

Bite-Sized Info for the Produce Industry

the

SNACK

ISSUE 105 JULY 2026



THE ARCHITECTURE OF FRESH

— TAYLOR FARMS, PG 58 —

From the creators of
AndNowUKnow and *Deli Market News*



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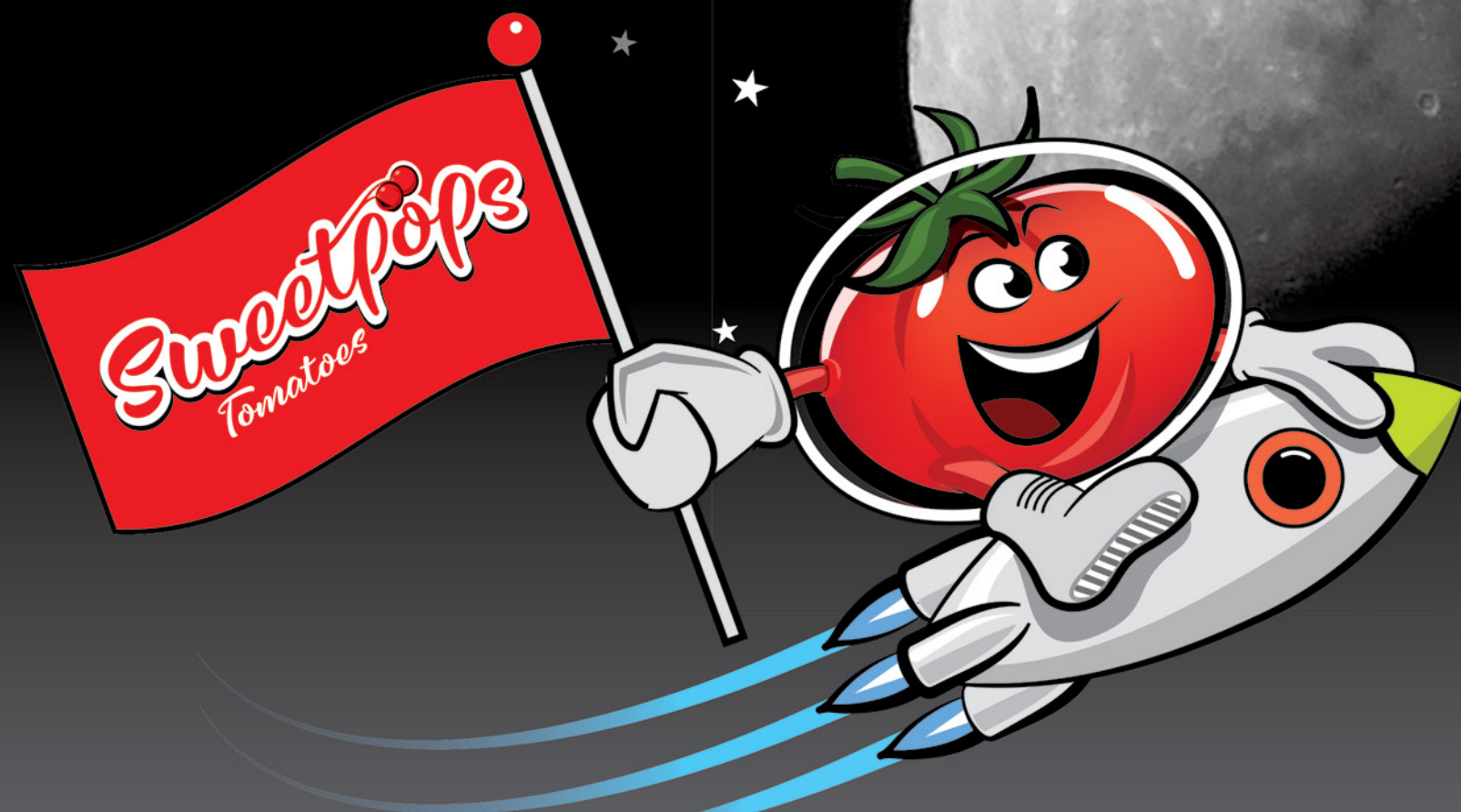
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FRESH PRODUCE ENDURES. While the words are few and simple, achieving them is far more poetic. The sweat equity, passion, and perseverance that have shaped American production agriculture form a bedrock of heritage and meaning, connecting generations through shared sacrifice and hard-won wisdom.

As the United States celebrates its 250th birthday, it feels right to reflect on unity, to come together to witness and celebrate fresh produce's lasting legacy, one that is written across generations.

Our business is a model of solidarity. As much as survival and hardship can create a polarized effect that leaves us unwilling to face each other at the table, the more prevalent reaction is unity. The more endearing, the more durable behavior, is community: relationship-building, humility, and courage.


The fabric of fresh produce is made strong and persistent by the people who form its folds, the passion that claims its seams, the hands that stitch its beauty and its grace. Fresh produce people are themselves a bridge of understanding and compassion, amplified in times of grief and turmoil, but more so in times of celebration and achievement.



We all wear our hearts in different ways, but fresh produce is always heart-forward in a world built to weather even the most armored of spirits.

What this really is—us, our *Snack* and *AndNowUKnow* family, giving thanks to the industry for giving us a wonderful home—is a place to bear witness to the beauty of the seed, the root, the tree, the fruit, and the hands that come together to bring it to the world.

Standing unwitnessed on most days are our truest and most dedicated fresh produce leaders.

Please know: We see you. We honor you. 

Jordan Okumura-Wright
Editor in Chief
AndNowUKnow, *Deli Market News*,
and *The Snack Magazine*

DID YOU KNOW?

All issues of *The Snack Magazine* are 100 percent recyclable. Only AQ coatings are used as opposed to laminates, allowing our magazine to be reused as fresh paper in its next life. The protective bag is also accepted by bag recycling centers. Please find the nearest available location if you wish to recycle this issue's bag. Keep it green!

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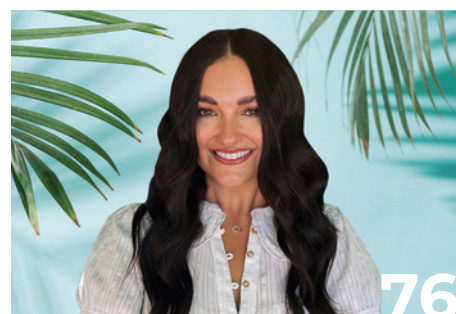
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FEATURES

MISSION PRODUCE® PASSING THE TORCH

As John Pawlowski settles into his new role as Chief Executive Officer, the supplier continues to deepen its category leadership and explore meaningful growth opportunities. John and former CEO Steve Barnard discuss the goals behind this strategic leadership transition...



SUNVIEW MARKETING INTERNATIONAL

MVP HIGHLIGHTS
Christine Etcheverry speaks the language of sales through relationships, curiosity, and collaboration. With deep agricultural roots and produce industry experience, she brings warmth, structure, and passion to every program she helps grow...



GRIMMWAY PRODUCE GROUP™

LEGACY AND RUNWAY
With over four decades of expertise and time spent with industry stalwarts, Ken Silveira steps into his new Chief Executive Officer role...



BOBALU

THE ENDURING HARVEST
RC Jones discusses the long-term blueprint behind the company's continuous growth, highlighting several key values and commitments as drivers of the strawberry operation's success...



SAMBRAILO PACKAGING

POWERED BY PEOPLE
Kiersten Sambrailo Clontz details how the packaging maven has evolved alongside the produce industry while upholding a people-first mindset that shows up across every aspect of its operations...



GIORGIO FRESH AND FOODS

MUSHROOMS VERSUS GOLIATH
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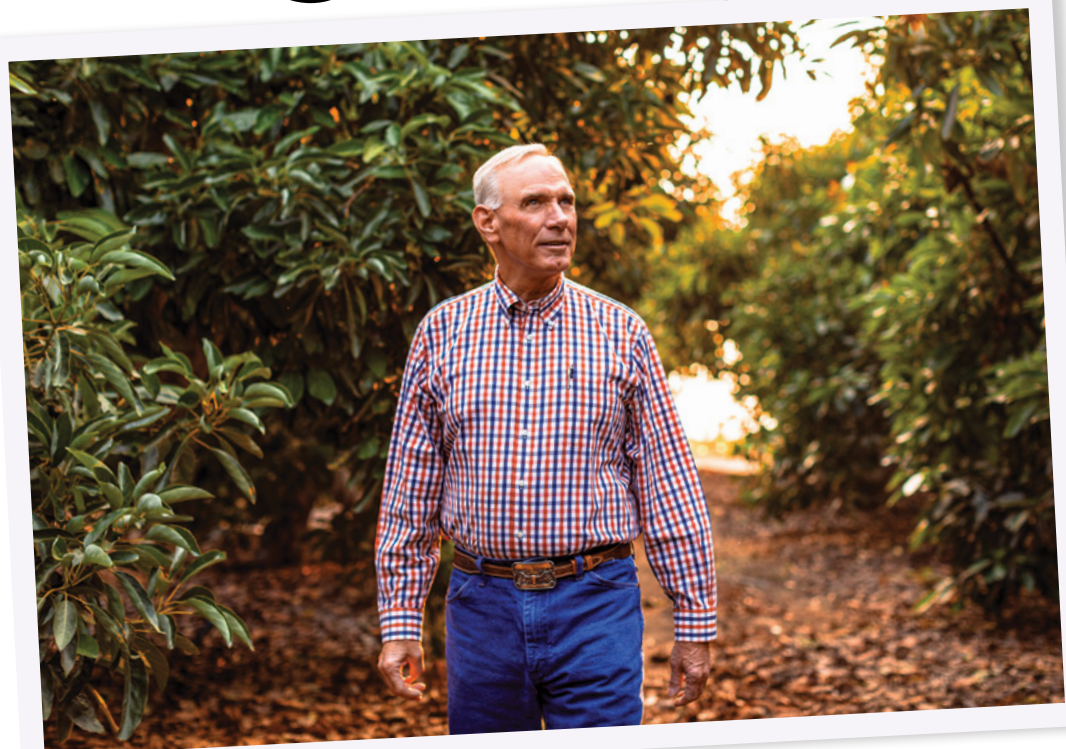


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Passing the TORCH



By Peggy Packer

To pass the torch is to impart an undeniable sense of confidence and trust to the person on the other end.

In this way, a Chief Executive Officer transition often signals a period of strength, stability, and dynamic growth for a company.

For Steve Barnard, Co-Founder and former Chief Executive Officer of Mission Produce®, 43 years of company experience reassured the industry vet's faith in John Pawlowski's ability to lead the prominent avocado and mango operation as its newest CEO.



The mantle of Chief Executive Officer passes to John Pawlowski



“Mission Produce® was built on hard work and dedication—and having fun in the process. Since the beginning, it’s always been about innovation, vision, taking risks, and not being afraid to fail.”

Steve Barnard,
Co-Founder and Executive Chairman,
Mission Produce®

In December 2025, Mission Produce announced that Steve would assume the role of Executive Chairman of the Board, with John, former President and Chief Operating Officer, becoming CEO at the close of the company’s Annual Meeting of Shareholders in April 2026.

“Mission is in a strong position, and that’s what makes this moment so exciting,” John shared shortly after taking the helm. “The foundation is solid—we have world-class supply, deep customer relationships, a competitive global infrastructure, and a team that knows how to execute. My focus is on building from that strength through a few clear priorities: continuing to grow our presence with retail, wholesale, and foodservice customers across North America and internationally; deepening

our leadership in both avocados and mangos; and operating with the kind of discipline and efficiency that allows us to pursue meaningful opportunities.”

Today, Mission Produce is a vertically integrated operation with a global network powered by over 20 countries and more than 19 facilities strategically located in key markets around the world. With over 4,000 hectares of avocados and mangos across California, Colombia, Peru, Guatemala, and South Africa, the grower isn’t pressing the brakes any time soon. In its ongoing mission to drive both categories forward, the supplier upholds a legacy of innovation over four decades in the making.

“When we started Mission Produce in 1983, I had no idea we’d be where we are

today,” Steve shares as his mind wanders back to the beginning of a 43-year history. “We started with a 35-foot office trailer and a pick-up truck and happened to be in the right place at the right time. We struck ‘green gold’ and grew into a billion-dollar public company, delivering billions of avocados a year to over 25 countries. Mission Produce was built on hard work and dedication—and having fun in the process. Since the beginning, it’s always been about innovation, vision, taking risks, and not being afraid to fail.”

In fact, Mission Produce’s willingness to take risks has been one of the key catalysts of the supplier’s success in the avocado sector.

“We were pioneers of the avocado revolution, along with Vik Tokar and Gil Henry, and were among the first to introduce ripe fruit at retail,” shares Steve, recalling the first time he pitched ripe, ready-to-eat avocados to a retail produce manager in Southern California.



“We never stop moving forward, and we’re always looking ahead. We’ve built one of the most advanced global networks in the business, and we’re still expanding into new regions and categories.”

Steve Barnard



“He said we were crazy—that it would leave a big mess. I told him, ‘Don’t worry. We’ll clean up any mess and even let you keep the money.’ We gave him 10 cases the following Friday morning and priced them higher than the unripe avocados on the same display. When I found out they sold out by noon that Saturday, I knew we were onto something.”

Later that year, the same retailer agreed to a 52-week ripe avocado program, and in 2000, Mission Produce launched its first ripening center in Oxnard, California. Since then, the supplier has strategically expanded its global network to meet demand, establishing ripening centers across Europe, the United Kingdom, and China to further grow consumption in those regions.

