business. Even within the company we’re nurturing relationships as we have three generations of families working with us.”

CHALLENGE AND CHANGE

However, it can be harder to develop and keep relationships today. “Many customers, especially the larger ones, are skeptical,” states M. Levin’s Levin. “It is often easier to develop a relationship and the benefits derived from it with smaller- or medium-sized guys. We do have the longevity to provide great product and service to everyone!”

“Relationships allow you to have an arrangement with your customers, where you tell them what they should buy — that’s the goal. It’s our job to serve them. Behind all the computers, faxes, e-mails and technology, what really matters is knowing, ‘Ed will take care of this for me.’”

— Tom Leonardi
Fresh Taste Produce
U.S.A. & Associates Inc.

“Change can be challenging,” states Procacci of Procacci Brothers “Companies we started with years ago are now out of business, and also buy-outs affect established relationships. One day you know the buyer or VP and the next day you don’t! Then they’re taking their business somewhere else where they already have an established relationship.”

“Relationship maintenance is a challenge,” admits George Manos, president of T.M. Kovacevich-Philadelphia Inc. “Changes can bring new people into the picture, which can really test you. But, sometimes it’s refreshing when the new generation comes in with new ideas and perspective.”

Regardless of the evolution of the Philly market and its customer base, relationships still count. “We’re getting more and more new

ethnic customers, and in addition to wanting good quality produce, they understand the relationship aspect of the business,” says Richard Nardella, CEO and chief financial officer of Nardella Inc. “They want to be friends and have a connection.”

“You have to be honest, have good prices and good quality,” says Gary Goldblatt with G & G Produce Inc. “It doesn’t matter if it was 100 years ago or yesterday.”

WHAT IT ALL MEANS

While it’s wonderful to talk about how

great relationships are, the question remains as to what benefits a good relationship actually brings in every-day business terms. “Relationships allow you to have an arrangement with your customers, where you tell them what they should buy — that’s the goal,” explains Fresh Taste’s Leonardi. “It’s our job to serve them. Behind all the computers, faxes, e-mails and technology, what really matters is knowing, ‘Ed will take care of this for me.’”

“There is a sense of stability we offer customers with a relationship,” contends Manos. “They know we’re here and have their best


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Richard Nardella, Nardella Inc.



John Durante, Nardella Inc.



Mark Semerjian, Nardella Inc.



Joe Procacci, Procacci Brothers Sales Corp.

interest taken care of. The shippers feel the same way. It's a good feeling for everyone."

In some instances, an established relationship means help with ads, promotion and increased sales. "I've been able to help customers with their ad sales," explains Todd Penza, a sales associate with Pinto Brothers. "I can help them get some extra promotion and deals and give them some advance notice on what is promotable."

Dan Vena of John Vena Inc. sees both sides of the coin. "If you can build a good relationship, then it's lucrative both from the supplier and customer standpoint. The customers who shop every day definitely understand the value of a relationship with us. For example, I can

help certain customers increase sales by putting together a specialty pack for them."

A consistent relationship also better ensures satisfaction. "We want a good relationship with our customer to make sure they're satisfied with the product," says Storey of Quaker City Produce. "I'm on the floor every day from 4 am until noon to inspect all the product going out and ensure my customers are happy."

Fred Hess, president of Hess Bros. Fruit Co., headquartered in Leola, PA, adds, "If you have someone you can trust provide you with a consistently good product, and because of the relationship they'll be honest with you about problems or potential problems, then

you can make good business decisions. If you feel like you have to continually look over your shoulder, then that makes working together very difficult."

On the grower side, a good relationship helps better move product. "If a crop comes on strong, the grower may ask for you to take more and he knows you'll treat him fairly," explains Penza. "They trust us with their merchandise and trust us not to flood the market."

"I have a few shippers who stay away from certain areas I'm trying to sell," shares Stea of Stea Bros. "By doing that, they allow me to do a better job for them and it's a win-win."

In some instances, an established relationship does translate into better pricing. "We can



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FROM ALL SECTIONS

Tomato Sales: Fred Makadon
Mushroom Sales: Nick Stio

help our smaller customer offer a great deal because they're flexible and work with us," says Fred Penza of Pinto Bros.

"We can give a better pricing break when we have an established relationship," says Coosmans' Roth. "We go out of our way to help the buyer because we better know their needs. We also make sure they get the product they need. Everything works both ways."

"Buyers are saving money by coming down themselves," adds John Black with E. W. Kean Co. Inc. "They're getting that face-to-face connection now. When you get to know them, you can let them know about good deals. Customers are looking to us to help provide solutions for them."

"My customers have known me for years and they stick with me because I treat them fairly," says Jack Collotti, Jr., president of Collotti & Sons Inc. "We try to give everyone the right stuff, as far as their market and use."

HELP ME HELP YOU

Good relationships help vendors better help their customers. "You know their business and you get a feel for what the customer needs," says John Difelicianonio, partner with Ryeco LLC. "You see their pattern and you know what might help them. When you talk every day and share information on what you have and what they need, it helps them better their business. A more open relationship is more beneficial in this business."

"Customers rely on you," says G & G's Goldblatt. "They know they don't need to explain. The longer the relationship, the easier it is for us because we know what the customer needs."

"There are tiers of customers. If we know which tier each customer fits in, we can better serve them," says Lerro of M & C Produce.

Consistency is key to a beneficial business relationship. "A customer without a good relationship will most likely only buy from the market when things are tight," explains Fred Penza. "But, a customer with a good relationship will be consistent. We try to serve all of our customers as best as possible, but having a relationship really helps you better know what the customer needs. We know their buying trends and their take on aggressive prices. This helps us help them."

"We can do more for the regular customer than the spot buyer because we know their business," agrees Procacci Brothers' Maxwell. "Sometimes, I will eat a higher price difference for a short time in order to best serve the market and our customers. That's what you do when you've got relationships with people. A relationship will give you an average price over 52 weeks versus spot buying."

"Lack of a relationship makes it harder for

us to serve the customer," says John Vena's Vena. "If we know exactly the right product mix, we're better able to anticipate what they need. I can know their trends and remember what worked or didn't work in the past."

SERVICE AND INFORMATION

Knowing the customer helps vendors tailor services for customers. "What can I do for you?" asks M. Levin's Levin. "I can provide you with service and that's why we've been around for so long. I can do so much more when I understand the customers' business. I

tell our customers we can put them on promotion four to six times a year and offer a competitive price year-round, as well as guaranteeing they have the right color bananas all the time. If they're strictly contract-buying, they can't guarantee the color — they're at the mercy of the elements."

John Vena, president of John Vena Inc., says, "Our company has always been dedicated to the customer in the Philadelphia area and for 90 years has tried to do what is best for our customers, employees and shippers — in line with our Partners in Quality."

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Reader Service # 118



John Black, E.W. Kean Co. Inc.



Ted Kean III, E.W. Kean Co. Inc.



John Vena, John Vena Inc.



Tony Hurst, Hurst Produce Inc.

"An established relationship helps us better service and inform them," says Waleski of Waleski Produce. "I can help direct them toward what's best. For example, corn and watermelon have to be the best product because you can't see inside. My customers know I'll tell them if it's not top-quality."

Information is another valuable part of the equation. Fresh Taste's Leonardi details, "It's not just about selling the fruit. We let customers know what's going to happen. We make sure to help them buy what they need. We educate them so they can make the best decision for their business."

"The information link is a key part of the

benefit of a relationship," agrees Nardella of Nardella Inc. "For example, in tomatoes, if a guy knows there is a problem in a certain growing area, he won't ship until they have better product. We do our best to find the product needed at the best quality available."

"One of the biggest benefits of the relationships made over the years is the updates I receive from vendors concerning the increase and decrease of product pricing and quality," says Hurst Produce's Hurst. "This is helpful to me in serving my customers."

Good relationships with customers can help merchants serve their shippers as well. "We can take the information we get from our

customers and pass it right back to the shippers, for example, requests for different packs," says Hunter Bros.' Wiechec. "Experience builds trust and trust allows us to better serve our customers and shippers. An established relationship gives you the ability to get a foot in the door with a new product or experiment. Then you have someone you trust to get the right feedback for the shipper. It's important to have the flow of info back and forth between the customers and shippers."

LOOKING FOR CONVENIENCE

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Reader Service # 21



Gary Goldblatt, G & G Produce, Inc.



Tom Kovacevich III, Coosemans Philadelphia Inc.



Frank Banecker and Paul Matthews, Procacci Specialties

"Customers are busy and occupied with other things so they're relying more and more on our relationship," says Coosemans' Roth. "There is more phone business and those coming in are shopping faster. They're relying more on us to get them what they need."

"People today have more things on their plates and they just don't have as much time to contribute to the relationships as they once did," says Hess of Hess Bros. Fruit. "But it also means they're trusting people more to do things for them because they don't have the time to do it themselves. There is a lot of emphasis put on trust and service."

The pursuit of convenience means mer-

chants are looking for ways they can better serve their customers. "Customers want easy, streamlined service," reports Todd Penza of Pinto Bros. "They want to trust the market vendors more. They need to rely on us to be knowledgeable and understand what they need so they can shop 10 stores instead of all of them."

"My goal is to make the customer's life easier," says Dan Vena of Vena Inc. "I want to be the first phone call whenever they have a question or need something."

"We really focus on making the customer's life easier," says M. Levin's Levin. "I'll make a second delivery if you need it, or if there are

boxes from the day before we'll take them back. If I take care of you, you'll take care of me — that's relationship business."

And when problems arise, a good relationship can help ease the problem. "If there is a problem with the load, it's immediately taken care of," says Nardella of Nardella Inc. "They know we're going to do the best job for them. If a customer has a problem with something, we'll send a truck to pick it up and make it right. They have confidence that we'll take care and resolve the issue."

E.W. Keans' Black adds, "While the friendship aspect may not always guarantee business, it is advantageous. If there's a problem

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John Waleski and Neil Markovic,
John W. Waleski Produce Inc.



John Nelli and Chip Wiechec, Hunter Bros. Inc.



Jeff Lerro, M & C Produce Co. Inc.

and they have a relationship with you, they don't feel hesitant to come back about it."

CREATING VALUE

The PRPM is not resting on its history or laurels as merchants focus on continuing to create value. "Being part of a 90-year old company is really exciting," says Dan Vena. "Having all that history behind us is inspiring. However, reflecting on the past is the easy part. Figuring out where to go next is harder."

"Relationships are based on how much value we create — and that's true on both sides," says Wiechec of Hunter Bros.

"It's about continued value," adds Ryeco's Difeliciantonio. "The bottom line is you have to find a way to help your customers make money. You can be the friendliest guy in the world, but you must benefit them business-wise, too."

Developing or maintaining a relationship means performance. "Longevity doesn't mean anything if you're not performing," says Procacci of Procacci Bros'. "You need to ask what you've done lately. We're always looking to see how we can keep current. The new market is a great example of this. We're not resting on our history, we're moving forward."

"We're always looking at what service we can offer to better serve our customers," says Stea of Stea Bros. "Our longevity means we're still creating value."

"Our ability to read what is going on in our customer base has allowed us to stay relevant," says John Vena of John Vena. "We still have a strong base of customers and it's growing. They're connected to this market and are connecting others to our business."

The opening of Procacci Specialties on the market is an example of innovation and change to better serve customers. "Our specialty division is an answer to our customers'

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Tim Reilly and Steve Levchenko, Ryeco LLC.



Michele Carfano and George Manos, T. M. Kovacevich-Philadelphia Inc.



Edward Reynolds and Tom Leonardi, Fresh Taste Produce U.S.A. & Associates Inc.

needs," explains Maxwell. "It serves a niche and products include plants, flowers, organic items, juices, salad dressings, salad items and ethnic grocery items. We're changing and expanding the line in response to our customer feedback."

M. Levin is serving its customers another way by offering some fresh-cut options. "Some new things we're doing include offering cut fruit in gallon sizes, including fruit salad, citrus, orange and grapefruit segments," explains Levin.

Leone's Milowsky reports, "We're expanding our California shipments and getting heav-

ier with those commodities."

NEW MARKET DEMONSTRATES COMMITMENT

The commitment made by the vendors on the Philadelphia market to procure a new market facility is perhaps the best demonstration of how seriously they take their relationships. "To make the kind of commitment we have made to the new market is huge," exclaims Maxwell of Procacci Brothers'. "This is one of the most exciting developments in our industry."

"The new market is a natural step," adds

John Vena. "My grandfather started at 151 Dock Street. In the 1930's, the merchants and city were thinking about a food distribution center. Philadelphia has always been a forward-thinking city. We're still forward-thinking. The new market is a reflection of this."

The new market is already under construction and plans are for companies to be moved in by fall of 2010. "The new market shows we're committed to our customers into the future," says Kovacevich's Carfano. "We're excited about the whole new market event."

The new, state-of-the-art facility will provide multiple benefits for merchants, shippers

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Reader Service # 14



Anthony Nicodemo, Anthony Stea and Nick Bongiorno, Stea Bros. Inc.



Michael Lombardo, Buddy Lombardo, Louis Penza, Todd Penza, Pete Penza and Fred Penza, Pinto Bros. Inc.

and customers. "The new market demonstrates our commitment to future relationships with our customers and growers," says Ryeco's Difeliciantonio. "It's a big investment, but it will be a state-of-the-art facility. Going forward, it doesn't benefit our customers or shippers to stay in our current location."

"We're going into an improved facility to better serve our customers and better handle the product for our shippers," says Quaker City's Storey.

"In the new market, we won't be open to

the elements," says G & G's Goldblatt. "The customer will have it easier because we'll have constant temperature year-round."

Merchants are looking forward to being able to better serve everyone with whom they do business. With the economy the way it is right now, keeping clients happy is key. "We hope the customers and shippers see how we're trying to grow our relationship with them by improving the environment we're in," says Storey. "In the new market, the product will never break the cold chain. It's a very

valuable feat to accomplish."

"The new market will provide us the advantage of being able to strengthen our relationships with new and existing customers because of technological support," says Wiechec of Hunter Bros. "Forward distribution will be a big area for the new market because of space."

"This market is an integral part of Philly and the environment around it," says Fred Penza of Pinto Bros. "We've lasted 50 years and will be around for many more." **pb**

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Tap Into Tinto

Acclaimed Chef Garces' tapas transport diners to Europe with an eclectic mix of French and Spanish culture and cuisine.

BY JODEAN ROBBINS



Entering through the two French doors into Tinto's intimate interior may as well be a flight over the Atlantic Ocean, as guests are transported into Spain's Basque region. From the construction of the menu to the unique mix of flavors, executive chef and owner, Jose Garces, has melded both French culture and Spanish cuisine into perfected small plates (or *tapas*) sharing influences from both sides of the border.

"I want my guests to experience the extraordinary cuisine of this area," says Garces. "Add in some fantastic wines, an intimate dining space, special imported products, such as authentic Spanish cheeses and charcuteries, as well as live Spanish guitar on Friday evenings, and you've got a really transportive dining experience."

Tinto's rustic wood tables and intricate tiling hint at the authenticity to come, but the food is what really delivers. "Our charcuterie display case at one end of the bar allows diners to study the cheese and charcuterie options available to them," says the toque. "The open kitchen offers a glimpse of the chefs working hard to prepare their small plates of Basque fare."

The servers have an incredible depth of knowledge about this cuisine and amazingly good pronunciation of some difficult Spanish and Basque words. "They are really the 'tour guides' of the meal," states Garces. "They lead guests through a menu of often unfamiliar items and help them to make choices that will delight them."

Garces, a 36-year-old Chicago native, has for many years now thought of Philadelphia as his real home. His parents were born in Ecuador and the heritage of his family is incredibly important to him, as well as his culinary creations. He attended culinary school at Chicago's Kendall College, and worked in Spain and in New York City. Garces arrived in Philadelphia to work with Chef Douglas Rodriguez at Alma de Cuba, and is now the executive chef and owner of five of Philadelphia's top innovative restaurants.

The demographics of Tinto vary widely. "We get a fascinating mix of locals, travelers, visitors and more," explains Garces. "Our din-

ers are young, including college students out for their first 'grown-up' meal in the city, along with experienced world travelers looking for a taste of a place they once visited and loved."

CRITICAL COMPONENT

In this 100-seat restaurant, every dish on the menu has a produce component and one-eighth of the menu is strictly fresh fruit and vegetables. "Tinto has a strong focus on *Verduras*, or vegetable dishes, including a section of the menu dedicated to vegetable-based tapas," Garces points out.

Produce is a crucial ingredient in the tradition of Garces' cuisine. "Spanish food is relatively simple food and they often rely on the bounty of the land around them to dictate their eating habits and recipes," he explains. "At Tinto, we try to emulate this simple reliance on top-quality products to create top-quality foods. Rather than relying on a wealth of seasonings and sauces, we try to serve simple, authentic dishes that let the few key ingredients in each dish really shine."

Like many chefs, Garces is dedicated to seeking out the freshest quality ingredients and he sources them from various suppliers including Farm Art, Sue's Produce, Mikuni, Wild Harves, and Chef's Garden. "The finest fruits and vegetables make the finest dishes, and therefore, make my job as a chef that much easier," Garces states. "When possible, I try to source my produce locally, to support area farmers. Their work is critical to our success! Fresh ingredients make the best food — period."

