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Executives Darren Micelle, Mark Barineau, and Gerry Odell weigh in on which core values helped grow the tomato empire...

Learn what keeps this produce heavy hitter up at night and what the word strategy really means...

Meet the man behind the mustache as the Italian-born, Toronto-based Food Network star reveals his amorous culinary roots and the key to keeping the soul in food...

From corporate marketing at Neutrogena and The Walt Disney Company, to a date grove, follow how Erin Hanagan-Muths is bringing emotional connection to the fresh produce industry...

What tops this Marketing and Communications Directors list of favorite things? Find out in this issue...
DEAR READERS,

The heat is on.

It is now September, and while we are cooling down here in California, the fire is definitely lit as we ramp up for PMA Fresh Summit 2016. As a precursor to the event, we are bringing you an extra issue this year as we look to some of the multigenerational companies in our industry, give a nod to those that have come before us, and look ahead to the future of fresh produce.

From an exploration of umami to the passionate story of Chef Massimo Capra, who enjoys listening to Pink Floyd in his kitchen while he’s cooking, we’ve got another issue of amazing stories to share with you.

With growth on the horizon, Brandon, Bryan, and Brett Grimm joined me to discuss the Grimm Way and how a legacy that took root in humble beginnings, built Grimmway into the powerhouse company it is today. Looking to the competitive tomato category for a little inspiration? In this issue we were joined by Lipman executives Darren Micelle, Mark Barineau, and Gerry Odell, who spoke about the company’s genesis and the vision now driving the team forward.

Speaking of competition, Lidl US’ Will Harwood spoke to us this month and pulled back the curtain on the expansion plans ahead and the foothold this retail giant looks to establish in the U.S.’ hot retail landscape. Also in line with that competitive mindset is Erin Hanagan-Muths of Bard Valley Date Growers, who dishes on the corporate marketing background that has fueled her drive and colored her perspective.

Curious about what makes D’Arrigo of NY’s Gabriela D’Arrigo tick? Some of her favorite things will definitely surprise you.

Celebrated this year at the Reception Honoring Women in Produce by United Fresh, Julie Krivanek shared with us her unlikely beginnings, and how the definition around “strategy” is an always-evolving concept.

As we look ahead to PMA Fresh Summit 2016, expect innovation and brand stories from across the industry in our October edition. It is not every day we get to speak with rockstars in our industry, and lucky for us, the relationships we’ve built have allowed us to bring their stories to you.

Until we meet again in Orlando, stay tuned as we keep you informed and enticed as our team works to continually enrich your experience in the fresh produce industry and beyond. One Snack at a time.

Cheers,

Jordan Okumura
Senior Editor
AndNowUKnow and The Snack
Here at The Snack Magazine, people are our thing. Check out this short list of some of the names we’ve featured, from the produce industry and beyond.

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So you’ve decided to take a trip. It’s a big summer road trip. You know the kind—where Chevy Chase should be driving. You pack up your bags, load up the SUV, and just drive.

As you’re driving north up the interstate, it strikes you: What are your plans along the way? You have a general idea where you’re going, but what will you do beyond driving? Will you just wait and see what happens? How will you enhance the journey? What will you do once you get there? Good questions to ask.

How many of us jump into our “career SUVs” without a plan and just drive? As a recruiter, I can tell you that this occurs more than you might think; including some pretty high-level people who just liked “the drive” they were on and stuck with it. Most of us, however, are not quite so lucky. Employees jump from job to job, without committing themselves to a destination.

Unless you start to plan ahead and take steps now, you could find yourself at the end of the road with your career, and not be at all where you thought you’d be.

One thing that I see often with great careers, is that a plan was made early on with a chosen destination. Even if that is not always possible, it’s never too late to choose your destination point, take time to complete the necessary steps, and dream big!

If you need help beginning your steps, try thinking with the mindset of a chess player. Planning four to five steps ahead will definitely benefit you, but even better is to think up to 20 moves ahead like some of the greats… yes, 20!