One of the primary ways the grower achieves this is through its vertically integrated model. While many companies locate supply to meet demand, Mission Produce adopts a unique strategy: growing supply to increase demand and spark more category opportunities. By building a reliable, year-round supply, the company is strategically fueling global avocado consumption.

“We never stop moving forward, and we’re always looking ahead. We’ve built one of the most advanced global networks in the business, and we’re still expanding into new regions and categories,” Steve notes. “When I think about the future of Mission Produce, we’ve got nowhere to go but up. John has brought tremendous leadership, vision, and decades of experience in the global food industry, and I am confident he’s the right person to lead Mission into the next chapter. He understands scale, systems, and what it takes to win in a competitive market. Over the past 40-plus years, we’ve built a strong foundation with lots of potential, and we’re not slowing down. The next 40 will be our best run yet.”

Having spent over 25 years in the global food industry, John wields a breadth of experience across different categories, geographies, and business models. He worked for over 16 years in progressive leadership roles at J.M. Smucker, ultimately serving as Vice President of International. From there, the specialty

“Mission Produce has real history, real purpose, and real momentum, and I couldn’t be more excited about where we’re headed.”

John Pavlovski,

President and Chief Executive Officer, Mission Produce®

food vet joined Lipari Foods as President and Chief Operations Officer, where he led mergers and acquisitions and organic growth, expanded national distribution, and built out the company’s operational strategy.

Not only have these experiences sharpened John’s expertise in logistics and efficiency, but they also gave him a deep appreciation for what it takes to grow a business across global markets: building the right teams, the right partnerships, and the right infrastructure to win on an international level.

“Both experiences prepared me well for Mission, because this company operates at a genuine global scale, with a supply chain spanning multiple continents and a customer base that expects the best,” John tells me. “The complexity here is real, and I find that energizing. Mission is a category leader, and I want to keep building on that.”

As Executive Chairman, Steve now provides strategic oversight, ensuring the company stays true to the vision that got it to this point. Now officially settled into the CEO role, John is embodying similar values in his leadership.

“Steve is a true pioneer. What he built from the ground up is remarkable,” John says. “He saw the opportunity in avocados before most of the industry did, and he had the conviction and tenacity to build Mission into a global force. That kind of bold, long-term thinking is something I have a lot of respect for. What I hope to carry forward is that spirit of innovation and hard work. Mission has always been a company that leads—from ripening technology to vertical integration and a diversified,

global supply—and that’s a legacy worth protecting and building on.”

Mission Produce has welcomed its newest CEO at a pivotal time of growth, as it continues to gain momentum across its premium avocado and mango programs. Over four decades of company history have laid the groundwork for an exceptionally bright future, especially as Steve and John collaborate to take the operation to new heights.

“Mission Produce has real history, real purpose, and real momentum, and I couldn’t be more excited about where we’re headed,” added John. “To our retail, wholesale, and foodservice partners, thank you for the trust you place in Mission. Our commitment to

you remains the same: delivering quality, consistency, and the kind of partnership that helps your business grow. And to the Mission team, the people across our farms, our packinghouses, our ripening centers, and our offices around the world—this is your success as much as anyone’s. I’m looking forward to what we build together.”

The passing of the torch is proof that a flame continues to burn, growing stronger and more powerful as each leader strategically fortifies the company’s foundation for success.

The steady flicker of that flame? The sign of an exciting new chapter for a global fresh produce operation. 🍇



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WTF DO I DO WITH

{ what the fork }

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Tomato Medley

?



FESTIVA™ SUMMER MEDLEY SALAD

INGREDIENTS

1 lb FESTIVA™ Cherry Tomato Medley
Fresh basil, chopped
Fresh oregano, chopped
Lemon zest
Garlic, grated
Olive oil
Salt
Pepper

Prep Time: 10 mins

Servings: 2–4

DIRECTIONS

- 1 In a serving dish, grate fresh garlic using a microplane.
- 2 Add freshly chopped basil and oregano.
- 3 Drizzle generously with olive oil.
- 4 Grate in lemon zest and season with salt and pepper.
- 5 Add your FESTIVA™ Cherry Tomato Medley, halving some tomatoes and leaving some whole for a mix of textures.
- 6 Toss everything together until coated.
- 7 Serve immediately and enjoy the vibrant flavors of summer in every bite!

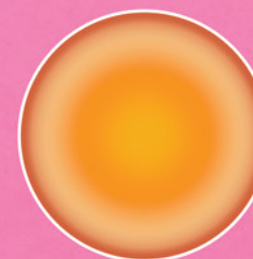
To learn more about WINDSET FARMS®, visit greenhousegrown.com



Sweet Potatoes

By Jordan Okumura-Wright

Slice them, dice them, sell them bulk or value-add—sweet potatoes are proving they deserve a year-round spotlight. With craveable flavor, versatility across menus and merchandising, and rising demand for better-for-you comfort foods, the category is helping retailers and foodservice operators drive everyday sales and profitable growth well beyond the holidays...



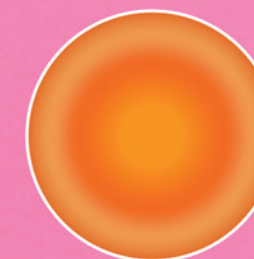
BEAUREGARD

Flavor: Traditional sweet flavor; apricot and floral aroma; excellent for baking, roasting, or in casseroles

Shape: Elongated

Eatability: Smooth; brown sugar

Color: Copper-rose to tan skin; orange flesh



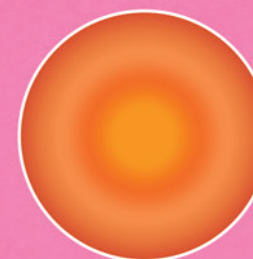
COVINGTON

Flavor: Moist, sweet, and earthy

Shape: Short and blocky

Eatability: Smooth and fibrous; softer variety

Color: Burnt-orange skin; orange flesh



EVANGELINE

Flavor: Decadent and moist

Shape: Elongated and blocky

Eatability: Smooth and fibrous

Color: Rust-orange skin; orange flesh



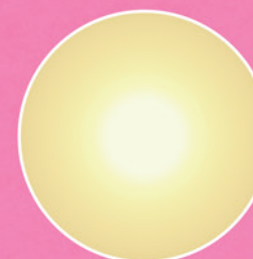
DIANE

Flavor: Very sweet and extra moist

Shape: Elongated

Eatability: Smooth

Color: Red-copper to plum skin; orange flesh



O'HENRY / BONITA

Flavor: Mild, sweet, drier-tasting, with nutty and earthy flavor

Shape: Longer and thinner when compared to blocky, elongated spuds

Eatability: Smooth and dry with medium firmness; low in visual and residual fiber

Color: Yellow skin; white to yellow flesh



MURASAKI / JAPANESE

Flavor: Mildly sweet, drier-tasting, full, nutty flavor, with vanilla aroma; exotic alternative to traditional

Shape: Short and blocky

Eatability: Smooth, dry, firm, and dense

Color: Dark purple skin; white flesh

SOURCE: Sweet potato information contributed by AndNowUKnow and The Snack category suppliers



THE ENDURING *Harvest*



**A Q&A WITH RC JONES,
MANAGING PARTNER, BOBALU**

By **Peggy Packer**

*To witness the journey of a single strawberry
is truly magical.*

In the heart of Oxnard, California, rows and rows of lush strawberry crops create a mesmerizing sea of green, speckled with vibrant and alluring glimpses of bright red. Here, Bobalu has perfected the art of strawberry growing for over 60 years, weaving a dedication to integrity, quality, and customer satisfaction into every facet of its operation.

As revealed in a recent conversation with RC Jones, Managing Member, the grower's coordinated efforts to strengthen its portfolio reflect a thoughtful long-term strategy—one centered on supporting its partners through supply assurance while establishing a foundation for success for generations to come.



Peggy Packer: What are Bobalu's most integral company values, and how do these focuses influence its growth?

RC Jones, Managing Member, Bobalu: At Bobalu, we take pride in being both family-owned and farmer-grown—two principles that guide every aspect of our business. Our foundation is built on a commitment to fairness, integrity, and quality, extending from our fields to our people and ultimately to the consumers we serve. We believe investing in our employees and maintaining consistently high product standards are essential drivers of long-term growth. These priorities not only strengthen our internal culture but also enable us to deliver reliable, year-round availability in an increasingly dynamic marketplace.

PP: How has Bobalu bolstered its strawberry program to respond to today's market demands?

RJ: To meet evolving consumer expectations and retail demands, Bobalu has made strategic investments across multiple growing regions. In California, we have expanded our fall production to better align with shifting market needs and to extend domestic supply during key transitional periods, which allows us to maintain continuity and freshness for our customers while reducing reliance on more volatile supply windows.

We are also excited about our continued expansion in Florida. As consumer demand for fresh berries continues to rise throughout the year, strengthening our presence in Florida enables us to deliver high-quality fruit during months when other regions face natural limitations. This geographic diversification plays a critical role in mitigating the risks associated with seasonality, weather variability, and regional disruptions.

By thoughtfully increasing production across California, Florida, and Mexico, Bobalu has positioned itself to minimize seasonal gaps, stabilize quality, and maintain the level of service our partners expect.



Quality you can count on



PP: How does the company stay in touch with evolving consumer demands and today's retail landscape?

RJ: We continuously analyze year-over-year consumption patterns to ensure we remain aligned with changing preferences and purchasing behaviors. Today's consumers are more health-conscious than ever, with a strong emphasis on convenient, nutritious snack options. This shift has created meaningful opportunities for innovation, particularly in categories such as frozen and freeze-dried fruit.

To support this growing demand, Bobalu benefits from a strong partnership with our sister company, Agrifrost. Through advanced processing capabilities, Agrifrost allows us to extend the usability and shelf-life of our fruit while maintaining its nutritional value and flavor profile. This integration enables us to diversify our product offerings beyond fresh berries, creating additional value for both retail and foodservice partners. By leveraging these capabilities, we can meet consumers where they are—whether they are seeking fresh, ready-to-eat options or longer-lasting, convenient alternatives.

PP: What other strengths elevate Bobalu as a supply-side partner?

RJ: As a grower, packer, and shipper, we maintain full control over the supply chain from field to final delivery, allowing us to uphold strict quality standards, improve efficiency, and respond quickly to market demands. Vertical integration also fosters greater transparency and accountability, which are increasingly important to our customers and their end consumers.

In addition, Bobalu and its parent companies are deeply committed to maximizing the use of every piece of fruit we grow. Through thoughtful planning and collaboration with partners like Agrifrost, we work to reduce waste and ensure fruit that may not meet fresh-market specifications is still utilized in value-added applications. This approach not only supports environmental responsibility but also enhances overall operational efficiency.

By combining strategic geographic expansion, a deep understanding of consumer trends, and a fully integrated supply chain, we deliver consistent quality and dependable supply throughout the year. Our commitment to innovation, sustainability, and strong partnerships will remain at the forefront as we navigate the future of the industry.



What's most evident from my conversation with RC is that the grower's evolution stems directly from the very values that have defined its success since day one. At its core, Bobalu's mission remains clear and unchanged: to provide exceptional fruit while supporting its employees, its partners, and the communities it serves.

That mission is achieved every single day—one delicious strawberry at a time. 🍓



» The IF List «

Vincent Balistrieri

Senior Produce Buyer, Redner's Markets

With Jordan Okumura-Wright

Welcome back to an IF List first as Vincent Balistrieri, Senior Produce Buyer, Redner's Markets, takes us on an adventure of art, language, song, and humor—part two. Vince is a clever gem, and with a head and heart full of creative ephemera, he brings artistry and passion to all he does in fresh produce. The strongest and brightest in our industry are those who do not necessarily separate their personal and professional lives, but find a balance between the two, letting each bolster the other. Please enjoy a little bit more about our friend, Vince...

» IF your phone could only have three apps, which would you keep?

Google Maps, YTMusic, Libby.

» IF you were another species in the animal kingdom, what would you be?

Koalas eat stress-reducing eucalyptus leaves and sleep 20-some hours a day—OR maybe Gene Wilder in the late '70s.

» IF you wrote an autobiography, what would be the title?

Toemuckin Kotztabacha.

» IF you had to wear the same thing every day, what items of clothing would you pick?

Gritty mascot costume.

» IF you could make everyone watch a movie of your choosing, which movie would you want them to see?

Even Dwarves Started Small.

» IF you could enhance one aspect of your intelligence, what part would you want to enhance?

Chemistry.

» IF you could join a musician, dead or alive, on stage to sing along or play an instrument with, who would you choose?

Raymond Scott.

» IF you had a superpower, what would you want it to be?

Healing others and myself.



» IF you were stranded on a desert island, what three items would you bring?

Paper, ink, and a solar-powered ice machine. ☺

House on the Rock 09.17.2015



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A Closer Look at Mission Produce® Lidded Mango Carton

By Chandler James


Mission Produce's latest packaging innovation doesn't need to be tied up with a bow for shoppers to recognize that it is the perfect addition to their kitchen counter. The new 4 kilo lidded mango carton is wrapped in sunset orange and complete with a large window that lets consumers get a glimpse of the sparkling gems inside.

Launched in February of 2026, the lidded mango carton was introduced at a crucial time as mango demand continues to grow. Developed with

the retailer in mind, it arrives display-ready, creates a strong in-store presence, and supports impulse purchases during key promotional windows. I know I wouldn't be able to get my hands on this pack quickly enough once I saw it.