The freshness and quality of the produce dictates the freshness and quality of the final product and is something Garces takes seriously. "When we are unable to source top-quality produce for a specific menu item, we will remove it from the menu, instead of serving it with substandard products," he remarks. "This is an inconvenience to our guests, so sourcing and cooking with fresh, local produce is a high priority in all of my kitchens."

The restaurant tries to add new menu items every few months, to follow the seasons and continue to offer guests a fresh experience. The chef adds, "We also have some seasonal items, such as our Truffled Chestnut Soup with

Duck and Mushroom Hash, that we bring back each year, much to the delight of our customers who have missed them while they're off the menu!"

DELIGHTFUL TREATS

The meal experience at Tinto definitely reflects Garces' commitment to bringing the best flavors out of authentic ingredients, which include innovative uses of produce in every dish. The gazpacho incorporates Heirloom tomatoes, avocados and fried Padrón peppers. An Arugula Salad underscores Serrano ham, Mission fig, fried goat cheese and pine nuts, all mixed with a Seville orange vinaigrette. A delectable Fig tapa showcases poached figs wrapped in Serrano ham.

The inherent simplicity of Tinto's dishes belies their intricate mix of delicate flavors. The Spanish Octopus, or *Pulpo*, uses lemon powder and is served over confit potatoes. The Diver Scallops feature a demi-glace of cider and are paired with shaved apple. The Chicken *Brocheta* (skewer) is served with garbanzo purée and truffle jus. The lamb loin is joined by eggplant, bacon and sherry jus. Prawns pair nicely with chorizo, grape tomatoes and Espelette chile.

The various *Montaditos* (or canapés) also do their fair share of integrating produce. The duck features duck confit, Serrano ham, black cherry and La Peral spread. A Berkshire Pork Belly in honey lacquer adds shaved apples, and the jumbo lump Crab includes avocado and Espelette chile. In the category of meats, New York strip is paired with herb roasted Porcinis and truffled goat cheese. The roasted rack of lamb is matched with artichoke purée and lemon, and the Berkshire pork cheek features celery root-apple purée and Marcona almond brittle.

The meal experience at Tinto definitely reflects Garces' commitment to bringing the best flavors out of authentic ingredients, which include innovative uses of produce in every dish.

Even the vegetable tapas menu is spectacular with Garces' talent behind it. Green beans are a taste sensation paired with almonds, dates, orange segments and paprika sherry vinaigrette. Asparagus has never before been so rich as in his smoked tomato compote with Mahon espuma. Baby artichokes served with fresh pappardelle and Meyer lemon are a palate's delight, and the extraordinary flavor of the Wild Mushrooms with Roasted Potato, Shallot and Parsley makes you wonder if there's a secret hidden ingredient.

The desserts complete the produce showcase whether it's the *Bananas y Azafran*, a rich chocolate cake with caramelized bananas and saffron cream, or the traditional *Crema Catalana*, caramelized Spanish custard served with poached figs and fig sorbet. The *Gateaux Basque* is a traditional Basque cake with pastry cream and fresh black cherries, and the *Mato y Miel* is a goat's milk mousse with orange-olive oil caramel, orange blossom geleé and almond lace tuile.

The unique and luscious flavors of Garces' creations, the attention and knowledge of the staff, and the thoughtful and beautiful presentation of each dish make eating at Tinto truly an amazing and enjoyable experience. The commitment of Garces and his staff to the integrity and quality of the ingredients shines through in the remarkable flavors he is able to coax out of his dishes.

pb

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By JODEAN ROBBINS

With origins as a small family store in Lancaster, PA, Darrenkamp's Food Market strives to maintain the same type of relationship with its customers as that original small store, even though the company has now grown to a three-store chain. In business since 1932, it is still family-owned and its store philosophy revolves around serving the customer.

"Our mission statement is clear about our intentions," says Bob Zimmerman, produce category manager. "We are committed to caring for our customers and communities by offering friendly, personalized service, quality meats and competitive prices."

Darrenkamp's values its long-established relationships with customers and reputation in the community. "Our customers trust us to have the best quality at a fair price," says Zimmerman. "We go the extra mile on a lot of items to ensure we're giving our customers what they demand."

Produce is an extremely important part of the store and Darrenkamp's customer base demands top quality. The produce department's contribution to overall sales is around 10 to 11 percent. Zimmerman remarks, "We emphasize the perishables, basically produce, meat, seafood and deli, in our stores. We were originally known for quality meats, and as our stores grew, we started getting a reputation for having top-quality produce as well."

All three stores have the same format, including a Jane's Café, which offers cafeteria-style dining featuring a daily selection of hot entrées, made-to-order sandwiches and a complete salad bar. Two stores have a pharmacy. The Willow Valley store, which PRODUCE BUSINESS visited, boasts 2,700 square feet of produce, within a 35,000-square-foot store.

FARM-STAND FEEL

A first glimpse of the department yields wide, open aisles and abundant, visually appealing displays. Use of wood crates to merchandise stonefruit and handwritten-style signage for most of the pricing helps promote

the farm-stand feel of the department. Thoughtful cross-merchandising, such as including salad toppers and dips within the lettuce and greens display, as well as complementary items in the berry and fresh-cut displays, make shopping easier for customers looking for ideas.

Wide aisles in the department are customer-friendly, allowing shoppers to easily navigate the store and linger as long as they want. "They don't feel like they're in someone's way if they stop to look at a display," says Zimmerman. "We try to keep the aisles as free as possible from clutter and items. It encourages customers to take their time and buy more."

Approximately, 23-linear feet of berries (strawberries, blueberries and cherries) line the left side of the department and create a visually attractive display. Cross-merchandised whipped cream and short cakes complement the products. "This section is extremely popular during the summer," reports Zimmerman.

The department is constantly making adjustments on the floor. "We make big changes seasonally, but we're also changing displays every week, depending on what we're promoting," explains Zimmerman. "We adjust according to the specials. The cut-fruit island stays where it is, but we enlarge the citrus display in the fall, for example. We also expand the blueberries and cherries in early summer."

UNIQUE EMPHASIS ON VALUE-ADDED

Upon entering the department, shoppers immediately encounter a 13x6-foot refrigerated island filled with fresh-cut fruit salads, melons, over-wrapped veggies, sliced and diced veggies and fresh cider. Darrenkamp's emphasis on fresh, value-added products has grown substantially. "We notice a lot of working women, so we've increased our grab-n-go items over the last few years," says Zimmerman. "We see value-added and convenience as a growing opportunity. Ten years ago, we hardly did much value-added, but in the last



Bob Zimmerman, Fred Hess of Hess Bros. Inc and Joe Darrenkamp.



few years, we've really begun to push it, and we've seen it expand. The key is freshness."

Darrenkamp's has also found success with fresh-cut fruit and vegetable trays. "We're seeing an increase in cut fruit and vegetable trays as party items, especially with the younger generation," says Zimmerman.

Darrenkamp's does almost all its value-added processing in-house for quality and shrink reasons. "This is our signature," Zimmerman explains. "Rather than buying it already processed, we're doing it here. The customers like it better because we can control the quality. We can control the ripeness and freshness of the product."

"We're packaging our grapes in-house because of the quality control and it's easier to merchandise them," Zimmerman continues. "We also do in-house packaging of spinach and lettuce mixes for the same reason. We over-wrap some veggies because it cuts down on dehydration."

VARIETY IN SOURCING

With 750 total produce SKUs in the system, and about 200 on the floor at any given time, Darrenkamp's relies on many sources to provide the store with the quality it needs. "We utilize a wide range of sources and place more emphasis on seasonal/local whenever

possible," says Zimmerman. "Local or regional is very important to us and we like to use it whenever we can. In-season, we go to the local produce auction; we have local vendors and growers; we buy from local wholesalers."

Darrenkamp's has been able to cultivate lasting relationships with local growers. "Over the years, we've built respect with growers," explains Zimmerman. "We have specific growers who produce just for us and we're very fortunate to have local people who grow great stuff, such as Hess Bros.' apples, from nearby Leola, PA, roughly 11 miles away."

The chain also pulls one to two trucks a week, depending on the season, from the Philadelphia Terminal Market through a wholesaler that buys for them. "We use the market as a fill-in when other sources aren't available," explains Zimmerman. "One benefit in buying from the Philly market is the speed. We can have it here the next morning. I've been buying from the market since the 1980's with my previous job and continue to do so for Darrenkamp's."

To make the most of the product once it's in the store, Darrenkamp's employs 16 total produce workers, eight of whom are full-time. "We average eight to ten working at any given time," says Zimmerman. "Employees make the difference. The second part of our mission

statement reflects the value we place on our employees. It states, 'Because we value each team member, we will strive to provide a safe and rewarding workplace.' When our employees feel valued, they value their work and, in turn, the customers."

Darrenkamp's has its own training program for employees that covers topics such as dress code, customer service, produce handling and merchandising, among others.

EFFECTIVE PROMOTION

The store serves a wide range of customers, from young people and retirees to singles and large families. "Our challenge is to have a product mix for each and every one of our customers," says Zimmerman. "For example, we're handling different packaging sizes now so both our single customers and our family customers have the size they need."

Darrenkamp's promotional messages focus on quality, freshness, service and fair prices. The chain does weekly ads about two-and-a-half weeks out, and includes a recipe in its circulars every week. Its also hold weekly demos throughout the store, grabbing consumer interest in new and seasonal products.

Darrenkamp's is involved in a local marketing group called Family Owned Markets, which consists of 14 family-owned independent stores in the Lancaster area. "We get a lot of benefits through these affiliations, but we're still independent and able to have our own identity," states Zimmerman.

One success story and good illustration of the chain's relationship with its suppliers is its foray into Tote Bag Apples. "We weren't sure of this, but tried it solely on the recommendation of our supplier and it worked tremendously," admits Zimmerman. "It has a farm market image that fits well with our stores and our customers love the product."


Darrenkamp's is also very community oriented. "In the fall we have a Community/Family Night where we offer hay ride and showcase antique tractors," explains Zimmerman. "We sell hot dogs and drinks and it really creates excitement with our customers." **pb**

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Trend Tracking In The Twin Cities

Produce wholesalers and distributors are taking cues from the increasingly diverse Minneapolis-St. Paul population as they push forward with local, organic products that answer to highest level of food safety standards.

BY SANDY LINDBLAD LEE



As the retail and foodservice sectors in the Minneapolis-St. Paul region continue to evolve, produce wholesalers and distributors in the Twin Cities are adapting to the trends.

Through maintaining and expanding their customer base, many companies are increasing their product lines. What's more, businesses are beginning to target specific demographics in an effort to respond to the increasing demand for locally grown produce, all the while remaining focused on food safety.

LOCAL IS HOT

Locally grown fruits and vegetables may be the hottest category on the shelves of produce departments in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan region, and wholesalers are stepping up to respond to that demand. Minnesota may not seem like a prime source for growing produce, but locally grown products have always flourished in popularity when they peak during the summer months.

Minneapolis, MN-based Wholesale Produce Supply LLC (WPS) executives have noticed the importance of locally grown produce to buyers and consumers, and they point out the benefits of attaining product through their company. "Our program at Wholesale is unique to everyone else's because we support an enormous distribution area," notes Brian Hauge, president. "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."

To guarantee the company's supply chain, "We actually contracted with specific growers to produce determined amounts for our customers," Hauge continues. For added food safety assurance, "We request suppliers we're assisting to either maintain third-party certification, or that they are working toward certification in the near future. We're working with key grower-partners to bring them to the next level."

Added shelf-life of locally grown products is also a benefit from WPS. "We can literally get the products from field to market in 24

hours or less," claims Hauge. "And we will cool the product as fast and as efficiently as possible," adds Jason Hendrickson, director of purchasing and business development.

"Americans are buying locally grown like never before," stresses Phillip Brooks, president of H. Brooks & Co. LLC, in New Brighton, MN. "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 his company "has a long history of close relationships with farmers who harvest the most delicious and best produce. These farmers, many of whom 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.

H. Brooks provides additional resources to its customers through its "Meet the Farmers" series it has been running in its bi-weekly newsletter. Brooks encourages retailers to utilize this information to gain more consumer confidence. "Let customers know how much you value the taste of freshness," he says. "Help them connect with the land by using signage that forges a relationship between consumers and farmers. Not only will you increase sales, you will deepen and strengthen your customer relationships."

Brooks also suggests the utilization of the Minnesota Grown Program through the St. Paul-based Minnesota Department of Agriculture for more ideas and support for promoting locally grown.

Jim Hannigan, president and CEO of J & J Distributing Co., in St. Paul, MN, is answering the locally grown demand with plans to grow his own supplies in the future. Hannigan hopes to develop a full-scale hydro-farm at his own packing facility. His operations are situated right in the middle of an urban area, not far from the state's capitol building. "We're taking baby steps on the project," he stresses. He is working with several partners, including the city of St. Paul and X-Cel Energy, to help make the project a reality.

Sources already in place for J & J 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 solid



Phillip Brooks, H. Brooks & Co. Inc.



Jim Hannigan, J & J Distributing Co.



Kevin Hannigan,
J & J Distributing Co.



Paul Piazza,
Minnesota Produce Inc.

organic program. It's the best of both worlds for our customers." Hannigan adds, "Even our caramel apple growers are local!" This fall, the company is introducing "Home-made," a new label for its caramel apples.

Brings Co. Inc., located in St. Paul, MN, is selling locally grown rutabagas and onions when they are in season, reports Beth Arel, sales manager. "We will be packing 3-pound bags of onions with the locally-grown label," she says.

MARKETING TO A DIVERSE POPULATION

While the Twin Cities' strong Scandinavian influence is still highly recognizable, the region is increasingly diverse. Immigrants from 160 countries came to Minneso-

ta during 2002, according to a report from the Minneapolis-based University of Minnesota College of Education & Human Development. Immigrants born in Somalia outnumbered all others, followed by those born in India, Ethiopia and Mexico.

Minnesota's population will continue to become more racially and ethnically diverse, according to a report from the State Demographic Center at the Minnesota Department of Administration, located in St. Paul. Between 2005 and 2015, the non-white population in the state is projected to grow 35 percent, compared to 7 percent for the white population, while the Hispanic population is expected to increase 47 percent.

Several Twin Cities wholesalers make sure to point out the growing needs in the

Latino customer segment. "Some of our greatest ventures are our produce, grocery and dairy lines for Hispanic consumers, featuring the Mexico Lindo label," reveals Hannigan. 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. "Although sales are growing, this is a much more difficult category. We've been focusing on adding Hispanic items to our Cub store lines and we work with our customers on merchandising," he adds.

Latino products are one of several growing segments in the fresh produce industry that have necessitated a much larger facility for J & J. "We've increased from 20,000 square feet of space in 1997 to the 108,000

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“What’s New In The Twin Cities?”

Barrings Co. Inc., St. Paul, MN: Shallots have been added to the product line of this multi-state distributor specializing in onions and rutabagas. “Shallots are getting to be more popular as more people are experimenting with cooking at home,” notes Beth Arel, sales manager.

New to the sales staff is Kelly Durant, who joined the company in June. She previously was in the health care industry, but has a diverse produce background “since she grew up in a family produce business,” says to Arel.

H. Brooks & Co. LLC, New Brighton, MN: “We’ve refreshed what we’re doing with the goal of helping our customers sell more product and increase profitability,” says Phillip Brooks, president. Among the enhanced offerings are a newly designed logo, Web site, and bi-weekly newsletter.

While continuously operating for over 100 years, “We’ve found people perceive us as having the freshest produce with the fastest delivery, and our new graphics provide a better reflection of our performance,” adds Brooks. “Speed equals freshness of product, which ultimately yields more profit for our customers.”

The new logo features more vibrant colors and a superior design with a new tagline stating, “Where Fresh is Fresher.”

“Our bi-weekly newsletter offers more information to aid our customers,” Brooks continues. “We’re helping to give them more and better ways to sell the product.” The latest trends, nutritional information and recipes are all a part of the newsletter. “We also print the recipes in a recipe card format so customers can easily insert them in their Web site or include them in store displays.” Each newsletter also features a “Buyer’s Top Ten,” which lists the most popular, top-selling products during that specific time frame.

Brooks & Co. continues to provide a documented commitment to sustainability. The company was the second in the nation — and the first in the Midwest — to receive certification from Minneapolis, MN-based Midwest Food Alliance (MFA). The organization is a branch of Portland, OR-based Food Alliance. There are more than 250 Food Alliance certified farmers and manufacturers in the United States. According to Bob Olson, director of the MFA, Food Alliance offers producers and handlers a way to verify they are conducting business in a sustainable manner through environmentally friendly procedures.

Brooks & Co. has also made upgrades in its packing facility. Among the upgrades, the company installed new equipment that allows it to tray-pack Sweet Elite sweet corn for Minneapolis, MN-based C. H. Robinson Worldwide Inc.’s Midwest accounts. “We’re going to be a central hub for packaging Sweet Elite trays of corn,” says Brooks.

J & J Distributing Co., St. Paul, MN: Jim Hannigan continues his focus on increasing his company’s green efforts in the Twin Cities. Several years ago, he was already implementing many of the initiatives that today, many are only beginning to consider.

Hannigan, an owner of J & J Distributing Co., plans to build a hydroponic greenhouse on his property to help meet the locally grown demand. This urban farm, as he calls it, would use alternative energy, employ St. Paul residents and provide homegrown produce.