The carton is hand-packed and ready to be stacked and displayed prominently throughout the store. Poised to capture mango category sales during holidays, promotional events, and other high-traffic

selling periods, the carton is a boon for creating high-impact merchandising destinations.

The lidded mango carton accommodates round mango varieties—including Kent, Keitt, Tommy Atkins, and Haden—across multiple sizes, offering customers consistent supply options throughout the season. And for retailers, this means you can count on an attractive and eye-catching pack to boost category momentum when it matters most. 



UP
CLOSE



GIORGIO®

MUSHROOMS



GOLIATH



A Q&A With Bryan Shelton, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, Giorgio Fresh and Foods

By Melissa De Leon Chavez

From pop culture to produce versatility, the mushroom is in its Goliath era. A renaissance item that spans the realms of folklore, gaming, fashion, and design aesthetics, this is a category experiencing a revival of exploration and open curiosity from consumers. It is a small veg carving out a rising impact.

And innovators like Giorgio Fresh and Foods are contributing to, if not directly responsible for, that transformation we are seeing as category awareness grows.

Continuing what has now become an annual pattern of flavor innovations that further widen the consumer scope of mushroom capabilities, the company has recently rolled out its latest offering, Grill Packs. As Vice President of Sales and Marketing Bryan Shelton has a front row seat to the story, this addition adds to the company's rising narrative as a champion of vegetables.

Melissa De Leon Chavez: From a merchandising and differentiation perspective, can you tell me a bit about the new Grill Packs and what the buy-side should know?



Bryan Shelton, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, Giorgio Fresh and Foods: The Grill Packs deliver bold, on-trend flavors—Steak Seasoning, Smoky Honey Habanero, and Brown Sugar Bourbon—now with a larger packaging window that puts product freshness front and center. This enhanced visibility creates stronger shelf appeal and reinforces quality, helping drive trial and differentiation to these products.

MDC: Giorgio has been on a roll with new launches that add convenience to the category while expanding consumers' understanding of what it's capable of. How do the latest Grill Packs perpetuate this strategy?

BS: Grill Packs continue to challenge the idea that vegetables aren't convenient. They offer a ready-to-cook solution that makes it easy for consumers to incorporate flavorful, satisfying vegetables into everyday meals, especially for quick dinner occasions.

The updated packaging emphasizes transparency, showcasing the mushrooms' freshness and quality while reinforcing ease of use and versatility. For the buy-side, this means a product that not only meets demand for convenience but also stands out on the shelf with clear, consumer-driven messaging.

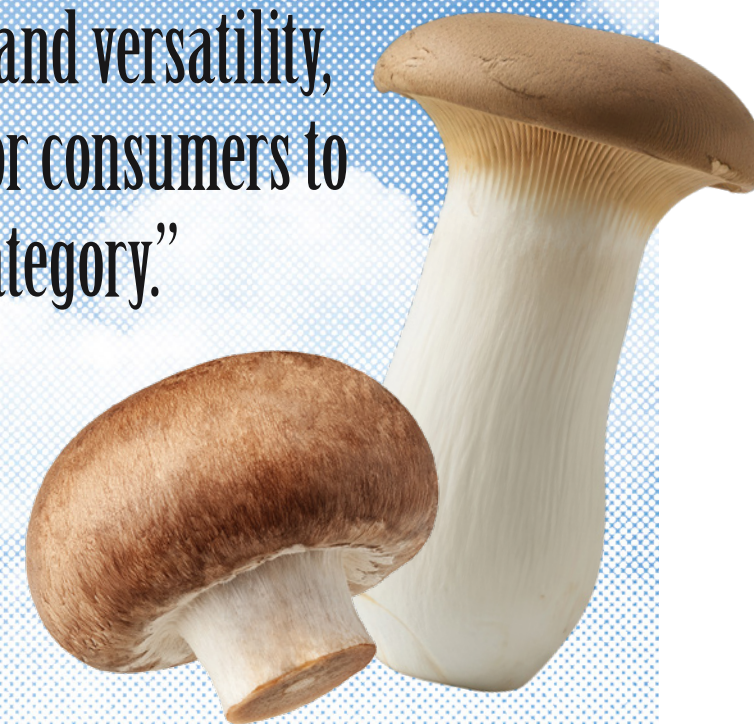


"This enhanced visibility creates stronger shelf appeal and reinforces quality, helping drive trial and differentiation to these products."

Bryan Shelton,
Vice President of Sales and Marketing,
Giorgio Fresh and Foods



"Giorgio's branding is focused on clarity, freshness, and versatility, making it easier for consumers to shop the category."



MDC: How might new branding plans align with or continue this trajectory and additional growth plans for Giorgio?

BS: Giorgio's branding is focused on clarity, freshness, and versatility, making it easier for consumers to shop the category. By simplifying messaging and highlighting usage occasions, Giorgio is better positioned to drive engagement, support innovation, and grow across both retail and foodservice.

MDC: Speaking of that larger-picture strategy, I'd love to know more about Giorgio's direction not just for itself but for the category as a whole.

BS: Giorgio continues to invest in innovation that expands the role of mushrooms in the kitchen from everyday convenience to premium, flavor-forward solutions for consumer kitchens. With strong growing capabilities, consistent quality, and a focus on consumer-driven trends, Giorgio is well positioned to support category growth and deliver value to retail partners.

Dispelling preconceived notions while broadening fresh horizons is my favorite underdog narrative, and one that has the mushroom category quickly rising as an earthy, grounded opportunity to carry the entire produce department forward. Small but strong, they are the perfect canvas for flavor variation while still offering a distinct enough personality to stand on their own.

An ingredient, a conversation piece, and a conduit through which the research and development capabilities of Giorgio Fresh and Foods can wield its creative prowess, mushroom might is the force needed to turn the modern food culture toward a veg-powered foundation.

With the broadened perspective of value-added offerings like Grill Packs, such a future may indeed be just a stone's throw away. 🍄

WTF DO I DO WITH LIV Produce Organic Sweet Potatoes ?

{ what the fork }



MISO HALIBUT WITH LIV PRODUCE ORGANIC SWEET POTATOES AND SPINACH

INGREDIENTS

SWEET POTATO PUREE

1 large LIV Produce Organic Sweet Potato
1 tsp vanilla extract
¼ tsp nutmeg
½ tsp cinnamon
1 tbsp butter
2 tbsp heavy whipping cream
 Salt, to taste

WILTED BABY SPINACH

1½ cups of fresh baby spinach leaves
2 tsp olive oil

HALIBUT

12 oz halibut (or other flaky white fish)
¼ cup sake
½ cup soy sauce
2 tbsp miso
2 tbsp brown sugar
2 tbsp olive oil (**1 tsp** for sauce, the rest for frying fish)
Juice from ½ a lemon
¾ cup water
 Roasted hazelnuts as garnish, optional

Prep Time: 20 mins

Cook Time: 20 mins

Servings: 2

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Peel LIV Produce Organic Sweet Potato and slice into 1" cubes.
- 2 Add cubes to medium saucepan and add enough water to cover cubes. Over high heat, bring to a boil. Reduce heat to simmer until tender to the fork.
- 3 Drain cubes and place in a mixing bowl. Add vanilla extract, nutmeg, cinnamon, and butter; use beater to whip into a purée. Slowly add heavy whipping cream to bring to a smooth texture. Set aside.
- 4 To cook the spinach, heat olive oil in a medium-sized non-stick pan until warm. Add baby spinach to pan and wilt until bright green and soft. Set aside off heat.
- 5 In a mixing bowl, whisk together sake, soy sauce, miso, brown sugar, olive oil, lemon juice, and water. Set aside.
- 6 In a small stainless steel or wrought iron pan, heat olive oil to medium heat. Carefully add fish to pan and sear each side until slightly brown. *Tip: Use two spatulas to flip fish and keep it together.*
- 7 Add prepared miso sauce to pan and continue to cook under medium heat until fish is cooked through and flaky. Remove from heat.
- 8 On a plate of choice, lay down a bed of half of the LIV Produce Organic Sweet Potato purée. Add a layer of the prepared wilted spinach leaves. Top with half of the fish.
- 9 Drizzle some of the sauce from the pan on the fish and garnish with chopped hazelnuts. Enjoy!



Learn about this product



To learn more about LIV Produce, visit livproduce.com



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WTF

DO I DO WITH

{ what the fork }

Queen Victoria
Brussels Bites®

?



MAPLE BACON BRUSSELS BITES®

INGREDIENTS

1 lb Queen Victoria Brussels Bites®
6 slices bacon, chopped
3 tbsp olive oil
¼ cup maple syrup
½ tsp salt
½ tsp pepper
½ cup pecans, finely chopped

Prep Time: 10 mins
Cook Time: 20 mins
Servings: 4–6

DIRECTIONS

- 1 In a small skillet, cook the chopped bacon until crisp. Set aside to drain.
- 2 Pour the Brussels Bites® into a bowl, and drizzle olive oil on top. Stir to mix the olive oil evenly. Once coated, drizzle maple syrup on top, and stir to mix thoroughly.
- 3 Place the Brussels Bites onto a cooking sheet lined with parchment paper, taking care to evenly spread them out. Top with bacon. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.
- 4 Cook in oven at 425° F for 13–15 minutes. Remove from oven, and sprinkle chopped pecans on top. Serve and enjoy!

To learn more about Ippolito International, visit www.qvproduce.com



IPPOLITO INTERNATIONAL



Learn about
this product



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WTF DO I DO WITH Bimi® Baby Broccoli ?

{ what the fork }



BANG BANG BIMi® BABY BROCCOLI

INGREDIENTS

2 lbs Bimi® Baby Broccoli, rinsed
2 tbsp neutral oil (like vegetable or canola)
 A pinch of salt

SZECHUAN “STRANGE FLAVOR” BANG BANG SAUCE

½ cup sesame paste
2 tsp salt
2 tbsp superfine sugar
½ cup light soy sauce
2 tbsp Chinkiang vinegar
1–2 tsp ground roasted Sichuan pepper or **1–2 tbsp** Sichuan pepper oil
1 cup chile oil
 plus **4–8 tbsp** sediment
8 tsp sesame oil

FOR SERVING (OPTIONAL)

Steamed jasmine rice, thinly sliced scallions, toasted sesame seeds

Prep Time: 15 mins
Cook Time: 10 mins
Servings: 4

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Prepare the Szechuan “Strange Flavor” Bang Bang Sauce: In a medium bowl, whisk together the sesame paste, salt, superfine sugar, light soy sauce, Chinkiang vinegar, and the ground roasted Sichuan pepper or Sichuan pepper oil.
- 2 Gradually whisk in the chile oil (including the sediment) and sesame oil until the sauce is smooth and emulsified. It should have a slightly thick, pourable consistency.
- 3 Taste the sauce and adjust the flavor as needed. Add more sugar for sweetness, vinegar for a sour tang, or chile oil for more heat and numbing sensation.
- 4 Trim the Bimi® Baby Broccoli if needed, to fit in the pan. Heat the oil in a large skillet or wok over medium-high heat. Add the baby broccoli and a pinch of salt. Stir-fry for 3–5 minutes until the stalks turn bright green and start to become tender-crisp.
- 5 To finish cooking, add ¼ cup of water or vegetable broth to the pan and cover it, letting the baby broccoli steam for 2–3 minutes until it reaches the desired tenderness.
- 6 Transfer the hot, cooked baby broccoli to a serving dish. Drizzle a generous amount of the prepared Szechuan Bang Bang sauce over the top. The broccoli can also be tossed directly in the sauce.
- 7 Serve immediately, on its own or over a bed of steamed rice. Garnish with thinly sliced scallions and toasted sesame seeds for extra flavor and texture. Enjoy!

To learn more about Bimi® Baby Broccoli, visit www.bimibaby.com



Recipe exclusively developed for Bimi® Baby Broccoli by Chef Thai Dang: James Beard-nominated chef, owner of HaiSous Vietnamese Kitchen, and partner in Crying Tiger, Chicago.

WTF DO I DO WITH Bee Sweet Citrus Navel Oranges ?

{ what the fork }



FRESH ORANGE ICE CREAM

INGREDIENTS

3–4 Bee Sweet Citrus Navel Oranges
1 cup orange juice
1 cup whole milk
1 (14 oz) can sweetened condensed milk
2 cups heavy cream
1 tsp orange oil or orange extract
1 tsp vanilla extract
 Pinch of salt

Prep Time: 35 mins
Chill Time: 3 hrs or overnight
Servings: 2–3

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Whisk together the orange juice, milk, and condensed milk.
- 2 Stir in the cream, both extracts, and a pinch of salt. Be sure the ice cream bowl that came with your ice cream maker has been in the freezer for 24 hours.
- 3 Pour mixture into the chilled bowl and churn for 20–25 minutes.
- 4 Transfer to a freezer-safe 9" x 5" loaf pan or any freezable container. Cover and freeze until solid, up to a few hours or overnight.
- 5 Scoop and enjoy!

To learn more about Bee Sweet Citrus, visit www.beesweetcitrus.com



► MENTORS IN THE MAKING ◀

VICTORIA LOPEZ

MARKETING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, FOX PACKAGING

BY PEGGY PACKER

Speak to anyone who has had the privilege of being Victoria Lopez’s mentor, and they will sing her the highest of praises. Lauded for her curiosity, determination, and collaborative nature, the Fox Packaging Manager has drawn on the best qualities of the vets who have guided her industry journey—and the result is a well-rounded leader with a wealth of expertise.

Like many, Victoria’s foray into produce was unexpected, sparked by a temporary role with Fox Packaging.

“At the time, I was working in the arts,” Victoria reflects. “After years of working with a group of business flippers across several industries, including staffing, distribution, and sales, I stepped away to focus on writing, completed a novel, and even went on a book tour.”

Not long after, Victoria’s business colleagues called on her again, requesting help with a short-term HR project.

“It took them about two weeks to convince me to take what was supposed

to be a three-day assignment,” Victoria laughs. “The project turned out to be with Aaron Fox at Fox Packaging, and it certainly did not last three days. I ended up working as a temp for about 100 days.”

Utilizing her creative and strategic background, Victoria eventually proposed creating a new marketing department, transforming what had originally been a temporary HR role into a new division of the company. Nearly nine years later, her role has evolved into Marketing and Business Development Manager.

“Fresh produce is an industry centered around something essential: food,” shares Victoria. “Supporting systems that help nutritious food reach communities is meaningful work. Packaging may seem technical from the



AARON FOX,
Vice President, Fox Packaging
and President, Fox Solutions

“When Victoria joined our company in 2017, it did not take long to see her potential, and it became abundantly clear that she thrives on challenges. This allowed her to be given more responsibility, and quickly she began assisting me with marketing management. Here, her creative, out-of-the-box thinking blossomed. Her passion, eagerness, and commitment to learning have carried her into her current role as Marketing and Business Development Manager.

Victoria’s enthusiasm for our business and industry is passion-filled and contagious. Her authentic and likable approach to relationship-building has enabled her to build a list of contacts spanning all levels of the industry, and her beyond-her-years professionalism has earned immense respect among her peers. She is an exceptional team player who hates to lose. This dedication and determination not only supports but raises the level of expectation for herself and everyone involved. I could not be prouder of Victoria and, as her mentor, am humbled to see her dedication and commitment to the produce industry honored and recognized.”



KEITH FOX,
President, Fox Packaging

“One thing that has always stood out about Victoria is how much she genuinely wants to do the right thing for the customer, for the team, and for the business. Over the years, I’ve seen her continue to develop her skills. She is straightforward in communicating what she can and cannot do, and she has learned when to push forward and when to hold the line, especially in moments where a promise cannot realistically be made. That ability to say no when needed—while still maintaining trust and helping explain the realities of flexible packaging within the supply chain—is not easy, and Victoria has developed that skill thoughtfully.

Victoria has a strong instinct for both people and business. She pairs what she knows with a good gut instinct, allowing her to make decisions that are not just right for the project but also for the team she is working with. She takes ownership, thinks things through, and shows up consistently. It has been rewarding to watch her grow into the professional she is today, and I am proud of the way she represents Fox.”

outside, but it sits at the intersection of branding, sustainability, agriculture, and supply chains. The connection between business, sustainability, and community makes the work feel important.”

Aaron Fox, Vice President of Fox Packaging and President of Fox Solutions, has been a vital mentor since Victoria’s first day with the company. From explaining regional sweet potato varieties to discussing how growing conditions affect crops, Aaron opened Victoria’s eyes to how fascinating the produce world truly is.

“Aaron gives direction by focusing on the result rather than dictating every step along the way. That approach allowed me the freedom to explore ideas, test strategies, and make mistakes,” Victoria says. “His advice was always simple: Communicate your thinking and work through decisions together. That trust created an environment where I could learn quickly and develop confidence in my role.”

President Keith Fox’s leadership has also influenced Victoria’s work, offering practical advice and instilling her with the confidence to move forward with new ideas.



KATHLEEN TRIOU,
President and Chief
Executive Officer, Fresh
Solutions Network

“Victoria Lopez was a terrific partner as we explored more sustainable packaging options for fresh potatoes. Our goal was to reduce plastic use, increase recycled content, and identify solutions that would work both for fresh potatoes and products designed for microwave cooking. Victoria approached the project with curiosity and determination. She worked hard to research available materials, gather technical information, and help us evaluate options that balanced sustainability, performance, and consumer convenience. Her willingness to learn and dig deeper made the process much more productive.

Just as important, Victoria brings a thoughtful, customer-focused approach to her work. She listens, asks smart questions, and is genuinely committed to helping her partners succeed. That combination of professionalism, curiosity, and collaboration makes her a pleasure to work with and a strong ambassador for Fox Packaging. She represents the kind of partner you want on complex projects where innovation and persistence really matter.”

“When I first pitched the idea of creating an internal marketing department, Keith’s response was simple. He said, ‘Alright Vic, go get ‘em.’ Keith believed marketing could help tell the story of who Fox Packaging is—not just the products we make, but the people behind the company and the work we are doing to support the fresh produce industry,” Victoria remembers. “Whenever I bring something new to the table, his approach has consistently been supportive and steady.”

Another key pillar in Victoria’s career journey is Kathleen Triou, President and Chief Executive Officer of Fresh Solutions Network, whom she met at an industry brunch early in her career.

“Whenever sustainability topics or packaging questions came up, Kathleen would reach out and ask for my perspective. She treated me as a resource and encouraged me to participate in industry conversations,” shares Victoria. “Those small acknowledgments meant a great deal and reinforced that the work was being seen.”

Onion 52’s Tiffany Cruickshank has also been an important mentor, developing a candid and open working relationship with Victoria through trade shows and collaborating on retail stock programs.

“Our conversations often revolve around the realities both packers and packaging suppliers face. That honest dialogue is refreshing and reminds me that the best work happens when people speak openly and solve problems together,” Victoria explains.

Several other leaders have supported Victoria’s journey, including Mr. and Mrs. Fox and the many retail partners and growers she has worked with throughout her career.

“One of the most important lessons I have learned is that strong collaboration comes from bringing different perspectives to the table,” Victoria says. “When people with different experiences work together, the result is a better product, better service, and a better experience for the growers, retailers, and communities we serve. I often remind myself that I work in flexible packaging, and that means I must remain flexible as well. The produce industry is always changing, and the best thing we can do is stay curious, keep asking questions, and continue the conversation.”

And that, my friends, is exactly why Victoria Lopez is the perfect mentor for the produce industry’s next generation.



TIFFANY CRUICKSHANK,
Sales Representative,
Onions 52

“Victoria is someone I have truly enjoyed working with over the years. In her role at Fox Packaging, she brings a strong balance of creativity and execution, which is not always easy to find. She does a great job of keeping projects moving forward and making sure details do not get lost along the way.

What stands out most is her ability to collaborate. She is thoughtful in her approach to conversations, open to feedback, and focused on finding solutions that work for everyone involved. That mindset makes her a valuable partner and someone people want to continue working with. She is building a strong foundation in both marketing and business development, and it is clear she takes pride in her work and the relationships she builds. I am excited to see how she continues to grow in the industry.”

WTF DO I DO WITH

California Giant Berries ?

{ what the fork }



BERRY, CORN, AND CUCUMBER SALAD

INGREDIENTS

SALAD

1 lb California Giant Strawberries, hulled and sliced
1 pint California Giant Blueberries
1 (6 oz) container California Giant Blackberries
2 Persian cucumbers, sliced
1 cup cooked yellow corn
6 oz feta cheese, crumbled

LEMON DRESSING

Zest of 1 lemon
3 tbsp lemon juice, freshly squeezed
2 tsp extra virgin olive oil
1 tsp honey
½ tsp minced garlic
1 tbsp fresh parsley, minced
Salt and pepper, to taste

GARNISH

Feta
4 fresh mint leaves, thinly sliced

Prep Time: 10 mins

Servings: 6–8

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Add all berries, sliced cucumbers, corn, and about half of feta to a medium-large bowl.
- 2 Make dressing: Add lemon zest, lemon juice, oil, honey, and garlic to a small blender and process until smooth. Stir in parsley and salt and pepper. Test dressing before adding more salt and pepper, to taste.

- 3 Pour dressing evenly over salad and gently toss to combine. Top with more crumbled feta and thinly sliced mint before serving.

Tip: The mint adds a hint of fresh and cooling flavor to this salad. If you don't care for mint, feel free to omit it.



To learn more about California Giant, visit www.calgiant.com

WTF DO I DO WITH

North Bay Blueberries ?

{ what the fork }



BAKERY STYLE BLUEBERRY SCONES

INGREDIENTS

1 pint North Bay Blueberries
4 cups AP flour (plus **¼ cup** for berries)
¼ cup caster sugar (or granulated)
2 tbsp baking powder
4 tsp milk powder
2 tsp salt
Zest of 1 lemon
3 sticks butter, cut into small pieces and frozen
4 eggs plus 1 egg yolk
1 cup cold heavy cream
Decorator sugar (or sugar in the raw) for finishing, optional

GLAZE

1 cup confectioners sugar
Juice of 1 lemon

Prep Time: 30 mins

Cook Time: 25 mins

Servings: 8–12 scones

DIRECTIONS

- 1 In a small bowl, combine sugar and lemon zest, then mix to infuse the sugar with the lemon zest oil. Place flour, infused sugar, baking powder, milk powder, and salt into a bowl of a stand mixer with a paddle attachment.
- 2 Start mixer to combine dry ingredients and start adding cold butter pieces, and mix on low until butter is small pea-sized and covered in flour.
- 3 In a small bowl, add cold eggs and cream and whisk to combine. Pour into the flour/butter mixture and mix until just combined.
- 4 Toss blueberries in **¼ cup** flour and add to dough, mixing just until combined. Do not overmix. Dough will be sticky.
- 5 Carefully scrape dough onto a floured surface and make two round mounds with the center slightly higher than the edges. Cut each round into 4–6 pieces, depending on how big you want your scones. Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet, a couple of inches apart, and freeze for at least **½ hour**.
- 6 Brush tops of frozen scones with egg wash and sprinkle with decorator sugar.
- 7 Bake both trays in a 380° F oven for 15 minutes, lower the heat to 350° F, and rotate trays. Bake an additional 10 minutes.
- 8 While baking, make a glaze by combining confectioners' sugar and lemon juice until a smooth glaze. Add water one tsp at a time if it is too dry and stir to make a smooth drizzle.
- 9 When scones are cooled, drizzle with glaze and let set up. Serve the same day for best results or bake scones individually from frozen. Enjoy!

To learn more about North Bay Produce, visit www.northbayproduce.com



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Christine Jackson

Director of Sales and Marketing,
WP Rawl

Time at WP Rawl: 22 years

With Anne Allen

With an obvious love for the produce industry, Christine Jackson brings to her role a verve for driving the business forward. After learning the industry from the ground up, she's transitioned into a role that suits her adaptability and drive. Learn more about this motivated Director as we discover what makes her an MVP...

»What is a metaphor for your day-to-day work life?

"My day-to-day work life is like being in a huddle: surrounded by the sales and marketing teams, talking through challenges, aligning our priorities, and problem-solving in real time. We're constantly adjusting the game plan to balance internal goals with customer needs, and every small win matters because it moves the business forward."

» Did you come to your role by accident or design? How so?

"I'd say it was by design, shaped over time. I've been with WP Rawl for 22 years, going on 23, and during that time I've held multiple roles that helped me grow both personally and professionally. After years of leading our marketing efforts and working closely alongside the sales team, the transition felt like a natural progression."

» Surprise us! What's a talent, interest, or skillset that people might not know you have?

"My siblings call me a super mom, though most days I feel more like the ringmaster of a very sweet and slightly chaotic circus. I coordinate life for my family, aging parents, plus a demanding full-time career. In the middle of all that, I carve out time for the gym—because taking care of everyone else works best when I'm also taking care of myself."

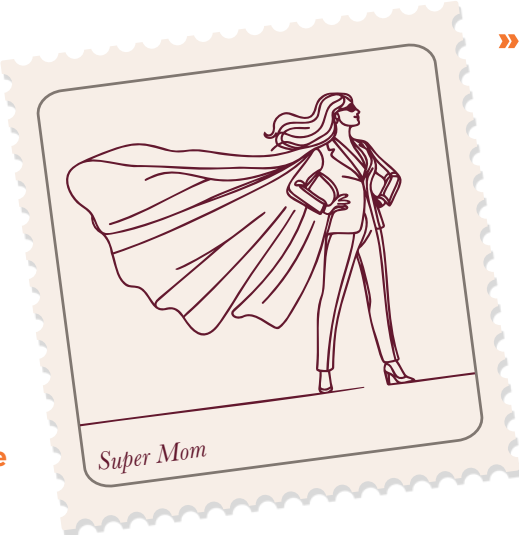
» What is the best advice you've received about your career?

"I was told I could choose any profession, but to stay in the produce industry because people will always

need food on their tables. That advice got me here, but the relationships built along the way are priceless and often become the most rewarding part of the journey."

» Is there a lesson in sales that has helped you in life?

"Sales taught me that relationships matter more than transactions. When you lead with honesty, empathy, and consistency, things tend to fall into place—both at work and in life."



» Fill in the blank: "The next generation of produce professionals should ____"

"Be intentional. Learn the business, build real relationships, and remember that trust is your greatest sales tool. Don't chase every opportunity—focus on the ones that align with your values and where you can truly add value."

» Who are the important mentors who had an influence on your life?

My dad: "He taught me the importance of responsibility and dedication: being on time, doing what you say you're going to do, and always following through."

Marshall Sherman, Vice President, Maglio Companies: "He took a chance on me 22 years ago and hired someone who had no idea what collard greens even were! He believed in me, shaped me, and guided me along the way. Even today, he remains a trusted mentor, and I'm grateful for the lasting impact he's had on my growth."