“It’s all about job creation and reducing the carbon footprint,” Hannigan notes, who has a great deal of local support for his hydroponic greenhouse. “The city of St. Paul is doing all it can to help get this project off the ground,” he says, adding that he has received approval on a \$550,000 economic stimulus grant.

Hannigan is working with hydroponic and alternate energy-related partners in the United States and Canada, along with colleagues at Ohio State University, who have taken on a study of urban farming and selected Hannigan’s concept as a special project.

Also new at the company, J & J has launched a lineup of grill-able vegetables, mostly in private label items. The vegetables are packed in microwavable and oven-ready packaging, and Hannigan notes the response has already been extremely positive. “We’ve also got a fall line coming out that features more root vegetables in the package,” he notes.

Key additions to the J & J staff include Johnny Gill and Ida DeLisi. Gill joined J & J as vice president of business development and customer relations. His background in retail grocery with HEB, Wal-Mart, Fleming and Target “brings a lot of knowledge to our company and will be a great asset in the retail area,” notes Hannigan. Gill grew up in the grocery business, working at his family’s Gill’s Food Stores.

Ida DeLisi is now a part of the marketing division at J & J. “She is very innovative and she brings graphic experience to us with her catalogue creation work.” Prior to joining J & J, she was a business analyst in another industry.

The company is also revamping its Web site and will be launching the new look in September.

Minnesota Produce Inc., Minneapolis, MN: President, Paul Piazza, emphasizes, “Things are stable here, which I almost have to say is a surprise to us because of the economy.” The company has been in business for nearly 50 years, with the bulk of its customer base remaining with foodservice distributors and processors.

Wholesale Produce Supply LLC, Minneapolis, MN: An expanded food safety program, enhanced foodservice focus, facility upgrades and many staff additions are all part of the company’s ongoing efforts to stay on the leading edge, according to president, Brian Hauge.

“We’re also working with key grower-partners to elevate them to the next level to make sure we exceed the requirements necessary for our supplies in all critical areas for food safety,” says Hauge. “We follow a strict protocol that monitors for chemical residues and surface bacteria, but we don’t stop there. Two testing laboratories assist us by routinely checking our products.”

“As one of the larger wholesalers in the Midwestern region, “Our program is unique from our competitors,” notes Jason Hendrickson, director of purchasing and business development. “We have a transportation distribution system that spreads throughout the Midwest and helps with efficient delivery and distribution of both locally grown regionally procured products.”

“We also continue to support our local growers as much as possible — as we have in the past — including home-grown produce in season out of the Midwest growing regions,” notes Hauge.

Reed Sibet, director of sales and marketing, emphasizes, “So many of our good customers are seeing more cost-savings by doing business with us. Our staff has done a great job helping our customers be more competitive.”

When it comes to quality control, WPS maintains there are times where nothing compares to manual labor. “We continually travel the world to seek out the newest in tomato repack and color sorting, and we still haven’t found anything to take the place of hand-packing,” Hauge says. “We believe the product can still get damaged too much by automation. To maintain the best quality, we feel that hand-packing is still the best.”

pb

square feet where we operate now.”

Brooks of H. Brooks & Co. reports his Hispanic business continues to grow. “We have more customers joining us each week,” he says.

Three years ago, H. Brooks added a new dimension to its Latino wholesale business through its acquisition of Latino product distributor, El Burrito Bodega. Brooks claims the list of Mexican and Latin American grocery and produce items the company carries is “the most comprehensive found under one roof. We now feature 300-plus items, including soda beverages specific to the Hispanic preferences, specialized *quesos* and other different cheeses, homemade tortillas and fresh produce specifically obtained for Hispanic preferences. We also offer customized help with merchandising and setup for independent retailers who need help expanding that category.”

Brooks adds, “We are also helping manufacturers who want their items introduced into stores, which could include anything from Piñatas and pinto beans, to the wildly popular Mexican candy and various, hard-to-find varieties of fresh chili peppers. At the same time, our core is still the perishable side of the business.”

For WPS, customized assistance to the Latino population includes its expertise gained by 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 Hauge. “Due to our vast supply base, we have the ability to react quicker to procure and deliver the freshest — and widest selection — of tomato varieties from local, national and international sources.”

THE ORGANIC EXPLOSION

To supply the steadily increasing demand for organics, several Twin Cities wholesalers are continuing to focus on one of the more popular segments in today’s food industry. Brings’ facility was officially certified in 2007 for organic produce handling and distribution. The onion and rutabaga specialist offers organic onions in yellow, red and sweet onions in both bulk and 3-pound consumer packs. “We plan to expand our line in the future,” reports Arel.

Maintaining a “certified organic” warehouse and fresh-cut facility, H. Brooks has maintained 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. “Our efforts are guided by experts in the organic field, including our work with the Organic Trade Association. We’re also participating in sustainable agri-

culture programs with local and regional growers — with certification for food safety in place.”

“Organics are now 25 percent of our business,” emphasizes J & J’s Hannigan. “Kevin Hannigan, our organic program director, is the best in the country. We are highly respected in the organic arena. J & J not only provides the products, but extensive merchandising assistance for organic departments. Additionally, we help retail cashiers easily identify organic produce by offering ‘pull-n-pak’ retail merchandising bags for produce departments.”

Meanwhile, the premise that organic produce is better for you, in addition to its sustainability factor, provides some psychological backup to marketers of organic produce who have to fight consumer resistance to higher prices compared to conventional produce. Considering its current momentum, the natural/organic food segment is predicted to grow 63 percent by 2010, surpassing the \$46 million market, according to a report from Packaged Facts, a market research publisher, based in New York, NY.

WPS has expanded its organic line to meet customer demand. In addition to



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Wholesale Produce Supply Co. personnel, from left: Jason Hendrickson, Brian Hauge, Art Quiggle, Doug Weller and Reed Sibet.

organic round and Roma tomatoes, the company repacks and distributes specialized packs. "We were the first in the industry to offer a 12-ounce, two-pack in a bubble wrap tray," notes Art Quiggle, WPS' vice president. "We also offer a round tomato three-pack and two-pack tray."

MEASURES TO MAINTAIN CUSTOMER CONFIDENCE

Food safety and sanitation, lot traceability and security require daily monitoring to maintain customer confidence, emphasizes WPS' Hauge. "Food safety is obviously our number one priority, not only in our packaging, but through the growers we buy from as well," he emphasizes. "We have monitoring in place to make sure Good Agricultural



The sales staff at Minnesota Produce, from left: Phil Klint, Paul Piazza, Ken Meyer and Jeff Goldfish.

Practices (GAP) are maintained."

Hauge points out WPS' leadership role regarding critical facets for optimum food safety maintenance. "The company started our HACCP [Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points] program back in 1997 before most people in our industry even know what that was. Our program has evolved and grown to cover all aspects of HACCP," he asserts. "Were 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 third-party audits per-

formed by USDA, Silliker, Primus, ASI and MCIA for organics."

"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," Hauge continues.

At Brings, owner Pat Coan says food safety remains top-of-mind throughout the repacking and distribution process. "We received a 'superior' rating through AIB Certification — the highest rating they give."

H. Brooks' Brooks also points out the emphasis on food safety. "We've had our HACCP plan in place for years now, and we are constantly updating it to ensure it's meeting all our needs. We had top ratings from ASI and all the other major food safety and security auditors. What's more, we have additional measures in place that far exceed any governmental mandates.

J & J's Hannigan also stresses the importance of the traceback system, pointing out the company's attention to food safety and sanitation "is second to none."

THE 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.

H. Brooks has become "a great logistics expert for foodservice providers, and we provide assistance as expeditors in packing and distribution for our foodservice customers," notes 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, while providing increased quality and shelf-life."

"Consumers in the Twin Cities 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," details WPS' Quiggle.

"Although we're 90 percent retail, we are moving more into foodservice," reports Hannigan. "Our fresh-cut fruits and vegetables provide convenience and save time by cutting out labor-intensive prep work."

Brings has a foodservice component as well. Arel reveals, "Our year-round sweet onion program is very appealing to our foodservice customers, as well as to retail, not to mention sweet onion varieties are improving all the time. They provide thick rings and are firmer, which make them easier for baking and frying."

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Reader Service # 130

The Transportation Industry Keeps On Trucking

Hauling produce has been hit by the current economy, but transportation providers are making adjustments, muddling through and, in many cases, starting to see improvements in business.

BY MIKE DUFF

Paul Kazan, president of Target Interstate Systems Inc., based in the Bronx, NY, points out everyone in transportation has taken a hit and on the East Coast, his business has softened lately.

A downturn in June came as a surprise to him, with lower volume and revenues per load due to lower rates. A lack of demand for equipment plus

costlier fuel meant dollars per load, which had been off 15 percent, were down in the 20 to 25 percent range. On top of everything else, getting return loads proved to be a constant challenge. "We couldn't get trucks off the East Coast," he admits. "It makes for an awkward situation."

Kazan notes truck rates had become comparable to what rail operators were getting, but taking those rates was the only way to move the rigs out. "I don't think they're doing well," he says, referring to rail lines. "We had to close down some underperforming operations and we're not able to carry all the employees we did. In some ways, we've gotten lean and mean, but, unfortunately, that had to come with the decision to lay off people," he explains. "The business has flattened out. Right now, we're running a tighter ship than we have in a long time. Sometimes, an economic downturn pushes you to where you are aware of what you need to do and improves your business."

And transportation companies are doing just that. In an effort to stay busy and keep their customers happy, many companies are creating a competitive edge with new offers, creative routes and profitable promos.

PUTTING THE CUSTOMER FIRST

Although food has been less impacted than other commodities hauled across the United States, providing support for customers remains critical, asserts Mark Petersen, transportation manager at Eden Prairie, MN-based C. H. Robinson Worldwide Inc. "We continue to work with our customers through these challenging times to find innovative ways to help them cut costs and increase efficiencies in their supply chains," he says, adding the cur-



Some trucking companies are having trouble getting trucks back from the East Coast.

rent situation is a more intense extension of business in more ordinary times. "Customers are always looking for the most cost effective service available to them in the marketplace," Peterson notes.

The reality is, as service companies, transportation firms are in a competitive sector. Petersen says, "C. H. Robinson can compete at a high level to earn business in the marketplace in any environment. We believe our competitive advantage is our people, relationships, technology and our network. We are always working to suggest

new ideas to help customers cut costs and increase efficiencies in their supply chains."

Kazan has had to offer more promotions to customers on the freight side of his business to get trucks rolling out West where they can pick up produce headed east. "We're offering rebates to people on booking freight," he reveals, adding he's also had to do some creative routing to keep trips profitable by scheduling trucks to deliver and pick up loads in multiple cities during cross-country trips.

While Petersen emphasizes C. H. Robin-

son does its best to meet the needs of all of its customers, strong relationships tend to hold up better in tough times. "I think it's fair to say that most everybody employs a type of philosophy of taking care of those that take care of them, but that isn't only related to the cost of hire or the cheapest or most expensive truck," he explains. "We are dedicated and committed to our relationships. We value all of the relationships we have and take pride in being able to consistently provide a high level of service."

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"Right now, we are running a tighter ship than we have in a long time. Sometimes, an economic downturn pushes you to where you are more aware of your business."

— Paul Kazan
Target Interstate Systems Inc.

Jimmy DeMatteis, president of Des Moines Truck Brokers Inc., based in Norwalk, IA, is another transportation operator who believes focusing on servicing the core customer base is the best way to cope with the present economy. "We have experienced some increase in business," he says. "I guess we're fortunate. This year, we're celebrating our 40th year in business. We recognized our long-term customers, some who have been with us for 15 years or more, are people we needed to visit. We examined our relationship and what value we bring to the table and what we can do to remain their preferred partner."

While revenues might now be what they were last year, in large measure because of the higher cost of fuel in the past year, DeMatteis believes a better way to determine how the business is doing is based on loads carried. "I'm not going to pretend I know why we're up, but our load count is up 28 percent for the month of July and it was up also in May and June," he says.

Brent Schmit, president of Shorewood, IL-based truck broker Eclipse Dist. Inc.,

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During the year ahead, C. H. Robinson Worldwide Inc. will continue to expand its service offerings and invest in its global network.



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OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Fuel prices have affected Des Moines Truck Brokers doubly, as farmers switched off feed production for ethanol, driving up prices for beef, pork, poultry and egg producers at a time when consumers in California are cutting back on food budgets. Similar to transportation operators in neighboring central states, such as Indiana and Kentucky, Iowa trucking firms are caught in a local bind. "Now, we don't have as many loads of beef, pork, poultry and eggs going out to the West Coast," DeMatteis says. "When the protein diet was the rage, we couldn't get enough trucks to haul eggs to California and Arizona."

"Now, we don't have as many loads of beef, pork, poultry and eggs going out to the West Coast. When the protein diet was the rage, we couldn't get enough truck to haul eggs to California and Arizona."

— Jimmy DeMatteis
Des Moines
Truck Brokers

Fuel is only one consideration to be weighed in rates that already have been squeezed to the point where there is little room left to maneuver. When fuel prices fell late last year, some wiggle room opened in cost considerations, but as they gain, the cir-

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How The Recession Is Affecting The Rails

While the recession has been tough on companies involved in truck transportation, it hasn't been all gentle upgrades on the rails either. Paul Esposito, senior vice president of sales and logistics for Railex LLC. Co., based in Riverhead, N.Y., declares, "The recession has collapsed rates."

Railex contracts with railroads to run regular trains between the West and East Coasts and provide a steady transportation link between the regions, but the recession has decreased demand and traffic. California's decision to push back implementation of new trucking regulations that Railex felt sure would decrease their availability for Golden State shippers and boost its own business is yet another bump in the road.

Still, Esposito asserts the company's

basic business model is sound, only requiring adjustment to the present circumstances. "What we're doing is keeping our core competencies in place," he says. "Also, we're branching out into consolidation of freight." With large, refrigerated transportation centers, Railex is developing new forms of consolidation for both retail and foodservice users who consistently move mixed loads and can benefit from the company's ability to maintain controlled atmosphere.

Railex is looking ahead to the recovery and remains confident its business is poised to grow. Currently, the company is contracting two trains each week from California's Central Valley and one from Washington State. Additionally, it has entered into discussion for a second weekly train from Washington. **pb**

cumstances return to something like the "life altering" situation that, according to Kazan, confronted the transportation indus-

try last year head-on — one that was particularly difficult for low-margin industries, such as produce.

The overall effects of the economic turmoil have put more stress on Kazan's business. "We've had to pay our truckers faster," he notes. "Everyone is needing money faster than in the past to make ends meet."

The economic circumstances can be complicated as new systems in bidding, scheduling, accounts payable, etc., have come online, some of which shift costs onto the transportation provider. Yet, C. H. Robinson's Petersen maintains new systems are an inevitable part of doing business. "You simply adjust and price business based on what it takes to execute given the parameters assigned to it," he says.

Service demands also are inevitable and, to a significant extent, simply an extension of the difficulty of the business climate through the distribution chain. Petersen contends establishing services at an agreeable cost is at the heart of the business. C. H. Robinson operates and, as such, demands for additional aid arise from necessity.

As foodservice sales slid early in the year, business declined for Kenosha, WI-based Cool Runnings. President Fred Plotsky reveals this past February was the bottom of the skid. Consumers aren't spending as much on eating out in the recession, meaning the company, which caters to the food-

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service industry, has less business and, as a result, the number of loads the company carries for a given customer has diminished. The core problem isn't customers disappearing, Plotsky notes, but rather scaling back to the point where business is off between 20 and 30 percent.

What's more, Plotsky notices his customers are shifting costs back on their services suppliers. In some cases, customers are using third-party administrative firms that require fees for collecting receivables, effectively charging him to turn over money he's owed. In others, customers have cut back their traffic departments and gone to interactive Internet updates, which is less efficient for the company.

Plotsky also points out some firms he works with are looking at price before anything else, which works fine until trucks become scarce. He tries to work with his more loyal and consistent customers while avoiding as much as possible those companies that avoid signing long-term contracts. He warns the same transportation firms that provide low rates when trucks are abundant will continue to live by the law of supply and demand when they're scarce, with the result that prices can suddenly ratchet up by 30 percent. "Cheap trucks are cheap trucks," he says. "They work cheap, then you can't find them when the market turns."

DeMatteis of Des Moines Truck Brokers recognizes the recession can lead people who already are scrambling to stay on top to consider new opportunities. "It's pretty easy, if you don't have solid relationships, good partnerships and a good rapport with customers for them to say, 'Let's test the waters,' or 'Let's throw some new people a bone.' The next thing you know, a few bones add up to a skeleton and you're missing something," he cautions.

Many companies Eclipse hauls for are moving less volume. "This recession is not doing anything for them when it come to the price of product, and that supports the price of transportation," Schmit explains. "We're hearing from customers that their sales are down."

With consumers buying less, margins and revenues are down, thus, less calls are coming in for transportation services. Yet, scaling back to meet the level of demand is only part of the equation. The recession is driving some companies Eclipse might work with to the point of financial distress. Schmit maintains work might be out there, but driving volume by extending credit beyond set, reasonable standards is only an invitation for disaster.

Recessionary troubles are being com-

"We'll provide services to our customers and contract carriers that will allow us to continue to meet our long-term growth objectives. We will keep on expanding our service offerings and investing in our global network."

**— Mark Petersen
C. H. Robinson
Worldwide Inc.**

pounded by regulatory changes for truckers hauling produce. Currently, anyone who is involved in moving products in and out of California faces the challenge of meeting tough new state regulations regarding trucks and trailers. Not only would rule changes in the Golden State require expenditures for new trailers or modifications to existing trailers, Schmit notes the government also looks to increase trucker insurance costs. "If a guy is not making money, it is going to be nearly impossible for him to spend \$20,000 on a new reefer," Schmit remarks. Although California delayed implementation of some standards, Schmit reports he knows truckers who won't haul to the state, preferring routes that take them to the Pacific Northwest, Idaho and Texas and back to the Midwest, where his business is located.

Local factors, too, can have a significant impact on what is happening to transportation firms. Mike Patton, vice president of sales for the Springfield, IL-based Lange Logistics Inc., reveals his business rebounded in the spring as independent retailers in the area around the Windy City — the ultimate recipients of much of what he moves — built business by making quick moves to accommodate changing consumer purchasing patterns.

STAYING AFLOAT

Target Interstate's Kazan is prepared for a long, hard haul. "The business is not stellar," he says matter-of-factly. "Everyone hurts.

There is not going to be any V-shaped market rebound. We're in the flat part of it now. I don't think we're going to see anything to say 'wow' until about this time next year. We're going to be struggling through and, unfortunately, there are going to be some peaks and valleys along the way."

During the year ahead, C. H. Robinson is committed to remaining flexible. Petersen maintains, "We will provide services to our customers and contract carriers that will allow us to continue to meet our long-term growth objectives. We will keep on expanding our service offerings and investing in our global network."

At Cool Runnings, Plotsky is simply trying to keep people employed and busy. "We have people here for 16 years, 13 years, and they still keep coming here, and they feel they've actually built something," he explains. "It's just a nice working environment. People don't mind coming to work or putting in the extra effort. We're just trying to find freight."


Just as produce distributors have, Tom Lange has been adjusting to circumstances, adding two new employees to the logistics department to satisfy the need for additional services and a diverse customer base that, like businesses around the country, are trying hard to navigate the roiling economy. **pb**

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Reader Service # 105

Seven Sure-Fire Ways To Sell More Spuds

Potatoes continue to be a category leader, and dedicated attention to displays along with value-added promotions will keep them there.

BY CAROL BAREUTHER, RD

Mash it, fry it, slice it, dice it. Anyway they are prepared, Americans love their potatoes. According to a February 2009-released survey by the Eagle, ID-based Idaho Potato Commission (IPC), consumers chose potatoes (26 percent), as their favorite vegetable.

Raul Gallegos, director of produce and floral at Bristol Farms, a 15-store chain based in Carson, CA, says, "We had all the diets. Now, it looks like diet trends have changed and combined with the current economy, today, it's meat and potatoes, or back to the basics."

Consumers are indeed spending more on potatoes. The potato category represented 5.5 percent of total produce dollar sales for the 52-week period ending December 27, 2008, compared to 5 percent the previous year, according to Perishables Group FreshFacts powered by ACNielsen.

1. BUILD ON THE BASICS

Most retailers carry a good selection of russet, red and yellow or Yukon potatoes, says Mac Johnson, president and CEO of Category Partners LLC, based in Aurora, CO. "Most Eastern retailers also carry a strong offering of white potatoes. Russets and reds, and whites in the east, really have no seasonality. Many of the other varieties have some seasonality based on availability."

The four main varieties of potatoes — russet, red, white and yellow/gold — made up 96.3 percent of volume and 93 percent of dollar sales in the potato category in 2008, according to Perishables Group FreshFacts.

Dick Thomas, Jr, vice president of sales at Potandon Produce LLC, headquartered in Idaho Falls, ID, notes, "Russets are king of the category."



Creating a potato destination in the produce department will encourage consumers to buy more than one variety and possibly trade up.

Paul Kneeland, vice president of produce and floral for Kings Super Markets Inc., a 25-store chain based in Parsippany, NJ, agrees and adds, "Our best-seller is a 60-count Idaho baker that pairs well with steaks. I think it gives customers the feel of eating in a steakhouse at home."

Russet potatoes contributed 62 percent of volume and 55 percent of potato category dollar sales in 2008, according to Perishables Group FreshFacts.

Some 60 to 70 percent of russet potatoes grown in Idaho are the Burbank variety, reports Ryan Bybee, sales manager for GPOD of Idaho, in Shelley, ID. "Twenty-five to 30 percent are Norkotah. The Norkotah looks good on the shelf and a lot of retailers like to merchandize it in bulk. But, it doesn't taste or cook like the Burbank."

Ted Kreis, marketing director for the Northern Plains Potato Growers Association

(NPPGA), in East Grand Forks, MN, contends, "Recently, red-skinned potatoes have taken share from russets. This past year, that slipped back, but only by less than 1 percent due to aggressive pricing from Idaho. Looking ahead, sizing will be good this year."

According to Perishables Group FreshFacts, in 2008, red potatoes made up 14.6 percent volume and 18.6 percent of dollar sales in the potato category.

Timothy Hobbs, director of development and grower relations for the Presque Isle-based Maine Potato Board, says, "White potatoes are our niche. Acreage is stable, so we look to have about the same size crop as this past year."

White potatoes represented 13.9 percent of volume and 12.4 percent of potato category dollar sales in 2008, according to Perishables Group FreshFacts.

Cross Promotional Ideas For Cooking At Home

More consumers are cooking at home in these uncertain economic times. Tim Feit, director of promotions and consumer education for the Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association Inc. (WPVGA), based in Antigo, WI, points out potatoes have always been one of the best values in the supermarket. "The fact that consumers are more budget-conscious in today's economy is an opportunity for retailers to promote this value and increase sales."

One way to promote the potato's value is to play on its versatility. Roland MacDonald, market development officer for the Prince Edward Island Potato Board, headquartered in Charlottetown, PEI, Canada, remarks, "Consumers still want to know what to do with potatoes. They want to know what type of potato is good for baking or boiling, for example, and this is where signage is so important. They also want ideas for quick and different tasting recipes."

Nonpareil Corporation, in Blackfoot, ID, is capitalizing on consumer's quest for recipes and cooking tips by being the first to distribute and market produce under the Betty Crocker Fresh label. Scott Phillips, director of sales and marketing,

says, "Betty Crocker is the First Lady of food and the marketing opportunities in the produce department are exciting. We plan to tie-in with shipper displays of Betty Crocker cookbooks and offer other types of cross-promotional opportunities."

Cross-merchandising is an ideal way to instantly give shoppers preparation suggestions. The fact that potatoes are rarely, if ever, consumed unadorned, presents several tie-in ideas. For example, according to a February 2009-released survey by the Eagle, ID-based Idaho Potato Commission, Americans top off their baked potato with butter more than 40 percent of the time, followed by sour cream, cheddar cheese and bacon.

Consumers are indeed looking for ideas, meal solutions, and a good value, maintains Mac Johnson, president and CEO of Category Partners LLC, in Aurora, CO. "A micro-baker with a can of chili used as a topping, along with bagged salad makes a great, quick meal. Almost every retailer has rotisserie chicken. Build a secondary display of red potatoes nearby and you have dinner for the family. Potatoes are so versatile that the cross-promotion and merchandising opportunities are almost endless." **pb**

"Yellow flesh varieties are gaining more acceptance and shelf space and growing incrementally in volume and sales," reveals Scott Phillips, director of sales and marketing for the Nonpareil Corp., headquartered in Blackfoot, ID.

In 2008, yellow flesh potatoes contributed 6 percent of volume and 7.5 percent of dollar sales in the potato category, according to Perishables Group FreshFacts.

2. ADD SMALLER SIZES AND NEWER VARIETIES

Small-sized potatoes are big sellers at Kings Super Markets, says Kneeland. "Creamers are our second-best seller after russets. I think customers like them because they are quick, convenient and versatile."

At Bristol Farms, "We offer all the specialty varieties, including creamers, purples and fingerlings," details Gallegos.

Johnson of Category Partners says, "We're seeing increased sales of fingerlings, purples and some of the other specialty potatoes off a relatively small base. Certainly, some of this has been created by the Food Network and some by consumers experiencing a new variety at their favorite restaurant. Many retailers have also played a role by giving some of these specialty potatoes space in their potato displays."

Creamer, fingerling and purple potatoes combined represented 1.2 percent of the potato category's volume and 3.2 percent of dollar sales in 2008, according to Perishables Group FreshFacts.

Tim Feit, director of promotions and consumer education for the Antigo-based Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers Association Inc. (WPVGA), shares, "I recently met with a major Wisconsin potato shipper who told me that specialty potatoes, such as fingerlings and purples, were a profitable niche within their sales mix. Volume sales weren't high, but there is a high profit margin." He continues, "As with any new product offering, it is important to introduce these new varieties effectively and educate the consumer on features and benefits with signage, brochures and recipes."

The higher cost of specialty potato varieties has slowed sales recently due to the sluggish economy, explains Seth Pemsler, IPC's vice president of retail. "But, they aren't going away by any means, and most retailers aren't decreasing their shelf space for them."

An ever-growing number of specialty potato varieties is what Kent Romrell, senior vice president of sales for Potandon Produce, calls, "a bright spot in the potato category. We look at as many as 100 new varieties a year in an in-depth way, although it

takes about five years to bring a variety into commercial production."

New this year, Potandon will offer three varieties of small-sized specialty potatoes in four-pack styles under its Green Giant Fresh label. These 1½-pound mesh packs include purple skin, purple flesh potatoes; red skin, yellow flesh potatoes; yellow skin, yellow flesh potatoes and a medley pack of all three colors. Cooking instructions and recipes are provided with each bag.

3. OFFER ORGANICS

Organic potatoes, similar to specialty varieties, have slowed down in sales due to the higher price point and a downturn in the economy, says GPOD's Bybee. "But demand is still there," he adds.

At Bristol Farms, Gallegos discloses, "We carry four SKUs of organic potatoes, including russets, reds and yellows."

Though organic produce is a big category at Kings Super Markets, with double the contribution to produce sales of the national average, "This hasn't translated to potatoes," admits Kneeland. "We do the best with the

5-pound organic russets."

According to Perishables Group FreshFacts, organically grown potatoes contributed 0.8 percent of volume and 1.1 percent of dollar sales to the potato category in 2008. However, both volume and dollar sales saw double-digit gains last year.

Category Partner's Johnson says, "Russets are the largest selling organic, followed by reds."

Linda Weyers, administrator for the Monte Vista, CO-based Colorado Potato Administrative Committee, says, "While organic potato production in the state is holding steady, we've noticed more retailers asking for locally grown. For example, three to four Safeway stores in our area recently ran a big locally grown Colorado Proud promotion and potatoes were among the produce featured."

4. CONSIDER VALUE-ADDED

Demand for potatoes has eroded over the last decade, says Kathleen Triou, vice president of domestic marketing for the U.S. Potato Board (USPB), in Denver, CO. "Con-

and driven by cost.”

Packaging preference is also geography driven. GPOD's Bybee details, “The Midwest likes mesh, the East prefers poly, and the West wants a tinted bag.”

“We’re seeing increased sales of fingerlings, purples, and some of the other specialty potatoes off a relatively small base.”

**— Mac Johnson
Category Partners LLC**

6. CREATE A POTATO DESTINATION

A potato display can look like one blur of brown with a little red, white and yellow mixed in, if retailers aren't careful. However, at Kings Supermarkets, produce managers create displays that feature a feast of color. For example, “We'll frame the potato display with asparagus, red pepper and corn on the sides,” says Kneeland. “It really makes the potatoes stand out.”

Sixty-eight percent of consumers have potatoes on their shopping list, reports USPB's Triou. “For those who do not, it's the quality of the display that's important for impulse sales. That means a clean, well-organized display, where potatoes are regularly culled and rotated to prevent greening. Offering an ample variety is also key.”

Consumers are looking for choice, notes Johnson. “So it's important to offer them a variety of potatoes so they stay shopping in that category.”

Triou concurs, and adds, “Consumers today are more sophisticated and buy different types of potatoes for different applications. If a retailer doesn't have an appropriate selection on-hand, then there's the potential for missed sales, either by consumers who would normally purchase more than one variety or by consumers who would trade up to another variety if available.”

What makes up an optimal choice really depends on the retailer. “Shopper demographics have to be considered even within a retail chain,” asserts Johnson. “For example, stores catering to lower income families

would have more space allocated to 10-pound, or value-proposition bags, whereas higher income stores should offer more specialty varieties, such as baby Dutch and fingerlings, and a store near a college campus needs double the space for micro-bakers.”

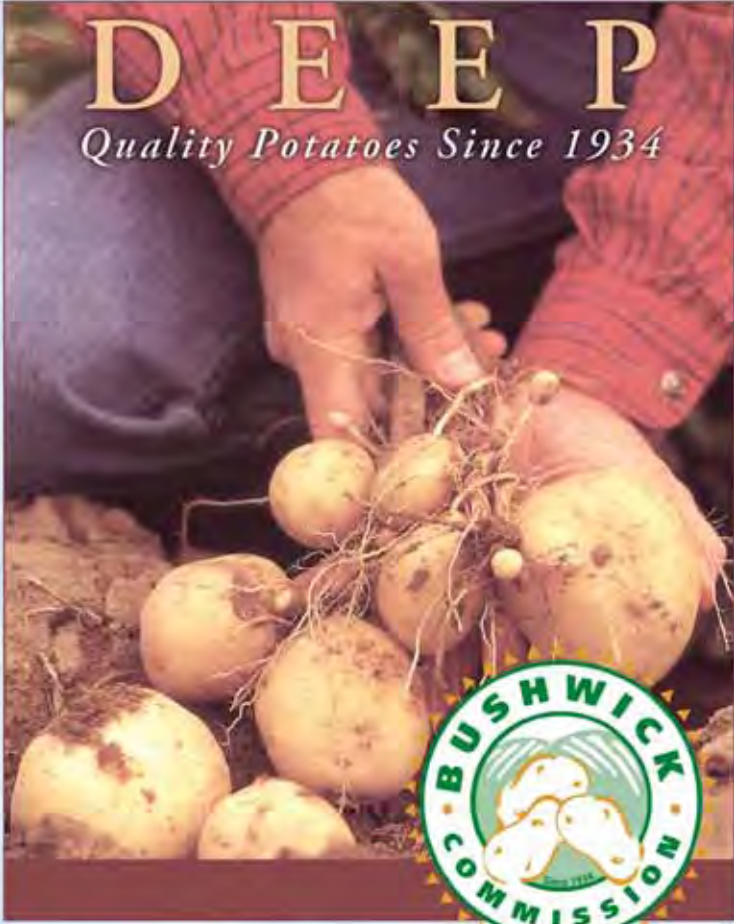
As for pack styles, Johnson adds, “A limited-assortment box-store might offer three or four items, a more mainstream retailer needs two or three bulk items and five to eight bagged items, while an upscale store or chain should have four to five bulk items and six to 10 bagged items.”

NPPGA's Kreis adds, “The best thing for

retailers to do is test new varieties, merchandising techniques and promotions to determine the optimal variety mix for their store. As long as effective pricing and promotion is done, consumers will let retailers know their preference

An additional element of an effective display is plentiful and descriptive signage, according to GPOD's Bybee.

Johnson agrees, adding, “Most signage says ‘Bakers \$.89.’ It's not a lot of information. Nutritional information would be a plus, especially with an aging consumer demographic interested in health and well-



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Reader Service # 126

ness. Also, usage tips, recipe ideas and almost anything that delivers a consumer message, versus just a price.”

What is the optimal display size? Kreis believes, “This depends a great deal on the type of store and the space available. Nonetheless, potatoes are a major profit center within the produce department, so the potato display should be prominent.”

7. ADVERTISE AND PROMOTE REGULARLY

At Bristol Farms, a potato item is featured every other week in the chain’s circular, says Gallegos. “We expand on promotions during the holiday season when demand is high and focus promotions around ease-of-use items, such as microwave bakers.”

Multiples are a favored promotional technique for potatoes at Kings Super Markets. “We’ll sell bags at \$2-for-4-pounds or \$3-for-5-pounds, depending on what type of potato we’re featuring,” notes Kneeland.

Promoting two items at the same time can also be successful, remarks John Pope, vice president of sales and marketing for MountainKing Potatoes, located in Houston, TX. “For example, run a russet promotion with a sub-feature on a baby red or yellow flesh. Both have different uses, so it’s logical

for consumers to pick up both, and it’s a good way to get consumers to try something new and trade up.”

Ken Gray, vice president for the Bushwick Commission Co. Inc., based in Farmingdale, NY, contends, “During this economically challenged time, successful retailers, like suppliers, are getting down and dirty with great pricing to provide customers with both quality and value.” To do this, try different things. “For example, put 8-, 15- and even 20-pound bags on sale, promote unique varieties, or run a special promotion on 3-pound, red, B-size potatoes,” he adds.

The IPC has found success with helping retailers increase potato sales in a variety of ways, including its annual Potato Lover’s Month promotion in February, national promotions with partner products, and this year, by conducting retailer-specific promotional programs. For example, Publix Supermarkets, a Lakeland, FL-based chain partnered with the IPC and Sargento to present its Win Free Groceries for a Year Sweepstakes. Idaho potato and Sargento product displays provided colorful sweepstakes signage, contest registration forms and coupons for Sargento Finishers. “During the promotion period, Idaho potato sales increased 17 percent.”

pb



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Reader Service # 55

IPC Retail Display Contest Brings In The Rings

The 2009 Idaho Potato Commission Potato Lover's Month Retail Display Contest continues to raise brand awareness of Idaho potatoes.