Powered by People

By Peggu Packer

The heart: The powerhouse. The body's most vital organ. The silent rhythm behind each waking moment—every step, every strategy. For Sambahilo Packaging, the team members who have built and continue to uphold its 103-year history are the true heartbeat of the business. With over a century and counting of success in the produce packaging space, the company attributes every incredible milestone and achievement to the many individuals who have worked together to make them possible.

This people-first mindset shows up across every aspect of Sambahilo's operations, and is one of the key ways the packaging provider continues to stand out as an industry leader.



“At the end of the day, it all comes down to our team,” Kiersten Sambrailo Clontz, Chief Business Officer, shares, emphasizing how every single member plays a critical role in achieving Sambrailo’s overall mission. “We make every decision with a focus on doing the right thing for our team. This is how our service and legacy are upheld—through our people.”

The support and expertise of its crew are at the core of Sambrailo’s growth as a company, enabling it to keep pace with evolving packaging demands and innovations in fresh produce for more than a century.

Dedicated to creating the best solutions for its customers’ needs, Sambrailo has developed a comprehensive suite of fully customizable agricultural packaging services. This includes tray make-up, real-time inventory, product development, quality assurance, marketing services, and food safety solutions.

The packaging maven’s customer service and operations team members have a combined 100 years of experience with Sambrailo, witnessing decades of product and service developments that have helped it continuously meet the changing needs of its partners.

“As the industry has evolved, so have we,” says Kiersten, while I try to envision what the Sambrailo of today might have looked like upon its founding in 1923. “That is because of the dedicated and innovative people we have on our team to provide support through all of the changes—from customer service to forklift drivers, warehouse managers, and machine operators. Our procurement team can predict needs before they are asked and is dedicated to ensuring our customers’ deliveries are made on time.”

Over four generations, Sambrailo’s leadership has established a strong foundation, recognized for its packaging innovations, services, and products. With extensive capabilities and several decades of experience, the company enables its partners to focus solely on their most essential task: bringing fresh produce to people.

In doing so, the company continues to build and expand its business by creating new products and services that are proficiently designed to help its customers improve their packaging methods and operations. While spearheading packaging advancements in the berry, tomato, and mushroom categories and enhancing its partners’ operational efficiency, Sambrailo has not only created a strong platform for industry growth but also established a level of credibility that is well-respected within its network.

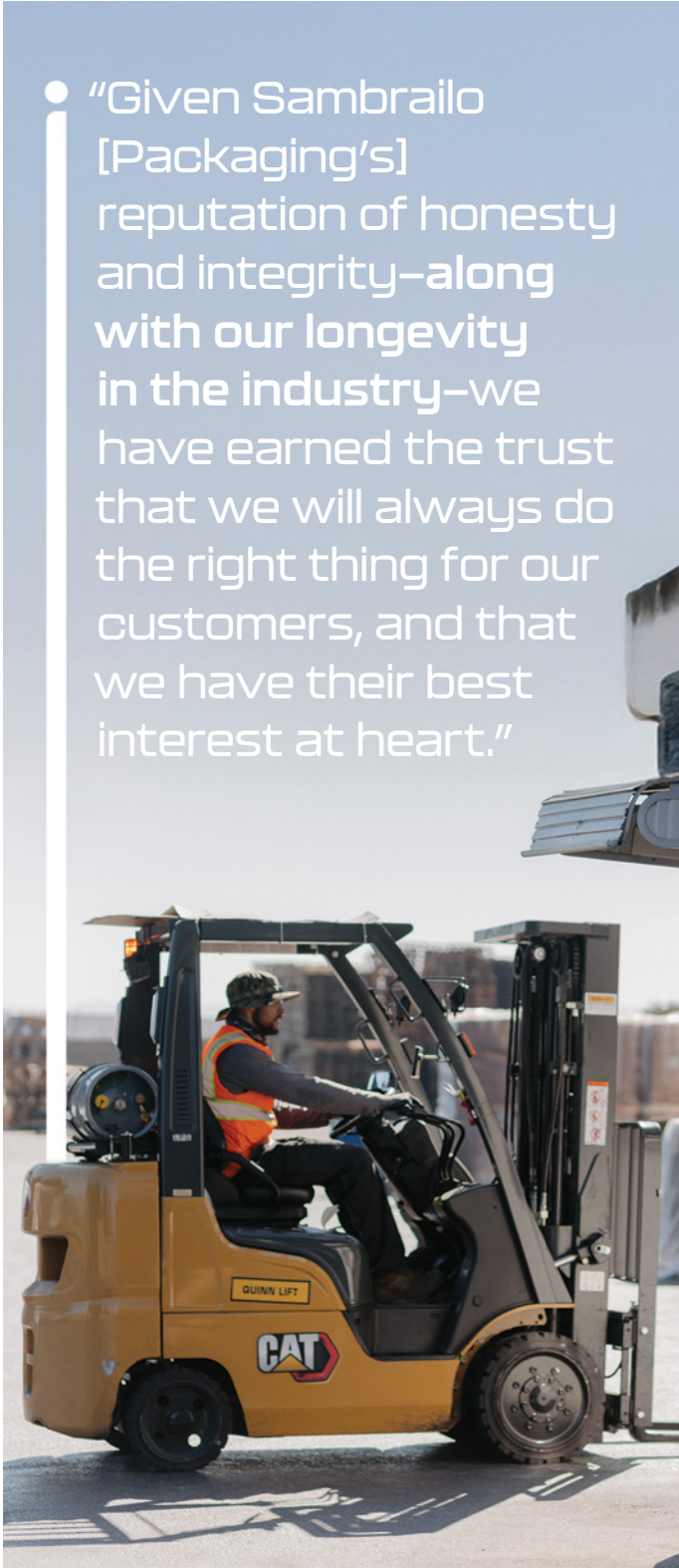
“Given Sambrailo’s reputation of honesty and integrity—along with our longevity in the industry—we have earned the trust that we will always do the right thing for our customers, and that we have their best interest at heart,” Kiersten adds, highlighting



how Sambrailo’s historic legacy and long-term partnerships are key strengths for the company. “We are proud to be a part of an incredible community of grower-shippers and retailers that have partnered with us for over 100 years.”

As Kiersten explains, this prestigious reputation was not forged overnight. Over its 103-year history, Sambrailo has eclipsed various milestones that have set the stage not just for the company’s growth but also for broader industry advancement.

Kiersten’s great-grandfather Charles Sambrailo began servicing apple growers in Watsonville,



“Given Sambrailo [Packaging’s] reputation of honesty and integrity—along with our longevity in the industry—we have earned the trust that we will always do the right thing for our customers, and that we have their best interest at heart.”



California’s Pajaro Valley, in 1923. The packaging ace’s products and services advanced gradually alongside the industry, guided by the leadership of each generation of the Sambrailo family. The progression of Sambrailo’s packaging portfolio reflects the produce industry’s steady evolution. From nailing together wooden apple crates to introducing its first strawberry clamshell in 1987 and later pioneering ReadyCycle®, a leading sustainable packaging solution, the Sambrailo team has built a cherished legacy in the produce industry.

In 2026, Sambrailo stands as a recognized provider, delivering an advanced suite of packaging services fully customizable for each partner and their operations. The company has strategically expanded its capabilities to handle everything from product development, marketing, and design to inventory management, forecasting, quality assurance, traceability, and reporting.

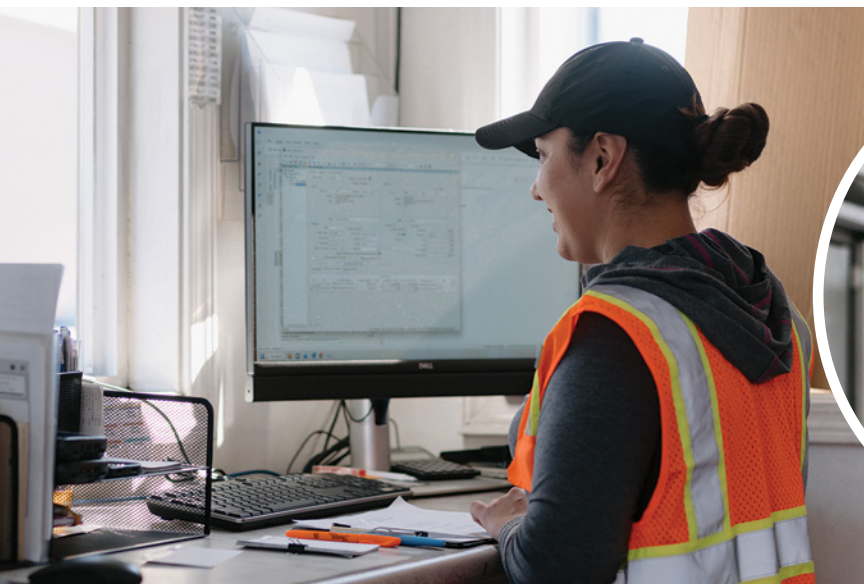
“As we have expanded our products and offerings over the decades, we have put an emphasis on the service aspect, providing more than just physical product,” Kiersten explains. “This includes quality assurance,



“We make every decision with a focus on doing the right thing for our team. This is how our service and legacy are upheld—through our people.”

- Kiersten Sambrailo Clontz,
Chief Business Officer,
Sambrailo Packaging





inventory management, and procurement forecasting to help our partners ensure adequate supply.”


Through 103 years of industry innovation, challenges, and growth, Sambrailo has stayed true to its guiding principle of “doing what is best for the produce.” This ethos is reflected across the company’s entire packaging and service portfolio. All of Sambrailo’s solutions are uniquely customizable, allowing suppliers to strategically adapt their packaging operations for retail, farmers’ markets, produce stands, grocery delivery services, and beyond.

With a highly skilled team overseeing each step and a commitment to service, quality, and innovation, the supplier simplifies its partners’ packaging needs and allows produce to hold its position as the leading priority.

As it continues to build on its already prominent industry presence, Sambrailo is expanding its reach into other key categories, sparking similar category advancements to those we have already seen across the berry, tomato, and mushroom sectors.

“We will be using our expertise in the berry industry to expand into other areas of the industry and new regions, offering this skillset to other commodities and companies,” Kiersten shares. “We want to support our partners in more categories with our Quality Lab and forecasting and procurement capabilities, while consistently providing unwavering customer service.”

In our daily lives, we don’t bear witness to the heart’s incredibly vital work, even as it carries us through each second of every day—but that constant, unceasing diligence is the single nucleus for something as remarkable as human life.

In a similar way, the many talented minds behind Sambrailo Packaging are the company’s true spirit. Through it all, they serve as the operation’s core, keeping a finger on the industry’s pulse while skillfully pushing it forward through over 100 years of innovation and expertise. 

“As we have expanded our products and offerings over the decades, we have put an emphasis on the service aspect, providing more than just physical product. This includes quality assurance, inventory management, and procurement forecasting to help our partners ensure adequate supply.”



Let me Reintroduce myself

Bimi® Baby Broccoli is my official name, but my friends call me Classic, Iconic, and Unbeatable. I am the original baby broccoli, and I’m here to stay.

Grown from the premium seed that started it all, I’m slender, tender, and totally stemsational. With year-round supply and consistent quality from leading grower-shippers to retail and foodservice partners, I keep things simple with effortless prep, zero fuss, and no waste.

YES, I'M DELICIOUS. YES, THERE'S MORE.

Ready to spice things up? Flip to Page 44 for my flavor packed *What The Fork* recipe, developed by James Beard Nominated Chef and Owner of HaiSous Vietnamese Kitchen, Chef Thai Dang. One bite and you’ll be a believer!

YOU THOUGHT THAT WAS ALL? NOT A CHANCE.
You’ll see me pop up everywhere, donning my best Bimi® green. Next up—look for me at the Organic Produce Summit in Monterey. I’ll show you why Bimi® is broccoli, but better.

Bimi®
Baby Broccoli



LEARN MORE

SAKATA®





The Architecture of FRESH

By Jordan Okumura-Wright

The pace of innovation, automation, production, and expansion is, for some, the foundation itself—the material measure of progress, intention, discovery. For others, each stone laid, each dollar invested, each early morning and late night exists in service of something larger than the momentum. These people are builders. They raise walls not to prove they can, but to shelter what lives inside them.

Taylor Farms is this kind of builder. An architect of both structure and purpose.

The beauty of this way of doing business is that it isn't complicated. The facility schematics, the product research, the operational machinery and technology—those are complex by necessity. But the guiding principle is not.

Build well, build for others, and build to last.

Mark Campion and T. Bruce Taylor have cultivated teams around this vision, constructing an infrastructure of like-minded individuals with unique perspectives, pipelines of proficiency and sophistication, and a blueprint that takes into account the success of their partners as well as Taylor Farms' own tenure and legacy.

"We win when our customer partners win," Bruce tells me as the conversation gets underway. Simple but strong.

What this looks like for a multinational company with global reach and resources, and an intimate, deeply connected, family-first philosophy, is scalable growth. Growth that benefits all parties through health, wellness, flavor, and creativity.

As the company moves through its 31st year in business, Taylor Farms is completing construction of a new facility outside of Baltimore, Maryland. Combined with the acquisition of Equinox Greenhouse—bringing controlled-environment agriculture into Taylor's network—the company is changing what its retail and foodservice partners can expect in terms of freshness, reliability, and service.

Equinox expands Taylor's capabilities with a state-of-the-art greenhouse in Louisa, Virginia,

the largest commercial leafy greens greenhouse in the Mid-Atlantic. Featuring cutting-edge technology that grows a wide variety of high-quality leafy greens, the controlled-environment agriculture facility will be managed by the team of Equinox growers while fully integrating into Taylor Farms' product portfolio and cold-chain logistics network.

"For the first time in our history, we have the capability to manufacture all of our different product lines under one roof and consolidate with greenhouse products to deliver the freshest product possible, with fewer food miles. And in a time when supply chain pressures are at their highest," **Mark, President of Taylor Farms Retail**, shares. "This solution drives logistics efficiencies, which keeps costs down for our retail partners and makes them more competitive in the marketplace."



Bruce, the company's **Senior Vice President of Marketing and Product**, continues with that same conviction, anchoring the opportunity with precision.



"We're excited to bring enhanced freshness across our entire portfolio: salad kits, salad blends, organic salads, snacks, and vegetables. When we deliver a fresher, better quality salad to consumers, we see faster velocities and lower shrink, which drives category growth for our retail partners and creates a better experience for consumers. The combination of our new Maryland facility and the Equinox Greenhouse acquisition allows us to further diversify our raw product supply—both geographically and by growing method—all while delivering tremendous value for retailers and consumers throughout the eastern seaboard. A lot of the excitement around greenhouse-grown products in the Northeast has been driven by freshness. Now we can deliver unmatched freshness, not just through our greenhouse greens portfolio, but across everything we do," he expresses.

This ambition connects directly to Taylor Farms’ broader expansion of its regional growing operations—one that gives the company geographic diversity in a much more significant way.

“Our Maryland facility gives us more processing capacity in the East and we’re actively expanding our growing capacity through open field, hoophouses, and greenhouses. Additional growing regions and methods means improved freshness and stronger surety of supply through diversification,” Bruce adds.

The Equinox acquisition marked Taylor Farms’ biggest venture into greenhouse grown to date.

“We see greenhouse growing as a natural addition to the Taylor Farms toolkit and one that makes us better at what we’ve always done: getting the freshest, highest quality product to consumers,” says



Sydney Ramskill,
Vice President
of Controlled
Environment
Agriculture.
“Equinox Growers has exceeded expectations since day one, and bringing our Maryland facility online alongside it gives us the scale and flexibility to continue innovating and serving our customers at the highest level on the East Coast.”

Improvement, as a cornerstone of Taylor Farms, has always gone hand in hand with evolution. As the company grows its portfolio and product capabilities, it moves in tandem with the times—matching flavor, consumer buying behaviors, and an insatiable appetite for discovering what’s next.

It still comes back to this: Build well, build for others, and build to last.

This is where the innovation pipeline becomes a fine-tuned tool for progressive product mixes that not only fill consumers’ homes with the best in flavor and ingredients, but also create demand and opportunities for capturing consumer loyalty. Especially when it hinges on a single moment, a single choice.



Call it structural integrity: Each brick laid, each product launch is in service of a higher calling—a legacy.

The protein platform is the latest expression of that.

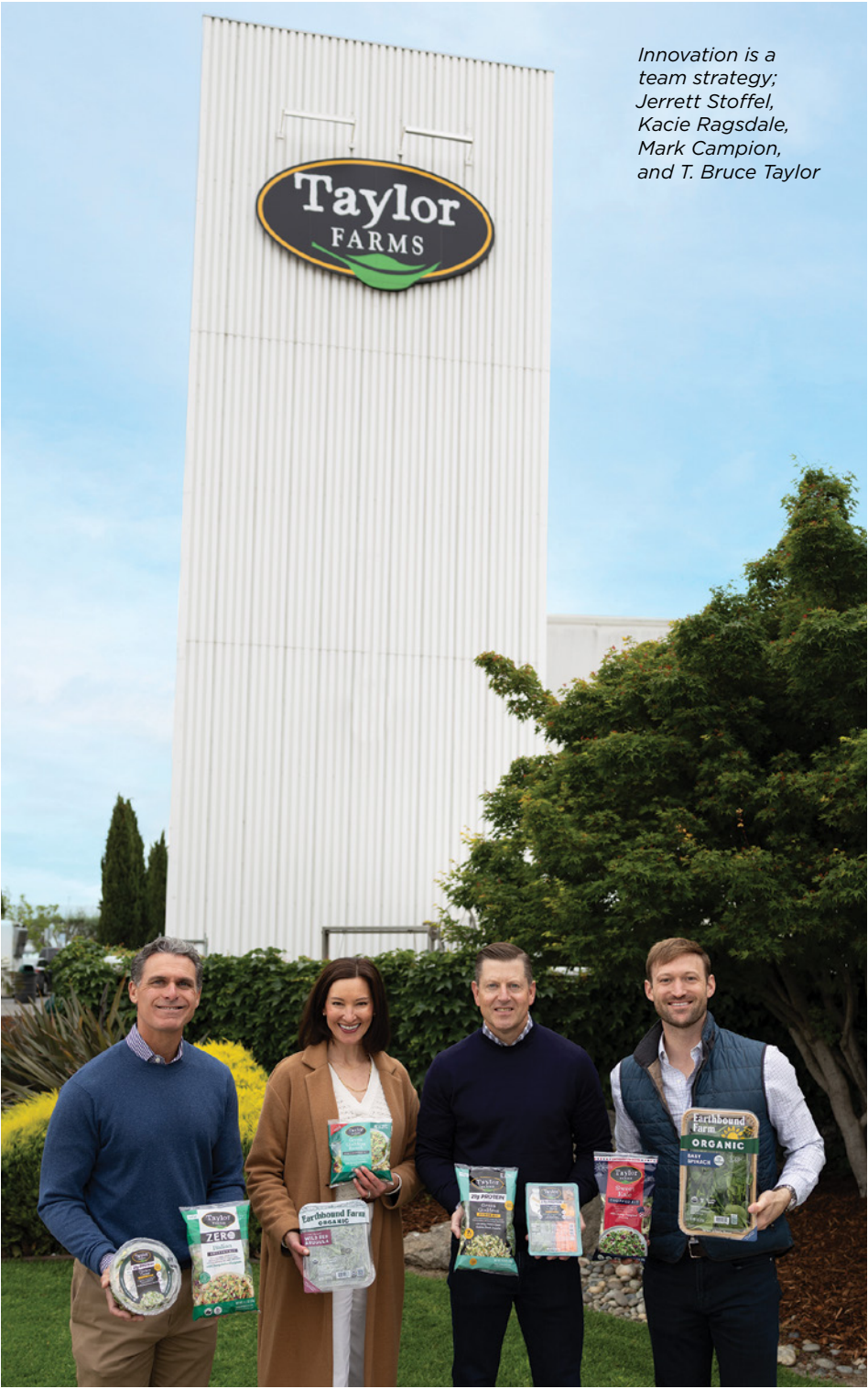
This year, Taylor Farms has created a stir with the introduction of a new platform strategically geared toward high-protein lifestyles, combining the power of fresh vegetables with protein-packed dressings, dips, and toppings to tap into the food scene’s latest, most prominent trend. The trend is impossible to ignore: protein.

The new Taylor Farms protein-forward platform includes 11 products now available nationwide:

Protein Chopped Salad Kits—
Available in Caesar, Southwest, Green Goddess, Caesar Mini, and Southwest Mini varieties

Protein Salad Bowls with Chicken—*Available in Caesar, Southwest, and Green Goddess Pasta varieties*

Protein Power Snacks—*Available in Caesar, Southwest, and Green Goddess Pasta varieties*



Innovation is a team strategy; Jerrett Stoffel, Kacie Ragsdale, Mark Campion, and T. Bruce Taylor

With its own dressing facility located in Ontario, California, Taylor Farms has internally developed the dips and dressings anchoring its protein line—driving innovation from product conception through to recipe development.

The team didn’t stop at just the dressing or the dip, but took the vision one step further by strategically sourcing multiple components to increase the amount of protein in these products. Consider Taylor Farms’ custom crouton crumble infused with whey protein, as well as Power Trail Mix, tortilla chips with chickpea protein,

and vegetables that are naturally a source of protein, to name a few.

“One thing we’re seeing at a macro level is that consumers are eating fewer calories, but they expect bigger benefits from those calories,” Bruce reveals. “There’s real demand for functional benefits in food right now. Consumers want fresh, great-tasting produce, but they’re also actively seeking more protein and fiber while keeping a close eye on added sugar. The onus is on food producers to provide more benefits in a smaller package. That’s what makes our protein line so exciting: It

“For the first time in our history, we have the capability to manufacture all of our different product lines under one roof and consolidate with greenhouse products to deliver the freshest product possible, with fewer food miles.”

Mark Campion, President, Taylor Farms Retail

directly addresses the consumer desire for more protein while simultaneously bringing meaningful differentiation to the salad kit set. Now, in addition to different size formats, different prices, different organic attributes, and different flavor profiles, shoppers have more functional benefits to consider too. More options, more choice, and more reasons to reach for a salad.”

Mark turns to a trend in the health and wellness space that is quickly shifting into a movement. Whether or not it is here to stay, it is reshaping the way consumers eat, what they reach for, and how their diets are evolving.

“With the advent of GLP-1 drugs and generics and ingestibles coming online, that demand is only going to increase. Those users need more functionality from their foods—higher protein and fiber content. These new protein salad kits are a way for us to address what we see as probably one of the largest macro trends in food that we’ve seen in 50 years,” Mark reveals.

Over the last decade, the salad kit set has been a primary driver of growth for retailers across the country. With today’s innovation and shifts in buying and eating behaviors, challenges become thresholds for opportunity, for growth, and for fresh ideas.

As builders in truth—from facilities to product innovation—Taylor Farms’



identity is genuinely a mindset. One that shapes how the team grows not just as a company, but alongside the customers it serves.

“We’re always trying to provide the products and services our customers need to grow their business. And when they grow their business, we get to grow along with them,” Mark shares. “I think our investment in the Northeast, between the new plant in Maryland and the acquisition of Equinox, allows us to bring new products and new innovations to them faster than we have in the past. The total investment we’re making in the region is representative of our desire to further penetrate the Northeast, align with our retailer partners in a more strategic way, and delight our loyal consumers.”

That desire to penetrate the Northeast isn’t abstract—it is engineered, product by product, capability by capability, at a one-stop shop.

commodities into the Northeast, and for the first time, Northeastern customers will be able to order field-grown commodities today for delivery tomorrow,” Mark explains.

But capability, for Taylor Farms, has never been the point—it has always been the means.

“If we’re able to deliver more nutrient-dense, better-tasting, better-quality, fresh produce to consumers and help them live a little bit healthier, that’s something that motivates us every single day,” Bruce tells me. “We’re a family-held company. We take a very long-term horizon in how we make these decisions, and we’re excited to be builders for the long term in a way that’s good for our communities and our consumers.”

And building, for Mark, means something concrete—a market long overdue.

“A lot of the excitement around greenhouse-grown products in the Northeast has been driven by freshness. Now we can deliver unmatched freshness, not just through our greenhouse greens portfolio, but across everything we do.”

T. Bruce Taylor, Senior Vice President of Marketing and Product, Taylor Farms Retail

“We have the broadest portfolio ever offered in fresh produce, and now we’re adding more capabilities and more categories under one roof than we ever have before, with premium freshness and quality across the board. What makes this facility unique is that we have every capability and technology we do on the West Coast, plus greenhouse-grown product moving through the same operation. That’s a first for us, and frankly, we think our retail partners are going to find that just as exciting as we do. We’re also bringing AI-driven forecasting tools to move field-grown

“Our market share has always underindexed in the Northeast, not due to lack of demand, but because we hadn’t yet built the proper capacity to fully serve it. This facility changes that. For the first time, we have the infrastructure and capacity to bring our entire product portfolio to that market at the level our customers deserve. I can’t wait to see what our fantastic team is able to build,” Mark adds.

At Taylor Farms, the blueprint never changes—only what gets built next. 🍅



California LEAFY GREENS Snack Chat

By Melissa De Leon Chavez

One are the days when lettuces and leafy greens were simply a vehicle for something else. Industry focus beyond yield into quality have contributed to a rising consumer understanding that this category also has a flavor profile to offer—an epiphany that has made for a burgeoning market that stands to gain a similar trajectory to the breads it has become a substitute for. With a bright horizon ahead, see what experts for the Golden State’s leafy greens had to say...



Micah Shen,
Vice President of Sales, Taylor Farms

“Packaged salads remain a growth engine within the produce department, and salad kits and healthy blends continue to lead the way. Consumers are looking for innovations in flavor, leaf variety, and packaging to keep up with their active lifestyles. Taylor Farms is working very closely with our growers and seed developers to continue exploring unique varieties, building on our new EBF beet greens to excite our customers. New cut sizes is one more way we are making eating healthy convenient, with our EBF chopped organic baby spinach. These new components are available not only as organic blends but as bases in our chopped salads.

While inflationary pressures and broader economic uncertainty continue to impact consumer spending habits, we remain optimistic about the long-term outlook for the category. Consumers continue to prioritize freshness, convenience, and healthier eating, and we believe ongoing innovation in products, flavors, and packaging will continue to drive engagement and sustainable category growth.”

Nichole Towell,
Senior Director of Marketing and Innovation,
Duda Farm Fresh Foods

“With most consumers already viewing leafy greens as essential to healthy living, the next phase of growth is inspiration and accessibility. It’s not just about stocking the shelf, it’s about telling a story about health, flavor, and convenience. When we meet shoppers with clear, simple ideas for how to use leafy greens across meals and snacking, we unlock new occasions and elevate the entire category.”