BY JENNIFER LESLIE KRAMER

The 18th year of the Idaho Potato Commission's (IPC) Potato Lover's Month Retail Display Contest was another huge success according to the IPC.

The IPC continued its popular contest with more than 2,150 entries, an 11 percent increase over this past year. Seth Pemsler, vice president of retail and international for the Eagle, ID-based IPC, recognizes the continued growth of the contest. "Throughout the first 13 years of this contest, we probably averaged 600-700 entries," he says. "But in the last five years, we have consistently had more than 2,000. What's more, the entries really run the gamut, arriving from stores all across the country, the big boys and the little guys, too." In addition to increased traffic in the produce department, produce managers are undoubtedly attracted to the first place prize of \$1,500. Not to mention, even fifth place winners are rewarded with \$250.

WHY IT WORKS

The Potato Lover's Month Contest takes place annually in February, during what is generally a slow time for produce departments. The perfect timing of the campaign provides produce managers a way to lure shoppers back into the produce department, when there is often not an abundance of fresh fruit, compared to other times of the year, such as summer and early fall. "If you tried to do the display during the summer, there is a great deal of competition occurring within the produce department," explains Pemsler. "It would be hard to get sufficient display space, or even the attention of the produce managers as they are most likely swamped with local, fresh fruit during this time. This presented an opportunity for the potato industry to capitalize on this lull and increase the capital in the potato category, along with the produce category in general."

IPC's contest is a big boost for the produce



Above: Lammers Food Fest, 1st place, 6-9 cash registers category. Right: Kirkpatrick Foodland, 1st place, 1-5 cash registers category.

Photos courtesy of Idaho Potato Commission

department in general, says Pemsler. "Large, creative Potato Lover's displays lure shoppers into the produce department during a time when many would just pass it by," he believes. "Once they're there, they think, 'Oh, I need lettuce, and maybe I'll pick up some strawberries, too. It definitely encourages impulse buys."

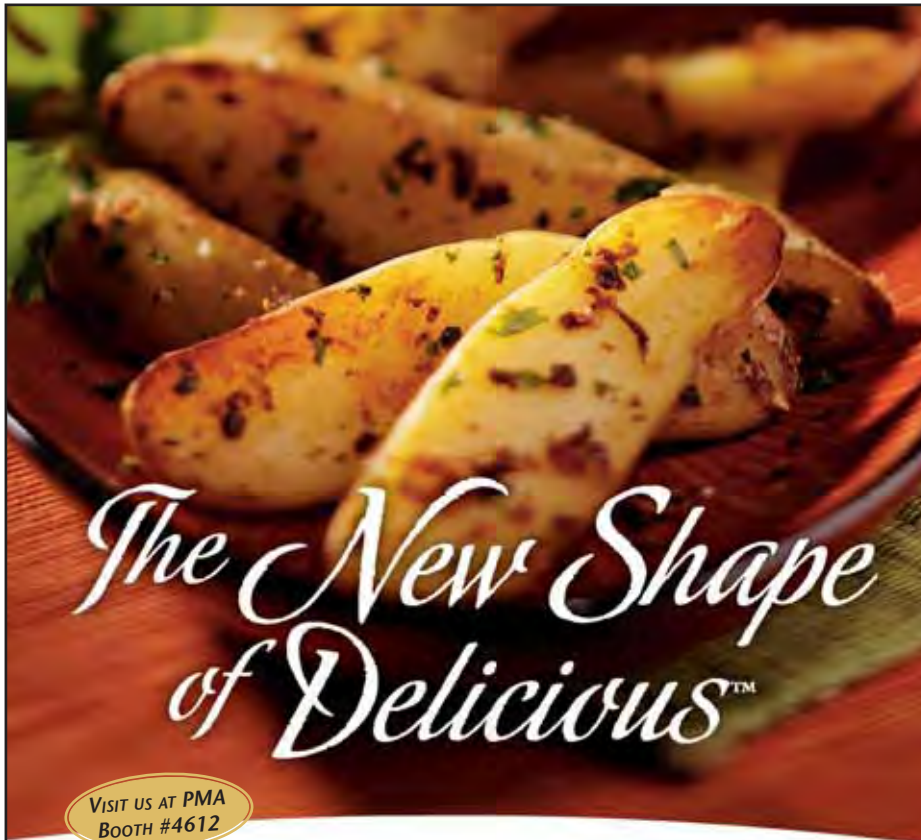
IPC also rewards the category managers at the winning stores. "We know how integral their excitement and participation is in the whole process, so we reward them with the same amount as we give the store,"

explains Pemsler. What's more, this year, contestants were rewarded with a portable DVD player just for entering.

This year, the IPC partnered with Mrs. Dash Seasoning Blends and Molly McButter, two healthful potato toppings that help retailers extend profits to the grocery aisles. "It's really the perfect combination," remarks Pemsler. "Today, everyone is trying to establish healthful eating habits. Plus, February can still be considered a diet month, as people are coming off the New Year and still trying to stick to their No. 1



Top: Pete's County Market, 4th place, 10+ cash registers category. Bottom: Save Mart, 5th place, 6-9 cash registers category.



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resolution — losing weight." The partnership has proved successful for all parties involved. In fact, according to Pemsler, Mrs. Dash had already signed on for another year before this year's contest had even come to an end.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Pemsler notes, this year, everything needed to enter the contest was made available online via the IPC's Web site. In order to enter, supermarkets and independent grocers had to maintain their displays in the produce department for at least one week between January 26 and February 27, 2009. In an effort to make the most out of the contest, the IPC required displays to include fresh bulk or bagged Idaho potatoes, an Idaho dehydrated potato product, such as Idaho Spuds, as well as Mrs. Dash Seasoning Blends and Molly McButter, this year's retail partners.

While it may seem easy at first, there are



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Top Left: Sheppard AFB, 1st place, Military West category. Above: Piggly Wiggly, 2nd place, 6-9 cash registers category.

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definitely tips and tricks that make the display look — and work — its best. “Conceptually, it has to be shoppable. If products are stacked too high, or too unevenly, shoppers will have a challenging time getting to them,” explains Pemsler. “Also, we really appreciate it when retailers go the extra mile. Instead of only using our signage and POS, which we always encourage including, retailers that make their own banners, signs and other creative eye-catchers definitely get our attention.” Entries are judged by store size, which is determined by the number of cash registers

Another hint that Pemsler suggests, despite how obvious it may sound, is to be sure to have enough product. “We get emails and letters from retailers quite frequently saying their display was such a hit they ran out of potatoes,” reveals Pemsler. “We don’t want to hear that! When you build a big display, you have to be sure to have enough goods to maintain it. If you think about the profit they lost simply by running out of product, that’s disappointing. Imagine how much more they could have sold if they were able to maintain the display!”

Pemsler also suggests running an ad concurrent to the display. “This will bring even more attention to the display and really drive it home that potatoes have arrived and are a can’t miss!”

pb

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TO BE CONTINUED...



Put Pears To Work In Produce

Better visibility, ripening programs and seasonally updating displays are tools to maximizing pear sales.

BY MIKE DUFF

The universal verdict is that it has been a good year for pears in the main crop growing regions of the West Coast. Chris Zanobini, executive director of the Sacramento-based California Pear Advisory Board (CPAB), reports, "We have a very nice pear crop. We had a great bloom. We've had great growing weather, and it looks like the quality is going to be exceptional. It seems like all the growing areas have a solid crop and all varieties have done well."

Loren Queen, marketing and communications manager for Domex Superfresh Growers LLC headquartered in Yakima, WA, agrees, adding, "The year leading up to the season was ideal growing conditions for pears. We had a lot of cold weather this winter, which helps invigorate the trees, then had a perfectly timed bloom with heat coming in behind."

Bob Mast, vice president of marketing for Wenatchee, WA-based Columbia Marketing International Corp. (CMI), asserts that, so far, the company's pear crop looks good. "The growing weather has been outstanding," he notes. "We've had some sunny days — not too warm — with some chilly hours at night. The crop looks nice and clean."

Roger Pepperl, marketing director at Stemilt Growers Inc., also located in Wenatchee, WA, expects a good pear crop this year, which is excellent news, considering, "The company has a new pear packing plant to walk right into as soon as the pears start coming in," he says.

Steve Reisenauer, director of sales for Sage Fruit Co. LLC, based in Yakima, WA, reveals, "It looks like the crop is going to be very good volume this year and a little larger than the past couple of years."

CONSIDER VARIETY

Outside of the core green — and a few red and brown — stalwarts, variety contin-



Using pears as a color break in an apple display has proven to be a success, boosting sales of both items.

ues to play a role in pear operations. Some growers, as well as independent grocers and chain operators looking to differentiate themselves through expanded produce selection, are using pears to make their merchandising a bit more interesting.

CPAB's Zanobini reveals the board does regular research on consumer pear preferences. Bartlett remains the preferred variety, but he adds the Golden Russet Bosc has been gaining fans. Among the red varieties, Star Crimsons are doing well, and Haley Red — a newer variety — is emerging strong.

The ever-increasing varieties of pears can prove to be a challenge. Mast contends, "Pears have not evolved like apples with club varieties. We have the standard varieties day-in and day-out. The challenge with pears is the beginning of the California deal overlaps. One green pear at a time is the way to go, as opposed to stocking Bartletts and Anjous simultaneously. The challenge is getting Anjous going while there are still Bartletts in stores."

Offering specialty varieties, such as Forelle and Comice, can provide retailers

committed to expanding varieties flavor options and novelty that makes pears more attractive to both regular and occasional consumers. The issue, according to Mast, is execution. The best way to introduce specialty varieties is through ads and conspicuous in-store merchandising, but getting such support is a challenge, as is consistency in application. Headquarters has to take the initiative if a retailer is going to take pears to the next level. "If we could secure ad space, it does force the hand of the store, as they have to ensure they have the offerings," Mast explains.

Michael Mockler, produce operations director for Thrifty, a division of Sobeys that includes a wholesale operation and a 24-store supermarket chain based in Saanichton, British Columbia, Canada, believes offering a variety of pears keeps the category viable for those consumers who are not satisfied with the two main varieties, particularly for food retailers who establish their reputations on having a greater perishables variety than the typical major chain retailers. Up until 2007, Thrifty was an indepen-



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Offering specialty varieties of pears, such as Comice, can make both regular and impulse consumers take notice.

dent grocer, and like many independents, built its point of differentiation around having a more dynamic perishables operations than more mainstream food retailers. Despite its new partnership with Sobeys, it still operates in that mode.

Variety consumers are typically upscale, and if they are looking for these types of products in the rest of the store, they will surely expect the same in the produce department. "Whether they are looking for Comice or Concorde, you can't afford to have someone who is looking for upscale pears not come into the store," says Mockler.

Pears that have emerged to take a middle ground between upscale varieties and core offerings, such as the Concorde and Bosc, provide novelty and a different experience that consumers might embrace. Sage's Reisenauer is among those who identify the Concorde as an up-and-coming variety. "It's a very unique pear," he remarks. "It's for those retailers who have a clientele that likes exotic pears and moves them well."

In addition to the Concorde, Sage offers Red Anjou and Comice pears, as well as Green Anjous and Bartletts. Reisenauer admits not every retailer the company works with wants Red Anjou and Comice varieties. "Only some will expand to put them in, but those are critical pears to some customers."

PROMOTE PEARS FRONT AND CENTER

CMI's Mast believes getting consumers to consider pears more often is the key to boosting future sales. "We're looking for new avenues to get secondary pear displays that focus on different varieties and emphasize the uniqueness of these varieties in new

Organics And Locally Grown

Organics are a challenging part of the pear picture. Hard to grow due to pest problems and tending to yield small fruit, organics have a role in the pear sector, yet aren't as prominent as in some fruit and vegetable categories. "I think organics are part of the mix, but there has been some slip in sales in the organic sector due to the economy," explains Chris Zanobini, executive director of the Sacramento-based California Pear Advisory Board (CPAB). "They are a growing and important part of the mix, but I don't see them becoming more than that in the near future."

Organic pears remain limited, although demand exists, contends Bob Mast, vice president of marketing for Wenatchee, WA-based Columbia Marketing International Corp. (CMI), but he adds growing difficulties — pears are not only hard to grow organically but difficult to transition to organic as well — complicate the growth picture. "Organic pears are less developed than organic apples. We're seeing a little growth on organic pears, but the fruit typically requires a fairly high retail to begin with. Getting organic pears in at the price points they command isn't conducive to a lot of consumers' purchasing habits, but we're seeing some increase on it," he explains.

According to Loren Queen, marketing and communications director for Domex Superfresh Growers LLC., based in Yakima, WA, organic pears face two major problems. "It's a pest management issue — that's the biggest challenge — and it's yield," he says. Organics remain a niche product for most consumers, including those who might have once flirted with natural products. "Back when the consumer had more money, it was much

more convenient to be organic," adds Queen. "They all had more disposable income regardless, so you could continue to increase the size of your organic pear crops. We're looking forward to that continued growth, especially when the pear consumer is pretty much the same demographic as the organic consumer. Organic pears work because the pear customer is usually middle-aged or older, and they have a bit more money and higher education, just like the core organic customer."

At Stemilt Growers Inc., based in Wenatchee, WA, organics are seen in a positive light. Roger Pepperl, marketing director, notes, "We're one of the largest organic pear shippers." In stores, he recommends organic pears be merchandised adjacent to organic apples at a one-to-three ratio, with the pears ideally swapped out each month for a different variety.

While organics are something to consider in the pear world, locally grown has not had much of an impact. Zanobini admits, "It's easy for me in California to say that the local effort is great," he notes. After all, many consumers in Los Angeles and San Francisco are available to gobble up California pears, but the reality is, outside of the West Coast and a few markets, such as New York, the impact isn't pronounced. However, he notes anything that makes people more aware of domestic fruits and vegetables is good for California pear growers and the produce industry as a whole.

Due to pears' limited growing area, Mast contends that it's difficult to have widespread locally grown pears. "For the most part, pears are only grown in the Northwest south to California. They are not as widespread a planting as other fruit, such as apples." **pb**

ways," he explains.

Additionally, Mast believes a tiered approach to merchandising — one that includes core, secondary and more novel varieties — is generally the most functional in maximizing pear potential. Making the merchandising work, though, requires advertising support, particularly in store circulars. It must include less familiar, upscale varieties if consumers are going to consider the full breadth of the assortment. "Mix-and-match ads are a good idea to get consumers to try some new varieties," he suggests.

Mast points out value promotions are enjoying some success, including, "Big-buy

ads where a store is promoting an item at 10 pounds for \$10, or five pounds for \$5 to get a big purchase at a lower retail price."

Suzanne Wolter, marketing director for Selah, WA-based Rainier Fruit Co., believes for most consumers, pears are an impulse buy, rather than a standard shopping list item. For that reason, pears must be conspicuously displayed in a heavy traffic area if they are to reach maximum potential. "Pears are hidden in the back. In order to encourage the sale of an impulse item, it needs to be front-and-center." At that point, grower initiatives are in the right place to flourish. Until pears are merchandised

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where consumers will regularly notice them, varieties such as a Forelle or a Seckel are less relevant to growing the category. Most consumers don't know what they are and, to the extent that the pear display may be hidden, the opportunity to educate consumers about them is limited.

Domex's Queen agrees, relating, "Pears really are impulse items and 50 percent or more of consumers are not planning to buy pears when they come into the store. People have to see them as they are coming into the produce department. What's more, they need enough space to be seen, 16-square-foot at the opening of the season in September, and, as they ramp up in October through the holidays, they need 20- to 24-square feet. When they have enough space, pears do well."

For Queen, extraordinary pear promotions aren't as important as consistent attention. "You have to execute every day," he asserts. "Those who are running successful pear categories are making sure they do everything right, especially with Anjous and Bartletts. Those are the power players."

Stemilt, on the other hand, takes a broader approach to the market and sees potential in varieties. "We have Boscs, Star Crimsons, Concordes, Seckels and Comice," Pepperl

"Pears really are impulse items and 50 percent or more of consumers are not planning to buy pears when they come into the store. People have to see them as they are coming into the produce department."

**— Loren Queen
Domex Superfresh Growers LLC.**

details. With all that, though, Stemilt is realistic about promoting pears. "Pears are a much smaller category in the produce department. It can be somewhere in the one to two-and-a-half percent range of the dollar volume, compared to apples, which is

five and a half to seven percent. So pears tend to get short SKUs. It might only get two SKUs — red and green."

To establish a stronger position in the produce department and in the general marketplace, pears will have to take it one step at a time. Cyclical promotions can drive interest beyond Bartletts and Anjous and boost the category for retailers. "During the fall months — September through December, retailers can run monthly pear-apoosoo promotions once a month," suggests Pepperl. "Build displays around Bartletts and Anjous, but include other pears with it. Sales of Bartletts and Anjous will increase with more exciting displays. People like to see variety; it sparks interest in the pear category. If retailers are successful, they can do a business on variety pears all year."

In terms of positioning pears, Stemilt recommends two-line pricing. For example, a red pear along with Bartletts or Anjou can run at the base price and variety pears at the higher price points, perhaps \$1.29- and \$1.49-per pound, respectively.