Tracy Carranza,

Vice President of Retail Sales, Church Brothers Farms

"Today's shopper doesn't separate how they think about their produce from how they think about their wellness routine, and that's exactly what inspired our new organic leafy greens line. We made a deliberate decision to move away from the traditional clamshell and into a bag format that feels more intentional on shelf. It's cleaner, more modern, and more aligned with the way consumers already shop in the supplement aisle. We also right-sized our portions, because we know food waste is a concern for people. If you're not going to use it all, you're less likely to buy it and smaller servings give shoppers the confidence to commit. We also made the functional benefits front and center on every bag with call outs like immunity support, energy, and bone health so that when someone reaches for our organic spinach or power greens, they know exactly what they're getting. It's wellness the way nature intended."

John Georgalos,

Commodity Account Manager, Ocean Mist® Farms

"The overall quality of our leaf lettuces is good. During the first two to three weeks of the Salinas Valley season, we experienced an excess of lettuce volume which has now begun to normalize. Known as the 'Salad Bowl of the World,' the Salinas Valley is home to an abundance of crops that make it a prime growing region for fresh salad ingredients. As warmer weather approaches, volumes are expected to increase and remain steady heading into the summer salad season. Best practices for merchandising fresh leafy greens include several key elements, including misting and hydration, eye-catching displays, product rotation, and cross-merchandising."



Bob Polovneff,

Director of Sales and Commodity Management, Ippolito International

"Leafy greens are the heart of summer produce! Without our salads and sandwiches to cool us off during the hot summer months, where would we be? Here at Ippolito our team works hard to keep customers well-supplied in leafy greens, with an unrelenting focus on quality in every pack. One of the things we like most about our leafy greens program is how diversified it has become. Romaine lettuce is perfect on salads, sandwiches, burgers, and grilled—it's everyone's favorite, but recently mini Romaine has become popular; its size is appealing. The petite head scales things down quite conveniently for the smaller household. Our convenient Queen Victoria mini Romaine 2 ct pack includes a recipe for Romaine lettuce taco boats! Red leaf lettuce has some serious fans: its color adds vibrance along with tender texture to any application, while its counterpart, green leaf, has become a burger and sandwich topping of choice due to its substantive, firm leaf. And we can't forget about Butter lettuce, which seems to have a resurgence in both retail and on restaurant menus. No surprise there, it takes the win for the softest leaf texture and sweetest flavor, making it a top choice for lettuce wraps. Aside from our field packs, our value-added product line offers many choices using these leafy greens in both conventional and organic salads. No doubt about it, leafy lettuces are at the center of summer plates!"



Nicole Minnich-Zapata,

Sales and Marketing Director, Misionero

"We suggest retailers merchandise their wall by use occasion, not just by SKU. Romaine anchors the set, hearts and mini Romaine for the salad-and-wrap shopper, chopped and whole-head for the meal builder, while green leaf and red leaf earn their facings as the go-to for sandwiches and taco-night shoppers. Specialty varieties like Lettuce Wraps and Deli Leaf give the set a discovery moment. Year-round California-Arizona supply keeps variety in stock, and a clear organic-beside-conventional layout captures the premium shopper without fragmenting the category. The greens wall sells the hardest when each variety has a job."

Deena Ensworth,

Senior Content Manager, Markon Cooperative

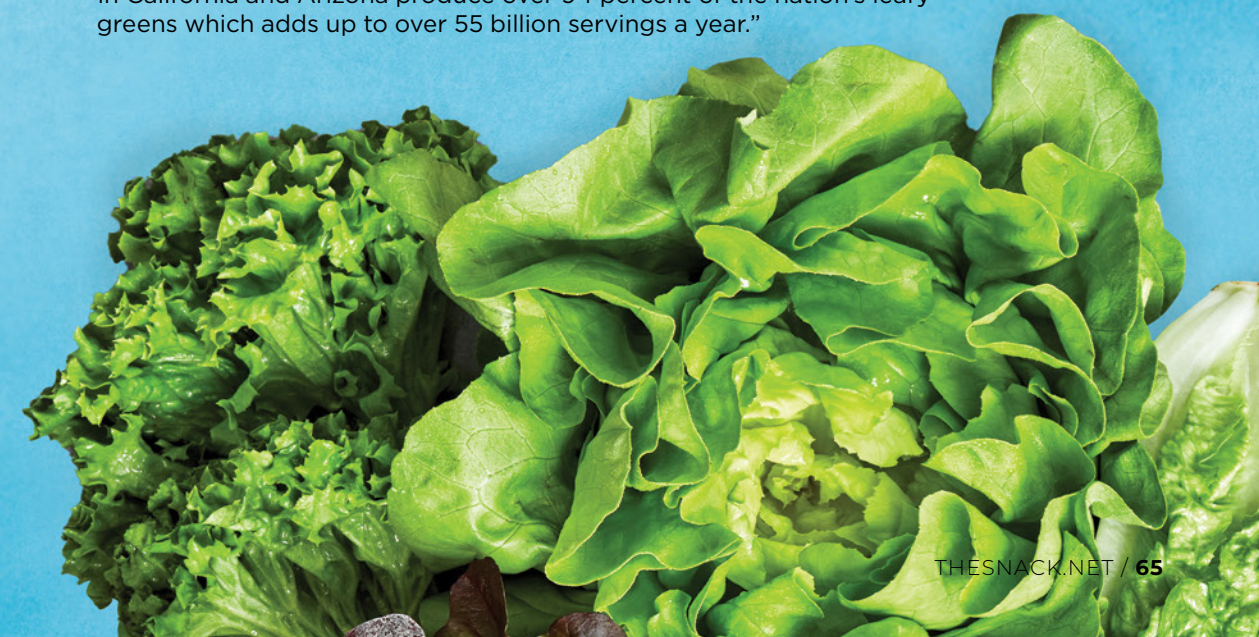
"Leafy greens have become indispensable in foodservice thanks to their versatility, nutritional value, and broad consumer appeal. They anchor salads, elevate appetizers, add freshness to bowls, and provide a vibrant base for proteins. Markon supports operators with robust menu portfolios—from classic mixes to specialty blends like Markon's exclusive blends Bistro Butter, Heritage, Hearts & Hearts, and Harvest Crisp—ensuring consistent quality and year-round availability. With wellness trends driving menu decisions, leafy greens will continue to be a high-demand category for us and the restaurant industry."



April Ward,

Communications, California Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement

"California leafy greens are currently flourishing, with production underway until late November from Salinas, Santa Maria, Oxnard, and Ventura. Enjoy the summer bounty by tossing fresh greens into a cool, vibrant salad with seasonal fruit, or using them as a low-carb wrap for barbecue burgers. When sourcing these greens, the single most important factor for buyers is verifying that your supplier is LGMA Certified. The LGMA is a mandatory food safety program that requires all members to maintain 100 percent compliance with rigorous, science-based food safety standards. LGMA members in California and Arizona produce over 94 percent of the nation's leafy greens which adds up to over 55 billion servings a year."



WTF DO I DO WITH { what the fork } Vidalia® Onions from Shuman Farms ?



HOMEMADE VIDALIA® ONION SALAD DRESSING

INGREDIENTS

½ **large** Shuman Farms Vidalia®
Onion, chopped
3 **tbsp** apple cider vinegar
2 **tsp** sugar
2 **tsp** creamy Dijon mustard
½ **tsp** pepper
¼ **tsp** salt
½ **cup** olive oil

Prep Time: 10 mins
Servings: 1 pint

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Add onion, vinegar, sugar, mustard, pepper, and salt to blender or food processor. Blend until well puréed.
- 2 While running, add oil a little at a time through the hole in the top of the blender/food processor until the dressing is creamy.
- 3 Enjoy with your favorite salad recipe!

To learn more about Shuman Farms,
visit www.shumanfarmsga.com



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JULY MVP HIGHLIGHTS



Wes Jones

Senior Manager of Sales,
Four Seasons Produce

Time at Four Seasons Produce: 23 years

With Chandler James

With a passion for improving systems in both his personal and professional life, Wes Jones' mind is shaped perfectly for the produce industry. He brings a unique perspective to his leadership role, elevating the sales team with deep industry expertise. Read on for a closer look at the life of this MVP...

» How would you describe your day-to-day work life?

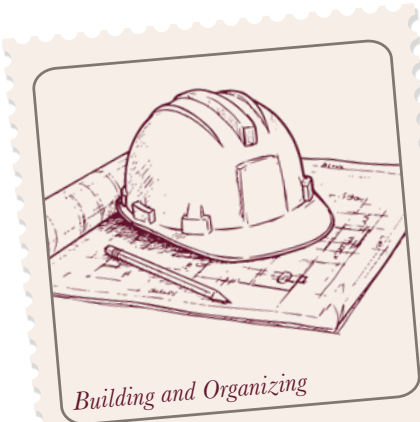
"My day-to-day is a mix of leading the team, staying close to customers, and managing the constant movement that comes with fresh produce. A lot of it is real-time problem solving—quality, shorts, logistics, or helping the team navigate customer needs. I also spend time reviewing performance and looking for opportunities to grow business or improve execution."

» Did you come to your role by accident or design? How so?

"A little of both. I didn't have a perfectly mapped-out plan, but I've always been intentional about learning the business and taking on more responsibility. Starting out, I focused on understanding the product, the supply chain, and the customer side of the business. Over time, that led to more opportunities."

» Is there a lesson in sales you've seen help in life?

"Listening is a big one. In produce, especially, every customer is a little different. If you're not really paying attention, you miss it. That carries over into life as well. The other lesson is resilience. Between weather, supply swings, and market changes, things don't always go as planned. Learning how to adjust and stay steady is key."



» What is one talent, interest, or skillset people might not know you have?

"I enjoy building and organizing things outside of work—whether it's setting up a garage, improving a system, or just finding ways to make things more efficient. It's a different outlet, but it ties back to the same mindset I use in the business—always looking for ways to improve and simplify."

» If sales were an animal, what would it be?

"A wolf. It's aware, adaptable, and knows when to work as part of a group and when to take the lead. Sales in produce is similar—you need to read situations, adjust quickly, and stay focused without forcing things, especially when conditions are constantly changing."

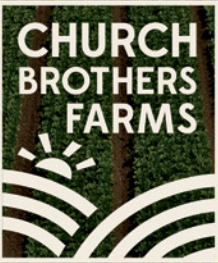
» What is the best advice you have received about your job or career?

"'Own the outcome.' In produce, there are a lot of variables you can't control, but the best people take responsibility for the result and figure out how to improve. That mindset builds trust with both your team and your customers over time."

» Fill in the blank: "The next generation of produce professionals should ____."

"...learn the fundamentals but also be open to change. Produce is still a relationship-driven business, but there's more data, technology, and efficiency tools than ever before. The people who can understand the product and the people side, while also using those tools, will have an edge."

NEW



ORGANIC



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Immune System Support



Antioxidant Support



Eye Health Support



Cognitive Function



Energy & Oxygen Transport Support

SMARTER SERVING 3.5 OUNCE BAG TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE

WELLNESS THE WAY NATURE INTENDED

WTF DO I DO WITH Calavo Avocados ?

{ what the fork }



AVOCADO CHICKEN QUINOA POWER BOWL

INGREDIENTS

QUINOA BOWL

- 1 large firm, but ripe** Calavo Avocado, diced
- 1 cup** quinoa, rinsed and drained in a fine mesh sieve
- 1½ cups** chicken broth
- 4 cups** baby arugula
- 1 (15 oz) can** garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained

- 2 cups** grilled chicken, diced
- 1 cup** small cherry or grape tomatoes, halved or quartered
- ½ cup** red onion, sliced
- Fresh basil, snipped

DRESSING

- ½ cup** extra virgin olive oil
- ½ cup** white wine vinegar

- 1 tsp** sugar
- 1 tsp** garlic salt, or to taste
- Freshly ground pepper, to taste

- Prep Time:** 20 mins
- Cook Time:** 22 mins
- Chill Time:** 1 hr
- Servings:** 4

DIRECTIONS

- Place quinoa and broth in a medium saucepan and bring to a simmer.
- Reduce heat and cook, covered, for 12 minutes. Remove from heat and let stand for 10 minutes. Fluff with a fork and let cool. Refrigerate for about an hour to cool. *May be prepared a day or two ahead.*
- While quinoa is cooling, place all dressing ingredients in a bowl or a jar

with a tight fitting lid. Whisk or shake to combine.

- Place equal amounts of arugula in four large bowls. Pile equal amounts of garbanzo beans, chicken, tomatoes, onion, and avocado over the top. Garnish with basil and serve with dressing. Enjoy!

Tip: Whisk ¼ cup Avofresco Guacamole to the vinaigrette to make a creamy avocado dressing.

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PRODUCE PULSE

Reclaiming THE HALO

By Melissa De Leon Chavez

“Health and wellness”

has become more than a body metric—it’s a brand, a hobby, even an identity. It has become a high-quality commodity for the sports and athletics industry, and all who utilize its halo; juices, snacks, even cereals and shakes.

Yet, rarely—and ironically—not in the produce aisle.

It is no secret sting that, despite being the frontline of health and wellness, fresh produce has not been at the forefront of this movement. Instead, protein powders, probiotic supplements, kombuchas, and other great-grandchildren of whole fruits and vegetables take the glory and the financial gains. But a new offering is taking a hammer to that dam, and I predict one crack will spread to flood-level potential.