CREATIVE MARKETING

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retail partners are aware of what promotions are available. The company focuses marketing initiatives on specific retailers since “what works for one retailer doesn’t for another,” explains Reisenauer, but he adds consistency is one factor that is important everywhere. Whatever works best for a specific retailer needs to be addressed throughout the year.

Reisenauer suggests retailers work within seasonality to promote pears at their peak and keep the attention of consumers who are growing more aware of when fruit is hitting the market at its best. “You don’t want to promote Bartletts in February,” he states. “You want to promote Bartletts early. That’s when the demand is there. Then in the fall, promote the Boscs and the Anjous into the Christmas season and beyond. Those winter pears work as Christmas items in gift box displays, and retailers can suggest Boscs as a baking pear.”

Given the economy, Stemilt’s Pepperl suggests retailers consider value-packaging in bins and display-ready cartons. Value-packaging includes 3-pound polybags mixing green, red and brown varieties, and over-wrapped packages of a variety of pears.

Retailers can look at a range of merchandising ideas to move more pears and sometimes a little experimentation can pay off. “We actually did a study on pear merchandising, and we commingled pears and apples together,” shares Pepperl. “Although some of the new apple varieties are bi-color, we brought pears into the apple display and used them for color breaks. We saw an increase of 12 percent in pear sales and an increase of two percent in apple sales. We

PEAR, WINE & CHEESE SELECTOR

PEAR VARIETY & FLAVOR	CHEESE	WINE
Bartlett: Sweet aromatic	Feta	Sparkling Wine
Red Bartlett: Sweet aromatic	Silton	Tasty Port
Bosc: Rich aromatic	Manchego	Late-harvest Redding
Comice: Very Sweet	Roquefort	Sauternes
Concorde: Sweet aromatic	Aged white cheddar	Cabernet Sauvignon
d’Anjou: Sweet smooth	Soft goat cheese	Pinot Gris
Red d’Anjou: Sweet smooth	Brie	Champagne
Forelle: Very Sweet	Fontina	Dry Redding
Seckel: Extremely Sweet	Fontina	Pinot Noir
Taylor’s Gold: Rich & Sweet	Aged goat cheese	Chardonnay



Stemilt supports ambitious sampling programs, which often include wine and cheese.

Asian Pears

Asian pear sales are gaining outside of traditional ethnic markets. The fruit continues to win over consumers who seek a different flavor profile, but the crunch of an apple.

In Soo Lee, senior manager at the Korean Agricultural Trade & Information of New York Inc., headquartered in Great Neck, NY, says consumers are still confused by Asian pears. Korea mainly exports two Asian pears: Shingo and Golden. Large and round, the Shingo is definitely unlike the pears U.S. consumers are used to, but it is particularly crispy, and has great potential with apple fans. The Golden isn’t far behind in size or crunch.

Korean pears continue to find their way primarily to Asian specialty markets, although King Kullen supermarkets have been carrying them for six years, relates Lee. BJ’s, as well as West Coast Costcos also have carried Korean pears. Korean Ag Trade continues to attend trade shows, such as PMA’s Fresh Summit, to familiarize more retailers and distributors with the product. In 2008, \$2.2 million – in export pricing – worth of Korean pears arrived in the United States, according to Lee.

Much of the Korean Ag Trade’s promotions focuses on consumer education. “They don’t know how to eat Korean pears,” says Lee. “American pears are eaten with the skin on, but you have to peel Korean pears.”

Christopher Kragie, deciduous fruit manager for Western Fresh Marketing, based in Madera, CA, asserts consumers don’t have to peel Asian pears to enjoy them, and promoting them that way isn’t necessary. It might even be counter-productive, as Americans are less likely to peel produce than ever before. Today, much of what once was eaten skin-off, including apples and potatoes, is consumed skin-on.

Kragie agrees, though, that Asian pear gains have been spotty, in part because low prices have made the commodity less valuable to the people handling it. Prices to growers in California, which had grown untenably low for some, should improve as several have left the market. “California is going to be a lot lighter than in the past,” he adds.

Consumer awareness is critical, and education must be hands-on. Kragie shares he has taken boxes of Asian pears

to local farmers’ market just to be proactive in promoting the product effectively. Yet, it’s not just a matter of selling the consumer. He thinks people handling Asian pears need to be more aggressive in approaching the trade as well. “You see a lot of people promoting figs and kiwi and advertising at PMA, cutting and tasting, but you don’t see that with Asian pears.”

Kragie believes more chain store support is required to get Asian pears to a level where the business is consistent and healthy, and he’s hopeful that given the hands-on nature of their new product promotions, warehouse clubs might tip the balance for the product. “Costco and Sam’s Club are willing to do a lot more of the in-store demos and sampling. With that, you will get a lot more demand for the product. It’s a great eating piece of fruit,” he says.

Bob Mast, vice president of marketing at Columbia Marketing International (CMI), headquartered in Wenatchee, WA, maintains a greater range of consumers will be enticed by the Asian pears if they are properly educated. “That’s an opportunity for us to help educate the consumer,” he says. “They’re not used to buying something that’s like an apple and pear mixed that’s going to be crunchier. Typically, we’ve seen them displayed in separate locations, in specialty or Oriental food sections. But we’ve seen the biggest success when they’re merchandised with pears and promoted from time to time.”

Also in Wenatchee, WA, Stemilt Growers Inc. incorporates Asian pears in its program and recommends changing varieties regularly to help catch the interest of consumers. Retailers can play on the differences between green and russeted Asian pears to put another spin on the category. Because Asian pears have that crispiness, Stemilt’s marketing director, Roger Pepperl, believes they have a particular appeal to children. “Kids will always be attracted to crispy things.”

Asian pears have good flavor and juiciness, but with or without the skin, shoppers just don’t understand them sufficiently. Pepperl discloses, “Consumers don’t know what to do with them. They’re great for salads or eating out-of-hand, but consumers could cook with them, too. You’ve got to put them out there and in ads as part of second line-pricing.”

pb



Offering a wide range of pears encourages consumers to experiment with new varieties.

thought pears would benefit, but were surprised apples did, too. We think it's the visibility of the colors."

Signage can provide a boost as well. "Pear-of-the-month signage or the pear-apoloosa, accompanied by a guide to flavor profiles and uses are all excellent ideas," notes Pepperl. "People are confused today as produce departments have a thousand products. Stores that educate their shoppers, along with ads, help consumers over-

come their trepidation about new products, as more people are willing to take a risk on a item that is on sale."

Stemilt also supports ambitious sampling programs, including those that mix pears, wine and cheese. "That becomes a very nice use for pears," Pepperl says. Sampling programs can turn into new merchandising initiatives. "That's really a popular thing we'll be doing more of this fall." The company also will build on the fact that restaurants are using pears more in their dishes, in both entrees and salads. It plans to distribute recipes that allow consumers to translate what they have been seeing at restaurants into home-cooked meals. **pb**

Take Advantage Of Ripening Programs

Ripening programs are one of the most effective methods of enhancing pear revenues. According to Chris Zanobini, executive director of the Sacramento-based California Pear Advisory Board (CPAB), "California started the pear ripening effort, at least this go around, about 15 years ago. We started getting focused with everything based on university research. Now the whole West Coast pear industry is working in the same direction, trying to accomplish the same thing, giving consumers a perfect piece of fruit to eat. We're all vying for a portion of the consumer dollar. We have to have a piece of fruit that's at its optimum. The ripening effort is critical there."

CPAB has a ripening advisor on staff that works with the entire U.S. pear industry to establish ripening programs. Its ripening efforts start with packers and handlers, so they know how to work with fruit in the distribution process. The board also is developing retail protocols to establish training and handling practices that put fruit into consumer shopping carts in the best condition.

Unfortunately, some pear retailers are overlooking critical opportunities. Zanobini explains the issue at hand. "Number One, they have got to provide the consumer with product that is ready to eat, so having a ripening program is critical. Number Two, having multiple varieties and sizes, and value-added options, such as six pears in a bag, can help boost the category. Having multiple varieties is also integral, as is positioning pears within the store. Of course, everyone wants the same spot, but think of where the display is productive at what time of year. For example, if retailers lay out pears with tree fruit in July and August, it can boost the category by 11 percent."

David Lessard, senior director of produce and floral at A&P, in Montvale, NJ, is building up a pre-conditioned pear program for the company's stores and is looking forward to getting the fruit to customers. "We have a pre-ripened program that we are doing with Bartletts," he shares. "It will be sometime in early August. We're going to place pre-ripened pears just like the ripe peaches and nectarines. We're going to focus on that eating experience."

Bob Mast, vice president of marketing for Wenatchee, WA-based Columbia Marketing International Corp. (CMI) notes ripe fruit initiatives are a matter of pear sellers catching up to the consumer. "It's hard for the consumer to understand that when they are ready to eat a pear they must consider the X factor of time out from having the pear on the shelf and when they can actually consume it.

We want to educate consumers about pre-ripened pear programs and, if retailers are carrying them, to get consumers to shift to pears that are ready to be eaten, instead of those that have to sit on their counters at home for four or five days."

Domex Superfresh Growers LLC, based in Yakima, WA, is taking ripening right to the consumer. "We have been packaging pears using a RipeSense technology," says Loren Queen, marketing and communications manager. "RipeSense is a packaging program that includes a sticker that shows how ripe the pears are inside of the container. We pack four or five to a package, depending on the type of program we're involved in, trigger the ripening process and then send them out to retail stores. Consumers can determine the level of ripeness by looking at the color of the sticker," he continues. "Some consumers like them a little less ripe, and they can be particularly useful in salads. When the pears are ready to eat, the labels change from red to yellow. We're using RipeSense with Anjou pears, since consumers have a hard time figuring out if this variety is ripe, since it's not as obvious as the Bartletts." Technology such as RipeSense can get the consumers attention and provide a reason for picking up pears.

Queen notes a ripening program is "the keystone in making a pear program successful. Pear ripening is relatively new as far as widespread application, so we've been working with our retail partners helping them understand how to run a preconditioned pear program. When retailers make the switch, they are seeing a sales increase of 50 percent in some cases over non-conditioned fruit."

Stemilt Growers Inc., located in Wenatchee, WA, also has a trademarked ripening program that focuses on Anjous. In the process, the company warms the pears then floods them with ethylene and finally cools them to provide an optimal condition.

"At our partner accounts — and we have a lot of partner retailers — we have shown double-digit increases with the use of a ripening program. That's been a big win for us," says Roger Pepperl, marketing director.

Sage Fruit Co LLC, headquartered in Yakima, WA, focuses its ripening program on Green Anjous. "It's an important part of our program," says Steve Reisenauer, director of sales. "It puts a piece of ripe fruit in customers' hands at an earlier time than ripening at home would. Not to mention, many consumers don't know how to properly ripen a pear once they get it home from the store." **pb**

Pistachio Industry Rebounds Following Recall

In light of a disastrous pistachio recall earlier in the year, the category continues to reassure consumers' concerns over food safety, and as a result, boost sales volume, some say.

BY BARBARA ROBISON

The pistachio world is returning to normal, following a scary ride earlier this year. "The recall had a negative effect on the industry at the time," admits Marc Seguin, director of marketing for Paramount Farms, a pistachio marketer based in Bakersfield, California. "Now, our pistachio sales are reaching pre-recall trends. We are definitely on track to meet our sales volume goals for the year."

A voluntary pistachio recall was instituted in early spring by Terra Bella, CA-based Setton Pistachio of Terra Bella Inc. after the FDA found salmonella in its pistachio products. The company recalled more than two million pounds of pistachio products and closed its California plant. In addition, the FDA recommended that consumers stop eating pistachios altogether.

As a result of the FDA's announcement and the precautionary recall, pistachio sales dropped dramatically. Shipments — domestic and foreign — were about 50 percent of normal during the month immediately following the recall. In May, shipments were 82 percent of the previous year's shipments during the same period, according to Richard Matoian, executive director for the Fresno, CA-based Western Pistachio Association (WPA).

However, the FDA reported no cases of human illness conclusively linked to the recalled pistachio products. Plus, of the 2008 pistachio harvest of 278 million pounds, the two million pounds the FDA recalled represented less than one percent of the total 2008 harvest. "We have no more recent shipment statistics, but we strongly believe the pistachio business will be back to normal in a few months," reports Matoian.

The 2009 pistachio harvest will begin this

fall, with production expected to exceed 2008 levels. The crop, estimated at more than 425 million pounds, should be of high-quality due to excellent growing conditions.

Setton Pistachio resumed normal business operations June 1, 2009, following the voluntary recall of roasted shelled pistachios and roasted in-shell pistachios. Pistachios packed after the recall are marked "Packed after June 1, 2009." Mia Cohen, COO of Setton Pistachio, declares, "While no confirmed illnesses have been conclusively linked with the recall, Setton took aggressive actions to build upon our food safety program and become a model for the industry."

FOCUSES ON FOOD SAFETY

Food safety will be highlighted by the pistachio industry as it moves into the new 2009 marketing season. Matoian notes, "The industry was progressive in establishing proactive food safety practices in 2000 and is determined to make those practices and procedures stronger than ever."

The California Pistachio Board, based in Folsom, CA, representing industry processors and handlers, is working with the Sacramento, CA-based California Department of Food & Agriculture on a new, wide-ranging state regulatory program, incorporating scientifically valid good agricultural and manufacturing practices. "We will also be working with the University of California Cooperative Extension, the California Department of Health and the FDA," reports manager David Goldenberg.

"Sure, there was a pistachio sales fall-off as with any major recall, but sales are really looking good now," says Mike Maguire, director of produce operations, for Market Basket Supermarkets, a 60-store chain based in Tewksbury, Massachusetts.



Photo courtesy of Keenan Farms Inc.

Pistachio companies are making a concerted marketing effort in an effort to make up for lost sales due to the recall.

Teresa Keenan, marketing manager at Avenal, CA-based pistachio marketer Keenan Farms Inc., reports, "Our sales are recovering each week. To reassure our customers, we have reconfigured our processing plant to address new microbiological requirements. We've completed upgrades on all of our food safety initiatives." The company has also incorporated disinfectant footbaths, hand sanitizers throughout the facilities and quarterly refresher food safety courses for employees.

Private, third-party auditors routinely inspect Paramount Farms' plant, ensuring quality programs are up to date. "Additionally, we are consistently audited by our wholesale customers and have passed their rigorous vendor assurance program standards," adds Seguin.

The recall cost pistachio marketing com-

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Reader Service # 38

pany, Aurora Products Inc., based in Stratford, Connecticut, over \$130,000. "Fortunately we were able to overcome the financial losses," states owner, Stephanie Blackwell. "Aurora offers over 250 items, of which pistachio products are only a small portion. We will market our other nut offerings until the dust settles for pistachios,"

"The recall didn't affect us one bit," declares Dave Erickson, produce buyer and merchandize manager at Rosauers Supermarkets Inc., a 21-unit chain based in Spokane, Washington. "We've carried Wonderful and Keenan pistachio brands, which weren't part of the recall, so our sales remained good."

HIGHLIGHT HEALTH

In addition to strengthening food safety programs, the pistachio industry will start the new season with plans to help build retail sales. "As part of our campaign, we are developing a new industry logo that emphasizes the health and nutritional values of the pistachio," says WPA's Matoian.


WPA will focus on a consumer outreach and education program. More than 30 research studies have shown that incorporating nuts, such as pistachios, into the diet can reduce the risk of heart disease and Type 2 diabetes.

As the new season begins, Keenan Farms will customize merchandising programs for retailers, but also provides POS materials, such as price cards, mini-posters, dump bins and display shippers. New merchandising materials will emphasize the pistachio's health benefit and will be unleashed in the fall and continue through the holidays and Super Bowl time.

Wade Carmichael, senior category manager of produce for Ukrop's Supermarkets Inc., a 28-unit chain based in Richmond, Virginia, discloses, "I think everybody was affected by the recall in some way. We provided our customers with specific information about it and the brands not involved. Now, we're looking forward to the new season and what sales promotion programs will be available to help retailers."

Setton Pistachio plans to build on what many people already know — marketing the nuts as a nutritious and heart-healthy snack that helps keep you full longer and can even help combat stress, according to Cohen.

Paramount Farms also has holiday promotions. Seguin notes, "We will introduce an exciting, new pistachio campaign for the fall and holiday season. It will be a broad consumer- and retail-based program for our Wonderful brand, emphasizing the nut as a healthful snack." **pb**




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Reader Service # 78

KENNICOTT BROTHERS COMPANY CHICAGO, IL

Lenny Walker is the new director of Market Fresh Flowers, the growing and marketing division of Kennicott Brothers. Drawing on 30 years in the floral industry, Walker offers a large array of services to the mass markets. Kennicott has been growing and importing floral products for 128 years.



VAUGHAN INC., SANFORD, FL

Mike Nicholas joins the nursery as a new sales team member. In addition to servicing existing customers, he is implementing expansion plans for selling Vaughan's dish gardens and indoor tropical foliage plants to non-traditional accounts. Experienced in building new businesses and forging relationships with external partners, Nicholas has worked in several industries as an entrepreneurial sales management strategist.



NEW PRODUCTS

WATER-WISE AND LABOR-SAVING

Structural Plastics Corp./Bench Masters, Holly, MI, introduces its Waterbed self-watering plant display system. The system wicks water up from the reservoir, delivering it to plants through a pressure-activated capillary mat system. Evaporation is reduced and labor is saved. The Waterbed is 24" x 48" and works with most benching, but is specifically made for Benchmaster 2' x 4' and 2' x 8' benches. Indoors or outdoors, each Waterbed will hold roughly 32 6-inch pots, or eight 10-inch pots.



Reader Service No. 320

ORGANIC BASIL FOR HOME CHEFS

Northland Floral Inc., St. Catharines, ON, Canada, is promoting Organic Basil in Burlap. Consumers are thrilled to pinch the USDA Certified Organic leaves as needed when cooking at home. Available in a 4-inch size, packed 12-per-case and a 6-inch size, packed 6-per-case. The eco-friendly, decorative burlap bag is biodegradable.



Reader Service No. 321

REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT

KoenPack USA, Miami, FL, introduces plastic Eco-Friendly buckets made using only 100 percent recyclable virgin material, which is free of any pollutants. Because of superior material, the buckets are slightly thinner and there is a significant increase in production speed. The result is a decreased environmental footprint. Stock colors available in red, purple, white and black, but color customization is possible. Color buckets are 10 liters.



Reader Service No. 322

EcoChic

The John Henry Company, Lansing, MI, is promoting its new EcoChic line featuring a variety of tags and signs on environmentally friendly substrates and decorative, reusable containers. Recycled enclosure cards and envelopes are also available, as well as customized plant tags. The EcoChic slogan is "Because the Earth sustains us all."



Reader Service No. 323

ORGANIC SOIL WAFERS

Wonder Soil, Las Vegas, NV, has a new item in its line of Earth friendly products. The Wonder Soil 7-2-3 Organic Tube contains 18 2 1/2-inch compressed expanding potting mix wafers. They are made with BIOSOIL, natural organic fertilizer, mycorrhizae, kelp, worm castings and water-saving polymers. Eighteen wafers fill 18 four-inch pots. With an unlimited shelf-life, the lightweight, easy-to-use potting mix product saves freight, labor and water.



Reader Service No. 324

BAG THE BALLOONS AND GO

HI-FLOAT Company, Louisville, KY, introduces Endless Balloon Transport Bags — great for soccer moms and parents hosting birthday parties. The original Transport Bags hold 15 fully inflated, 11-inch balloons. This new roll is not perforated so bags can be cut to any size. The bags allow for easy transportation of balloon arrangements and help minimize tangling.



Reader Service No. 325

BAMBOO-LOOK DECOR

Napa Home & Garden, Duluth, GA, introduces a trio of glazed ceramic bamboo vases. Each one is handmade by a potter and hand-dipped into the perfect caramel glaze. The 5-, 7-, and 12-inch tall ranges are ideal for the perfect green arrangement. Perfectly sculptural, consumers may prefer the vases hold nothing at all.



Reader Service No. 326

PINEAPPLE PLANT PLEASES

Hawaiian Sunshine Nursery, Waimanalo, HI, is offering Lava Burst Dwarf Pineapple, an exciting new variegated form of *Ananas lucidus*. The foliage has a bright orange stripe in the center and bears a small reddish-orange ornamental pineapple. This is a durable, drought-tolerant upright plant in a 6-inch pot for interior and exterior uses.



Reader Service No. 327

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

Pushing The Sustainability Wave

Suppliers recognize the value of offering retailers eco-friendly bouquets and other certified floral products.

BY AMY SHANNON

While all corners of the produce industry work to incorporate socially responsible or environmentally friendly products into their list of offerings, the floral world is not far behind, offering an array of certified bouquets and other floral items.

"With environmental concerns an emerging societal issue, it is important that flower growers and marketers communicate not only the beauty of our product, but also that it is being grown in an eco-friendly, responsible way," explains Bruce Brady, director of marketing and business development for Farmers' West Flowers & Bouquets Inc., based in Carpinteria, CA.

Maria Brous, director of media and community relations for Publix Super Markets Inc., a Lakeland, FL-based chain, agrees, adding, "It is the right thing to do for the environment. Consumers are demanding certified floral products because of the sustainability factor and they are interested in saving our planet's natural resources." The chain only conducts business with floral companies that support certification programs at the farm level. "Our Smart bouquets offer a card with green tips. Also, some of the bouquets have a seal indicating the alliance they belong to along with a [corresponding] Web site."

Many suppliers and retailers are quick to adopt certified products as a matter of social responsibility, but others are holding back, unsure of the potential impact of certification programs, and perhaps still unaware of exactly what sets certified and non-certified products apart. Standardizing organizations are working to educate both retailers and suppliers to "validate their claims and keep producers from making idle assertions [or

green-washing]," says Brady.

Fair Trade, granted in the United States by Oakland, CA-based TransFair USA, is one of the most recognizable certification programs. World Flowers LLC, an Englewood, NJ-based supplier and subsidiary branch of Oserian Flowers, a Naivasha, Kenya-based farm that works with buyers in Europe and the United States, offers all Fair Trade-certified floral products. "Fair Trade has a very strict set of rules and a rigorous series of audits," states Joseph Farrell, president of World Flowers.

Organic Bouquet Inc., located in San Francisco, CA, supports many sustainability programs, including Fair Trade, New York, NY-based Rainforest Alliance (RA), Oakland, CA-based VeriFlora, Bogotá, Columbia-based Florverde, as well as several other certification groups. "Some of these we do not support as stand-alone certifications, but offer them as part of multi-certified choices," emphasizes Robert McLaughlin, president of Organic Bouquet. "They all have their strong points, and all of them beat the alternatives of no social or environmental responsibility."

Educating retailers, as well as consumers, about various certification programs is an important aspect to marketing certification programs. "We give them responsible choices at a competitive price," explains McLaughlin. "Our stance on certifications and eco-friendly products is that we support all the major certifications after careful internal review."

The Elite Flower, based in Doral, FL, specializes in roses, spray roses, alstroemeria, gerbera and farm-made bouquets. Elite is currently certified by Florverde, VeriFlora and Rainforest Alliance, according to Alan Parkhurst, AIFD, PFCI, a floral designer.



Photo courtesy of B and H Flowers

Publix offers EarthSmart flowers, which are packaged in biodegradable sleeves.

"We've been a member of VeriFlora for at least four years," Parkhurst notes. "The industry leaders are all going in the direction of being green. There's a strong demand for certified products, but unfortunately not too many people want to pay for it, retailers or consumers."

Farmers' West became VeriFlora-certified in 2008 and subsequently began including the VeriFlora label as part of its flower bunches and bouquets. The certified products include lilies, gerberas and germinis, snapdragons, dahlias, matsumoto asters, lisianthus, liatris and sunflowers. "VeriFlora has been called the gold standard of the sustainability movement," claims Brady. "Since becoming VeriFlora-certified, the big increase in requests has been for sustainably grown flowers."

This is due in part to the abundance of marketing information developed by certified growers — the VeriFlora Sustainability Council and Scientific Certification Systems (SCS), the Emeryville, CA-based creator of the VeriFlora standard — Brady adds, suggesting retailers contact their suppliers to find out which standards they use. “Then, request materials from the certifying organization to use as additional incentives to drive floral sales.”

Several flowers and greens supplied by Vista, CA-based fresh-cut flower supplier Dos Gringos — A California Flower Company are VeriFlora-certified. “VeriFlora inspects our farms to ensure that certified crops are being grown in accordance with sustainable agricultural practices,” explains Joan Saunders, manager of executive services. “We’ve been certified for over a year. We initially looked into the certification program because we felt it was a good fit for our clients, such as Whole Foods Market.”

All floral products supplied by Homestead, FL-based Kerry’s Nursery Inc. are VeriFlora-certified, says Alex Sevilla, vice president of sales and marketing. Kerry’s became certified in early 2009. “It gives us a way to communicate to the world that we are environmentally conscious.”

B and H Flowers Inc., located in Carpinteria, CA, is the first flower grower in Santa Barbara County to be VeriFlora-certified as a sustainably grown greenhouse operation, according to Scott Fulton, vice president of sales and marketing. The fifth-generation family operation has been VeriFlora-certified for three years, and it has worked with some floral products certified as USDA-organic for a little more than a year. “For us, receiving the certification was more a validation [of our practices],” Fulton explains. “The fact is, we’ve been growing sustainably for a long time. Still, it has helped us become better suppliers.”

EDUCATE CONSUMERS

Knowledge about each of the major certification programs and what they mean is growing, experts say. Still, many retailers are in the dark. “We talk to a lot of people who only have a real basic understanding,” notes World Flowers’ Farrell. “Some supermarkets aren’t ready just yet. It takes time to get a program going, but once it does, it takes off like wildfire.”

McLaughlin of Organic Bouquet suggests retailers spend time learning about each certification directly from the certifying agency. “But they also must trust their supplier for up-to-date information,” he adds.

Publix’s floral products include certification labels. For instance, its alstros and lilies

Go The Distance

Some suppliers have recognized the benefits of certification programs and are taking their sustainability efforts one step further. For instance, Dos Gringos built its facility with a unique waste system that sweeps green waste into grates, propels them down a conveyor belt and into a compost bin. The compost material is later picked up by the City of Vista, allowing the contract flower grower to turn a week’s worth of discarded stems, leaves and errant petals into mulch that fertilizes parks, hiking trails and roadside foliage throughout the community. “It’s a win-win for our facilities and the city,” explains Joan Saunders, manager of executive services.

Created by Jason Levin, Dos Gringos’ president, the system serves as an environmentally friendly alternative to the

time-consuming, labor-intensive practice of sweeping each production station individually to combine all waste in several garbage bins destined for area landfills.

B and H collects all of its rainwater and irrigation water in a percolating pond and holding tank and then recycles the water through a completely self-contained system, completely eliminating any runoff. The company also inspects plants and water valves daily to minimize wasted water, and has installed high-efficiency water pumps. Additionally, the business makes extensive use of beneficial insects, uses soft or organic products in the rare instance treatment is needed and is increasing the use of certified organic fertilizers. The company’s extensive recycling program works to conserve resources and minimize waste. **pb**

are labeled as Rainforest alliance-certified, and its Earth Smart bouquets include certification labeling, notes Brous. Packaged in biodegradable sleeves, Earth Smart flowers are grown and distributed by Gems, a Miami, FL-based marketer of fresh-cut flowers. The flowers are grown and packaged using certified social and environmental standards, including integrated pest management practices, optimal irrigation techniques, sound disposal alternatives and control of air emissions.

Later this year, Organic Bouquet plans to launch its new business-to-business platform, which will allow the company to become a trading and educational content site for the floral industry. “We have several POP materials to assist retailers at the consumer level,” reports McLaughlin. The company also is in the process of initiating the first and largest certification of retailers through a 50-store pilot program.

The marketing department at Farmers’ West works with its retail customers to develop custom marketing programs to suit their promotional needs. “We believe in growing great flowers and providing marketing materials that help to sell our flowers,” notes Brady.

Likewise, Dos Gringos creates special labels for its certified bouquets. “We’ll customize whatever we need, whether it’s information on the product or a label of some kind, based on our customers’ needs,” reports Saunders.

“We are willing to help retailers with marketing materials,” adds Elite’s Parkhurst.

“We’ll customize just about anything, including counter signs for coolers.”

EXPLORE ORGANIC

Organic Bouquet and Organic Style, the online provider of eco-friendly and organic gifts, will more than double its revenue in 2009-10 as the rest of the industry is seeing decline, according to McLaughlin. “We’re working hard in new ventures and initiatives that allow us to build the foundation needed to lead the organic and sustainable floral industry.”

Organic Bouquet’s current organic projects include three hectares of organic roses in Ecuador, as well as several projects dealing with premium, heirloom and organic produce. “We’ve been investing millions in organic projects in both North and South America,” McLaughlin remarks. USDA-certified organic floral products are in great demand. “Growing the supply continues to be the problem of this industry. But we have plans to double the world’s certified organic flowers in the next few years. All of our organic floral products will be dually certified as organic and sustainable.”

While some suppliers are more hesitant than Organic Bouquet to delve into the organic floral sector, many are considering it in the near future. “A small portion of the products we work with are already organic-certified, even though we do not ship and label them as such,” states Saunders of Dos Gringos. “We are, however, in the process of receiving our Organic Handler Certification. It’s the wave of the future.” **pb**



To Lead Or To Follow

Recently, Lorelei DiSogra, vice president of nutrition and health for the United Fresh Produce Association, was quoted, "If each school funded gets \$20,000 to \$30,000 for produce, that's a new business opportunity for a local industry player in that region."

The reality is the program funded from the USDA billion-dollar budget — launched with \$15 million for the start-up program in a few test states several years ago — will grow to more than \$72 million in the coming year and is scheduled for a \$150 million expenditure in the 2011-2012 school year. At a minimum of \$20,000 per school, this equates to a maximum of 7,500 schools being in the program in another two years. More simply stated, this is equal to a little more than 150 schools per state.

According to DiSogra, there are approximately 100,000 schools in the United States, or nearly 14 times as many that would possibly be covered two years from now. Doing so would require an expenditure of two to three billion dollars from the USDA at a time when the federal budget will be facing a trillion dollar deficit. Granted, two billion dollars only represents a minuscule two-tenths of one percent, or chump change, for those connected with Washington largess, similar to the expenditure of Cash for Clunkers. But is it realistic?

The criteria must include an analysis of prospective results. Will the program achieve the combined results of being a catalyst for reducing childhood obesity and improving the overall consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables? And does this exposure lead to increased family consumption when school-age children eat at home? Can this become part of reducing health care costs and improving productivity from a lower number of sick days?

As the health insurance debate escalates, Dave Burd, president of Safeway, outlined how the company has reduced health care costs after identifying behavior as a major contributor. Non-union associates are offered incentives for good-health behavior, married with personal accountability. Seventy percent of chronic diseases, including cardiovascular, diabetes and cancer are the result of smoking, obesity and lack of activity, according to the Cleveland Clinic. A recent study stated obesity accounts for nearly ten percent of medical spending for one-third of the adult population, and the amount continues to soar at the same time another third are overweight.

The Safeway program includes associate team weight loss and activity competition, as well as corporate cafeteria discounts for eat-

ing more healthful meals, an indirect inference emphasizing the contribution of fresh fruit and vegetables. What an overall marvelous program it could become if leading retailers would create programs similar to Safeway's with an emphasis on produce and exercise initially for their employees and ultimately for their customers.

There is also the initial opportunity for individual retail stores to Adopt a School in the neighboring community, supporting a portion of the cost to increase the availability of fresh fruit and vegetables for the student's daily fresh snack. Similarly, wholesalers, producers and foodservice operators could also become a Produce Partner for an individual school.

The first comment could well be that it's too costly. Just providing the money is an enormous expense. But the marketing opportunities are immense for each individual contributor to develop a consumer attention-grabbing promotional program. Developing various types of contest challenges related to healthy weights is one way to gain attention from an overall healthy objective and increase growth of the produce industry. There is no lack of marketing expertise or creativity to generate a public relations program turning costs into a positive return on investment.

As the produce industry contemplates a \$30 million generic marketing program, what better way than to focus on a school snack produce program than with voluntary coordinated company participation? The challenge becomes not only altering student consumption and activity programs, but also how to develop an entirely new consumption pattern among future generations.

Instead of seeing a school becoming part of the federally funded snack program as a way to profit from the sale of those items, the mindset needs to be addressed to the pay-off on a longer term basis. Now is the time to look at the big picture. Do we recognize the slip-

pery slope we are on when we look to more and more government intervention with all of its attendant controls and inevitable taxation? Will we then be more comfortable lying in the hammock of mediocrity from a governmental safety net instead of being able to use our own freedom over risk-and-reward initiatives? Identify the top priorities, coordinate all efforts toward those goals and the secondary objectives will be achieved. The choice is between being leaders and coordinators for the numerous potential stakeholders, and becoming passive, dissatisfied political followers. **pb**

The choice is between being leaders and coordinators for the numerous potential stakeholders, and becoming passive, dissatisfied political followers.



Nigel Jenney

Misguided Intentions Of 'Eat Seasonably' Campaign

Much has been written about sustainability and the locally grown movement, but a new battle has been brewing in Britain between advocates of eating "seasonably" and the fruit and vegetable industry. It's an intriguing issue. After all, isn't all produce seasonal somewhere? Pundit Investigator and Special Projects Editor, Mira Slott, sat down with Nigel Jenney, president of the Fresh Produce Consortium, based in the United Kingdom, to find out more:

Q: Could you describe and put into context how this seasonal campaign began and the various groups sponsoring it?

A: The Eat Seasonably campaign is one of many that have come to the floor in recent months in the UK, precipitated and encouraged by the current recession and increasing consumer interest on sustainability and food security in the UK.

Q: Where did this "eat seasonably" concept originate?

A: The National Trust, which owns a lot of agricultural land, extended its interests, starting a non-profit initiative called, *We Will if You Will*. Eat Seasonably is the first campaign from the project spearheaded by Dame Fiona Reynolds, director general of the National Trust, and Ian Cheshire, Chairman of B&Q, a do-it-yourself store. B&Q has a planting and seeds division and encourages UK consumers to focus on growing their own fruits and vegetables. The campaign is partially funded by the UK's Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), a group that encourages conservation of energy in the home, in transportation, etc., and sees eating locally as an off shoot.

Promoters of the initiative say it "aims to deliver a series of new and unique collaborative efforts between business and civil society to encourage the mass mobilization of individuals toward more sustainable lifestyles."