A breakthrough from Wonder Veggies, a company that has developed some of the first-ever technology for offering consumers probiotic produce, has led to a partnership that will enhance the inherent qualities of blueberries with added functional benefits. Through an unseen, textureless addition that does not differentiate the raw eating, baked, or frozen experience of the berries, California Giant Berry Farms’ Belli Berries™ represents a true meeting between the consumer perception of health and wellness and what the produce department actually offers.

The potential this process unlocks is unprecedented.

With mainstream media like Ad Age noting the way health and wellness through big pharma and care industries have upped marketing investments (the publication reported an extreme shift in Super Bowl investors for the 2026 ads*) the timing for fresh to not just compete, but unseat commercial leaders in what it means to be healthy could not be better.

Creating what California Giant calls “Produce 2.0”—a channel of fresh that puts a whole new strength behind the term “superfood”—it cannot be understated what this could mean if the industry plays its cards right in terms of marketing, consumer communication, and education. And since the company is only the first to partner with Wonder Veggies on this innovation, it is safe to say there is more to come.

Prepare your in-store elevator pitch, your social media slogans, and your pithy signage and merchandising quips. Education will be key, but if played right, Belli Berries and the fresh products that will follow have the potential to do for fresh produce what Bo Jackson did for Nike; what Got Milk did for dairy; what *Wicked* has done for green and pink.

Once these offerings hit the market, ensure consumers know which department is the first and last word in health and wellness. 



LEGACY AND RUNWAY

By Anne Allen

Grimmway Produce Group™ and Ken Silveira make a compelling match. When the industry veteran stepped into the role of Chief Executive Officer in March of 2026, he found an operation hungry for growth—an impressive feat for a company that’s already grown in its lifetime from a few hundred acres to a vertically integrated giant with over 100,000.

With an impressive resume of his own, Ken has strategies to expand the company, ones that help retailers and foodservice operators drive the future of the categories stewarded by Grimmway Produce Group.



Anne Allen: Ken, how would you characterize your journey in agriculture and fresh produce so far? What career milestones led you to your new role?

Ken Silveira, Chief Executive Officer, Grimmway Produce Group™:

Nearly four decades in, what I keep coming back to is how much this industry rewards the long view. I started out at Tanimura & Antle, where I spent close to 20 years and eventually served as President and Chief Operating Officer. That's where I learned that great produce companies are built on great teams and relationships, not transactions. From there, I had the chance to help grow Mastronardi Produce® West in controlled environment agriculture, lead The VPS Companies in frozen, and most recently serve as President of Bengard Ranch across a 20,000-acre vertically integrated footprint.

Each step taught me a different piece of the industry, whether fresh, value-added, indoor, conventional, or organic, and that range is what I'm bringing to Grimmway Produce Group.



AA: With such significant time spent with industry stalwarts, what drew you to Grimmway?

KS: Honestly, it was the combination of legacy and runway. Grimmway has the kind of foundation you can't manufacture, with generations of farming expertise, a culture rooted in stewardship, and a portfolio of brands that already lead in their categories. But what made it the right move for me was the opportunity ahead: taking that scale and reliability and accelerating it with innovation that drives real category growth. Getting to do that alongside Jeff Huckaby in his new role as Chief Agricultural Officer, with his deep field knowledge anchoring the work, made the decision an easy one.

AA: With such a well-laid foundation in Grimmway, what are your immediate goals for the company? What about in five to 10 years?

KS: In the short term, I'm focused on listening; getting out to our growing regions, facilities, and customers to understand the business firsthand; and building on the strong foundation Jeff Huckaby and the team have built. Near-term, the priority is building on the momentum already underway across our family of companies—Grimmway Farms, Cal-Organic Farms, Tasteful Selections, RPE, and San Miguel Produce—so partners experience a more complete, scaled solution from a single portfolio.

The recent expansion into Morris, Minnesota, is a good example of how that plays out in



practice, diversifying our growing regions, strengthening year-round carrot supply, and giving customers even more reliability. Looking five to 10 years out, the ambition is bigger: to lead by shifting from product selling to category solutions, using our assortment, insights, and multi-region supply to help retailers grow their carrot, potato, and organic vegetable businesses, not just move cases.

AA: With four decades of experience at your back, you've seen the mechanics of what it takes for companies to stand apart. What would you say differentiates Grimmway on the national and global stage?

KS: Very few companies in fresh produce can offer what this portfolio does together. With more than 100,000 acres across our operations, 55,000 of them organic, and the combined reach of Grimmway Farms, Cal-Organic Farms, Tasteful Selections, RPE, and San Miguel Produce, we bring conventional and organic, multiple commodities, and a multi-region supply base under one roof. That scale translates into reliability our partners can plan around.

What sets us apart isn't just the size, though. We're using that operational strength as a platform for innovation in varieties, packaging, and category strategy. The goal is to be the partner our customers turn to not just to fill a shelf

or a menu, but to grow the category, and that's a position only Grimmway Produce Group can credibly hold.

AA: Last but not least, what does being a good leader mean to you? How does it guide you and Grimmway moving forward?

KS: Leadership in this business is about clarity, trust, and relationships. People in the field, in the plant, and at the customer's table all need to understand where we're headed and why it matters, and they need to know their leader is in it with them, not above it. The relationships you build along the way, with your team, your growers, and your partners, are what carry an organization through every cycle this industry throws at it.

I try to listen first, make decisions that are honest about trade-offs, and surround myself with people who are smarter than I am in their lane. When you get that right, an organization stops operating as a collection of business units and starts moving as one, which is exactly the unified strength a portfolio like ours can offer partners.

With the operational strengths of Grimmway Produce Group in good hands, the company's legacy will only continue to extend that runway.

“Grimmway [Produce Group™] has the kind of foundation you can't manufacture, with generations of farming expertise, a culture rooted in stewardship, and a portfolio of brands that already lead in their categories.”

- Ken Silveira, Chief Executive Officer, Grimmway Produce Group™



Christine Etcheverry

Domestic Account Manager,
Sunview Marketing International

Time at Sunview Marketing International: 2.5 years

With Jordan Okumura-Wright

Sales is a language all its own, one best spoken by those who value relationships and collaboration while staying curious, adaptable, and committed to growth. That's what comes to mind when I think of Christine Etcheverry, Domestic Account Manager at Sunview Marketing International. Beyond her ability to light up a room, Christine has a way of making everyone in her orbit feel seen and valued. Bringing two and a half years at Sunview and over four years in the produce industry, Christine has found a way to combine a lifelong foundation in agriculture with building and managing structured programs that drive consistent, day-to-day execution and long-term growth. So what drives this industry-passionate grape connoisseur? The answer might surprise you...

» How would you describe your day-to-day work life?

"Running an air traffic control tower. Everything is moving fast, priorities shift constantly, and success comes down to keeping product, timing, and people aligned so execution happens without disruption."

» Did you come to your role by accident or design? How so?

"Very much by design. Agriculture has always been a part of my life. I grew up in 4-H alongside my five siblings and went on to earn my degree in Agricultural Business and Marketing from Oklahoma State. It's been passed down through generations, including my grandfather, who worked in agriculture and even crossed paths with the family I work for today. Looking at it now, ending up here feels less like chance and more like a continuation of something that started long before me."

» Is there a lesson in sales you've seen help in life?

"Consistency, controlling what you can, and attention to detail go a long way. You don't win from one big moment. You win by showing

VALUES
AT THE CORE
—
OWNERSHIP
—
INTENTIONALITY
—
ACCOUNTABILITY
—
CONSISTENCY



Shark

up prepared, executing the small things right, and staying disciplined regardless of the outcome."

» What is one talent, interest, or skillset people might not know you have?

"I'm very intuitive when it comes to reading people and adjusting how I communicate. Understanding who you're talking to and meeting them where they are has been a huge advantage for me."


» If sales were an animal, what would it be?

"A shark. Calculated and constantly in motion. It's about awareness, timing, and precision, but also knowing when to be aggressive and go after what you want."

» What is the best advice you've received about your job/career?

"Control what you can and stay consistent. In this business, you don't win from one big moment; you win by showing up prepared, executing the details, and following through every time, regardless of the outcome."

» Fill in the blank: "The next generation of produce professionals should _____."

"Stay hungry. Challenge what you don't understand, and take pride in earning your place." 



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What Vacation Time Can Reveal About Your Career

By Editorial Contributor Julie Marcik, President, Joe Produce SearchSM

Some of the clearest thoughts about your career can happen when you are away from work.

When you step outside your usual routine, whether that is on vacation, during a long walk, or simply in a quiet moment with people you trust, it becomes easier to think honestly about where you are in life and work. Distance has a way of cutting through the noise.

That is one of the real gifts of vacation time. It is not just a chance to rest and recharge. It is also a chance to gain perspective.

When we are deep in the day-to-day demands of work, it is easy to stay in reaction mode. We are solving problems, answering questions, managing responsibilities, and moving from one thing to the next. There is not always much room left to reflect. Time away creates that room. It gives us the space to slow down, think more clearly, and ask ourselves whether our work is still aligned with the life we want to build.

Sometimes all it takes is one simple question: How is work going?

Your reaction may tell you more than your answer does.



Ask yourself:

- Do you light up and start sharing stories?
- Do you feel proud of what you are building?
- Are you energized by the conversation?
- Or do you feel a pit in your stomach before you even speak?

That reaction can be revealing. Sometimes it points to temporary stress or a challenge that needs to be addressed. Other times, it signals something deeper. You may have outgrown your role, lost motivation, or drifted away from the kind of work and environment that energizes you.

Time away can help you tell the difference.

A vacation, or even a meaningful pause from routine, can help you ask an important question: Is this just a demanding season, or is this the long-term reality of the job? What feels temporary in the middle of a busy stretch can sometimes turn out to be the normal rhythm of the role. And that kind of clarity matters.

The good news is that you do not need a full vacation to find it. Not everyone has the luxury of getting away. Sometimes perspective comes during a long walk, an afternoon outside, or a conversation with a spouse, mentor, or close confidant. Often, the clearest thoughts come when you are with the people who know you best and care about you most.



When you find yourself in that kind of space, here are a few questions worth asking:

- What am I excited to go back to, and why?
- What am I dreading, and why?
- Am I enjoying what I do?
- Am I still learning?
- Am I surrounded by people who challenge and motivate me?
- What would I change if I could?
- What small step could I take toward that change?



A change in scenery can lead to a change in perspective. Sometimes the best way to evaluate your career is to step away from it long enough to hear what your instincts have been trying to tell you.

The ocean has always been that place for me. It helps me quiet the noise and get back to what really matters.

What is that place for you?

You may come back rested. You may come back reenergized. Or you may come back with a clearer sense of what you want to change. And sometimes that is exactly what you needed. 💡



Julie Marcik, President,



Julie Marcik is President of Joe Produce. With more than 20 years of executive search experience, she leads the Joe Produce team and oversees the company's strategy, growth, and service to the produce industry and adjacent sectors. Julie brings deep expertise in talent, leadership, and long-term organizational fit. Joe Produce is the go-to job platform and trusted recruiting partner for the produce industry and adjacent sectors.

Libations For All Occasions

CHOCOLATE CHERRY PICK-ME-UP



By Chandler James

Photography by Reid Monsma

I recently visited a local Sacramento, California, haunt called The Shady Lady Saloon. If you are not familiar, the spacious bar takes on the persona of a moody speakeasy, complete with tufted red chairs, a jazzy stage, and vintage light fixtures that draw your eye to original brick walls and massive ceiling beams.

There, I enjoyed one of my favorite libations: the espresso martini. It is the quintessential cocktail for a night out—offering the sophistication of a strong drink with the comforting and robust flavor of coffee. Being the produce-obsessed writer that I am, I couldn’t help but wonder how I might improve upon such a classic drink.

The deep maroon curtains and walnut accents served as inspiration for a chocolate-and cherry-infused cocktail I have dubbed the Chocolate Cherry Pick-Me-Up. The rich notes of a strong brew pair perfectly with the sweet-tart flavor of fresh cherry simple syrup to create a libation you will be returning to the bar for over and over again.

Produce buyers—I have not forgotten you. Beyond the bar of The Shady Lady, I could see this cocktail driving foot traffic to grocery aisles. Combining these flavors in your cross-merchandising will inspire consumers to spruce up their home bar cart; I know I would fly toward such a display like a bee to a blossom. 🍷



Here’s how to make it... **Prep Time:** 10 mins **Servings:** 1
Cook Time: 10 mins

INGREDIENTS

SIMPLE SYRUP
1 cup fresh cherries, pitted
½ cup sugar
½ cup water

DRINK
1 ½ oz cooled espresso or cold brew coffee
1 oz coffee creamer (or Bailey’s for an extra kick)
1 oz vodka (Tito’s recommended)
½-1 oz cherry simple syrup, to taste
Chocolate shavings, for garnish

DIRECTIONS

1. Add cherries, sugar, and water to a pot and bring to a simmer over medium-heat.
2. Mix lightly and press down on the cherries as the sugar dissolves.
3. Once all sugar is dissolved, strain the syrup into a resealable glass container and let it cool.
4. Combine the coffee, creamer, vodka, and syrup in a cocktail shaker with ice. Shake for at least 30 seconds.
5. Strain the cocktail into a martini or coupe glass and top with chocolate shavings and a fresh cherry. Enjoy!

Tip: To upcycle the excess cherries, spread on toast, add to smoothies, and more. Extra syrup can be used in your morning cup of Joe!



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