We felt it necessary to raise the flag for imported produce. The campaign is partially funded on a narrow definition of what constitutes in-season produce. It's great to encourage consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables, but we want to stop the distorted messages around it. Our industry is taking a much broader approach to promoting produce.

Q: Could you elaborate on what exactly is problematic with this campaign?

A: Our core view is that we accept the Eating Seasonably campaign encourages consumption of fresh produce. What we're concerned about is limiting that choice of enjoyment, because it only permits British produce and only certain produce at different times of the British season. The UK enjoys a varied diet of fresh produce and around 60 percent of fresh produce in the UK is imported. Broadly, the UK is considerably more self sufficient in vegetables than fruit. I'd say roughly 77 percent of vegetables compared to 10 to 15 percent of fruit.

Our climate allows us to produce certain vegetables very well, and a number of fruit items well. But the climate is what it is in the UK. As you know, we get quite a bit of rain. Producing items, such as bananas and citrus, are almost impossible to grow.

Q: How long has this seasonal campaign been running, and are you noticing any difference in terms of ways consumers are purchasing?

A: Up to date, no. The Eat Seasonably campaign was only marketed in June of this year, so we've responded very quickly and robustly. Number one, we've talked about the desire and interest of consumers to get produce for much longer times of the year. Actually, quite often there are a lot of fruits and vegetables coming from other parts of the world that are not detrimental from a sustainability perspective.

Q: Eating locally produced food has become a popular phenomenon, exemplified acutely when major UK supermarkets started differentiating food packages from Kenya with airplane stickers. Some characterize sustainability as being made up of three silos – environmental, social and business related. What is your position in this regard?

A: Food security and sustainability are major topics in the UK for food supplies in general, from meat products to cereals through to fruits and vegetables. As you've already highlighted, we've chosen to import a wide variety of fresh produce. In a country that imports large amounts of fresh produce, it gets on the radar very quickly.

There are two elements we are examining, and the UK government is looking at how we can encourage improved food security and whether or not there is the potential to grow more fresh produce in the UK. Balancing that, we are also very aware food security is a global position, and quite rightly, accept locally, in-season produce grown wherever in the world. Enjoying fresh produce in season, regardless of its origin, is the important thing.

Q: Are retailers gravitating to the Eat Seasonably campaign? Will they be marketing the concept with signage and promotions?

A: From our point of view, what we're looking to do is to encourage consumers to eat more fresh produce, so regardless of the season, the great news is that retailers and others are promoting fresh produce. It's all about balance, enjoying product regardless of what UK product is in season.

Q: What reaction have you received from your broad constituency since you voiced your concerns regarding the Eat Seasonably campaign?

A: The response that we've had from all areas of the supply chain supports the importance of taking a constructive and balanced way forward. It's about promoting increased consumption of fresh produce and it's not about promoting one particular commodity or origin.

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SEPTEMBER 2009

COMPANY	PAGE #	RS#	PHONE	FAX
Agrexco USA, Ltd.	139	38	718-481-8700	718-481-8710
Albert's Organics	21	99	678-429-9497	610-388-8418
Alpine Fresh	36	31	305-594-9117	305-594-8506
Altar Produce LLC	36	29	760-357-6762	760-357-8265
American Packaging Corporation	71	5	585-254-9500	919-570-0413
Associated Potato Growers, Inc.	122	122	800-437-4685	701-746-5767
B.R.S Produce Co.	96	39	215-467-7180	215-467-7182
BelleHarvest Sales, Inc.	56	117	800-452-7753	616-794-3961
BelleHarvest Sales, Inc.	44	116	800-452-7753	616-794-3961
Blue Book Services	9	47	630-668-3500	630-668-0303
The Brings Co., Inc.	108	128	651-484-2666	651-484-8857
H. Brooks and Company	111	83	651-635-0126	651-746-2210
Jack Brown Produce, Inc.	56	91	616-887-9568	616-887-9765
Bushwick Commission Co., Inc.	123	103	800-645-9470	516-249-6047
Capital City Fruit Co., Inc.	42	54	515-981-5111	515-981-4564
Carb-Americans, Inc.	36	4	954-786-0000	954-786-0775
Castle Rock Vineyards	64	120	661-721-8717	661-721-0419
Chestnut Hill Farms	36	22	305-592-6969	305-436-8969
Chilean Avocado Importers Association	59	34	202-626-0560	
Classic Salads, LLC	24	77	831-763-4520	831-763-1542
Collytti & Sons, Inc.	98	21	215-389-3335	215-755-9616
Columbia Marketing International	135	32	509-663-1955	509-663-2231
Coosemans Philadelphia, Inc.	96	104	215-334-3634	215-334-3636
The Cranberry Network LLC	39	100	715-422-0410	715-422-0406
Crowley Maritime Corp.	109	63	800-CROWLEY	
Crystal Valley Foods	36	30	800-359-5631	305-592-9803
Curry & Company	47	35	800-929-1073	503-393-6085
Customized Brokers	36	3	305-471-8989	305-471-8988
Del Monte Fresh Produce	148	33	800-950-3683	305-520-8495
Des Moines Truck Brokers, Inc.	119	105	800-247-2514	515-981-0923
Dole Fresh Fruit Company	73	49	818-879-6600	818-879-6628
Dole Fresh Vegetable Co.	2	52	800-333-5454	831-754-5243
dProduce Man Software	30	53	888-PRODMAN	650-712-9973
Duda Farm Fresh Foods, Inc.	75	102	866-792-DUDA	561-978-5705
Earthbound Farm	23	129	888-624-1004	831-623-7886
East Coast Brokers & Packers, Inc.	147	68	800-557-7751	863-869-9850
Fagerberg Produce, Inc.	47	80	970-834-1353	970-834-1434
Four Corners Farm	47	121	912-852-5098	912-852-5097
Four Seasons Produce, Inc.	94	59	800-422-8384	717-721-2597
Fowler Farms	52-53	92	315-594-8068	315-594-8060
Fresh Partners AB	46	45	46-8-742-1215	46-8-742-6201
Fruit 2day/White Wave	79	94	303-635-4844	303-635-5844
G & G Produce, Inc.	102	12	215-336-9922	215-336-9925
Genpro Transportation Services, Inc.	116	44	800-243-6770	973-589-1877
Giorgio Fresh Co.	98	50	800-330-5711	610-429-3810
The Giumarra Companies	60	62	760-480-9133	760-489-1870
Global Organic Specialty Source, Inc.	22	106	877-952-1198	941-358-6551
Gourmet Trading Company	36	8	310-216-7575	310-216-7676
Harvest Sensations	36	37	305-591-8173	305-591-8175
Hess Brothers Fruit Co.	44	86	717-656-2631	717-656-4526
Honey Bear Tree Fruit Co.	44	123	800-551-6183	952-746-1316
Hunter Brothers Inc.	99	19	215-336-4343	215-336-4340
Idaho Potato Commission	127	97	208-334-2350	208-334-2274
Intorex Corp.	41	74	888-441-8676	
J&J Distributing Co.	112	130	651-221-0560	651-221-0570
Jacobs, Malcolm & Burr, Inc.	36	28	415-285-0400	415-824-4844
E.W. Kean Co., Inc.	99	20	215-336-2321	215-336-1596
Kern Ridge Growers, LLC	22	107	661-854-3156	661-854-2832
Keystone Fruit Marketing, Inc.	44	108	717-597-2112	717-597-4096
Keystone Fruit Marketing, Inc.	37	10	717-597-2112	717-597-4096
Keystone Fruit Marketing, Inc.	47	95	717-597-2112	717-597-4096
T.M. Kovacevich - Philadelphia, Inc.	93	18	215-336-3160	215-336-2866
The Kunkel Co., Inc.	108	82	952-938-3528	952-938-1028
Lakeside Organic Gardens	32	109	831-761-8797	831-728-1104
Layer Saver, LLC	118	11	866-597-7287	866-597-7278

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M. Levin & Co., Inc.	100	110	800-523-1986	215-755-6757
LGS Specialty Sales, Ltd.	90	87	800-796-2349	718-542-2354
M&M Farms, Inc.	32	67	800-634-7898	305-233-0813
Maine Potato Board	124	124	207-769-5061	207-764-4148
Mann Packing Company, Inc.	11	56	800-884-6266	831-422-5171
J. Marchini & Son / LeGrand	24	111	559-665-9710	559-665-9714
Miatech	46	66	800-339-5234	503-659-2204
Minnesota Produce, Inc.	108	84	612-377-6790	612-377-3768
Mission Produce, Inc.	37	7	888-549-3421	805-981-3660
MIXTEC Group	42	43	626-440-7077	626-440-1557
Nardella, Inc.	102	17	215-336-1558	215-336-5757
New York Apple Association, Inc.	51	98	585-924-2171	585-924-1629
New York Apple Sales, Inc.	50	125	518-477-7200	518-477-6770
Niagara Fresh Fruit Co.	45	89	716-778-7631	716-778-8768
Nonpareil Corp.	27	23	800-522-2223	208-785-3656
North Bay Produce	37	85	231-946-1941	231-946-1902
P.E.I. Potato Board	124	126	902-892-6551	902-566-4914
Pandol Brothers, Inc.	43	65	661-725-3145	661-725-4741
Paramount Farms	7	132	310-966-4654	310-447-7778
Paramount Farms	5	131	310-966-4654	310-447-7778
Pear Bureau Northwest	133	112	503-652-9720	503-652-9721
The Perishable Specialist, Inc.	37	24	305-477-9906	305-477-9975
Peruvian Asparagus Importers Association	37	41	610-284-0326	
Philadelphia Fresh Food Terminal Corp.	97	118	215 336-3003	215-336-5542
Pinto Brothers, Inc.	101	16	800-523-4047	215-336-5422
Primavera Marketing, Inc.	45	79	209-931-9420	209-931-9424
Proccaci Bros. Sales Corp.	100	127	800-523-4616	215-467-1144
Produce for Better Health Foundation	35	46	302-235-2329	302-235-5555
The Produce Marketing Association	54	73	302-738-7100	302-731-2409
Produce Pro Software	30	48	630-395-0535	630-572-0390
Progressive Marketing Group	37	9	323-890-8100	323-890-8113
Quaker City Produce Co.	104	93	215-467-5000	215-336-4416
Railex, LLC	117	75	888-4RAILEX	518-356-3908
Red Blossom Farms, Inc.	43	69	805-981-1839	805-693-0032
Rice Fruit Company	45	42	800-627-3359	717-677-9842
Riveridge Produce Marketing, Inc.	45	113	616-887-6873	616-887-6874
Riveridge Produce Marketing, Inc.	57	40	800-968-8833	616-887-6874
Ryeco, Incorporated	106	15	215-551-8883	215-551-9036
Sage Fruit Company	134	6	913-239-0060	913-239-0055
Saven/OSO Sweet	47	36	231-946-9696	231-946-1420
Setton Pistachio of Terra Bella, Inc.	139	78	559-535-6050	559-535-6089
South Wind Farms	126	114	208-436-8164	208-436-8039
Southern Specialties	37	26	954-784-6500	954-784-5800
Spice World, Inc.	124	55	800-433-4979	407-857-7171
Stea Bros., Inc.	101	14	215-336-7806	215-336-2194
Stemilt Growers, Inc.	19	71	509-662-9667	509-663-2914
Sun Orchard Fruit Company	50	119	716-778-8544	716-778-8545
Sun-Glo of Idaho	128	2	208-356-9891	208-356-7351
Sunlight Int'l. Sales	63	72	661-792-6360	661-792-6529
Sunrise Growers	68	96	714-630-2050	714-630-0215
Sunrise Logistics	114	90	888-518-8502	717-721-2518
Team Produce International, Inc.	37	25	800-505-0665	305-513-9596
Thermal Technologies, Incorporated	25	64	888-4-MRPEEL	803-691-8010
Trinity Fruit Sales	45	88	559-433-3777	559-433-3790
A.J. Trucco, Inc.	139	115	718-893-3060	718-617-9884
United Fresh Produce Association	33	58	202-303-3400	202-303-3433
John Vena, Inc.	95	13	215-336-0766	215-336-2812
Vidalia Union Committee	INSERT	51	912-537-1918	912-537-2166
Village Farms	31	70	888-377-3213	610-429-6222
Wada Farms Potatoes Inc.	127	61	888-BUY-WADA	208-785-0415
Weis-Buy Farms, Inc.	42	101	239-433-3530	239-433-3773
Well-Pict Berries	43	60	831-722-3871	831-722-6340
Western Fumigation	37	27	954-673-2914	
Wholesale Produce Supply Company	109	81	612-378-2025	612-378-9547
Yakima Fresh LLC	131	57	800-541-0394	847-685-0474

Blast from the Past

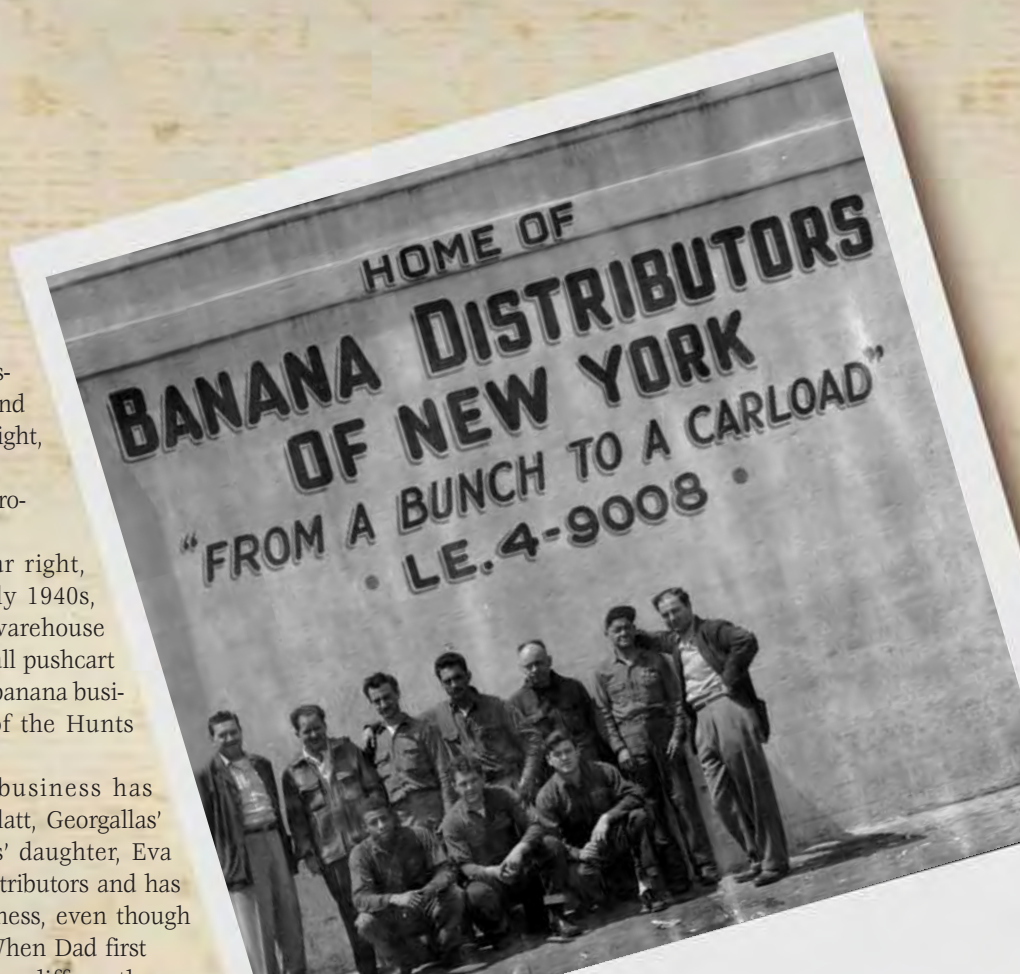
Only those truly ensconced in the produce world are aware of the longtime connection between Banana Distributors Of New York Inc. and Junior's Produce Inc. The snapshot to the right, from the late 1940s, illustrates the extent to which these two popular New York-based produce companies are intertwined.

James Georgallas, standing on the far right, founded Banana Distributors in the early 1940s, establishing his business at the Harlem warehouse depicted in the photo. What began as a small pushcart business has grown into one of the largest banana businesses in New York, located just outside of the Hunts Point Terminal Market.

While Georgallas has retired, the business has remained in the family, with Paul Rosenblatt, Georgallas' son-in-law, running the show. Georgallas' daughter, Eva Rosenblatt, is also a partner at Banana Distributors and has fond memories of growing up in the business, even though much has changed in the past 60 years. "When Dad first started the business, bananas arrived very differently than they do today. They used to arrive in a stalk, with a long rope attached to it so they could be hung from the ceiling to ripen [as shown in the inset photo]. Today, when you buy from Ecuador, they typically arrive already cut into the clusters you see in the grocery store and we ripen them with ethylene."

Also included in the picture, standing second from the left, is Louis Augone, Georgallas' partner and brother-in-law, as well as Louis' brother, Ted, on the far left. Eva remembers her Uncle Louis fondly, saying, "He was the best – the kindest, most loving man. When my son was very young, he would come spend the day at the warehouse. Even though he couldn't do much because he was so young, Uncle Louis always gave him a \$5 bill at the end of the day." Augone's legacy has continued with his son, Junior, who also grew up around the business. To no one's surprise, Junior started his own venture in 1979, Junior's Produce, which is now located on the Hunts Point Market.

pb



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