Here are a few opening moves to get you started on the path to your career:

1. Think about what you love and what you want to do!
2. Develop and acquire skills that are valued in your career path.
3. Have a well-written resume. Also, create a portfolio, and document your achievements beyond your resume.
4. Stay focused on your goals.
5. Strengthen your connections and relationships.
6. Set milestones to achieve.

BONUS STEPS:
- Work with people who support you, your growth, and goals.
- Strengthen your weaknesses, and push beyond your comfort zones.
The shortest distance between two points is a straight line. However, it’s difficult to make a career path (at least in agriculture) a straight line. As I review my 29 years in produce, I still think my most efficient ascent to my end career goal was in the first ten moves.

When you find yourself wanting or needing to move forward in your career (or even start it), think about where and what you want to be doing in the next 10 to 20 years. Choose a destination, and make sure your plans go way beyond just wanting to be financially successful. If you take the time to plan your steps, happiness during your journey will be greater, and the end result will be much closer to what you really want.

Remember, you can keep your goal the same while adjusting your strategies along the way. Be flexible, but stay on that path!

Rex Lawrence,
Founder & President of Joe Produce
was born and raised in Salinas, CA. His 29 years in the produce industry include positions in senior sales, marketing and management for some of the industry’s leaders. Rex and his team truly understand that finding the perfect “fit” is about more than matching a skill set with specific job requirements.
Wine is my other form of therapy besides working out. It also happens to be another miracle elixir.

I have broccoli rabe 4–5 times a week, breakfast burritos are where it's at.

From Salinas, California, to her latest stomping grounds in New York City, this marketing up-and-comer is helping to bring innovation and differentiation to D'Arrigo Bros. Co. of New York, one fresh produce item at a time.

"We're a motley crew if there ever was one!"
"We have the opportunity to speak openly and it is considered an art form. Bill Burr is one of my faves."
"They have the opportunity to speak openly and it is considered an art form. Bill Burr is one of my faves."
"I can't imagine being anywhere else."
"My Mexican mother's and Sicilian father's cooking. Too many dishes to choose from! Mom's Albondigas (meatball) soup is unreal.

Wine is my other form of therapy besides working out. It also happens to be another miracle elixir.

I have never been a morning person per se, so coffee is basically my miracle elixir.

I have broccoli rabe 4–5 times a week, breakfast burritos are where it's at.

My Mexican mother's and Sicilian father's cooking. Too many dishes to choose from! Mom's Albondigas (meatball) soup is unreal.

The last great trip I went on was definitely to Ireland. I would go back in a heartbeat.

They have the opportunity to speak openly and it is considered an art form. Bill Burr is one of my faves.

I can't imagine being anywhere else.

From left to right: Kevin, Peter, and Brian D'Arrigo
"This helps clear my head, relieves stress, and allows me to consume more wine and food."
"I have broccoli rabe 4–5 times a week, breakfast burritos are where it's at."
ith upwards of 20 lbs. of the tuber used to create one bottle of Covington Gourmet Sweet Potato Vodka, this spirit is ideal for our industry, and for increasing produce consumption one drink at a time. This sweet potato vodka is truly a unique experience, presenting a remarkably smooth drinkability, with creamy notes and a tinge of perceived sweetness that can be served on the rocks, or in, say... a Maria Sangrienta Martini. Imagine Covington Gourmet Vodka, tomatoes, jalapeños, lime, Worcestershire sauce, and a little celery to mitigate the heat. If you need it.

With Jimmy Burch and Bobby Ham, third generation sweet potato farmers in eastern North Carolina, at the helm, this vodka is produced in small batches to capture the middle 60 percent known as the “heart” of the distillate. Care goes into this handcrafted spirit which only adds to that smooth, earthy character, and mixology versatility. On top of that, the spent mash is returned to the soil to enrich the next crop.

As we look to the holiday season, and a peak in demand for sweet potatoes across the board, consider this as an addition to your festive table spread... or just pour it neat on a cool fall night. Either way, this is a great opportunity to keep sweet potatoes on your plate, or in your glass.

**MARIA SANGRIENTA MARTINI**

- 2.5 oz Covington Gourmet Vodka
- 5 oz tomatoes
- 1 oz jalapeño (seeded)
- 0.5 oz lime juice
- 0.1 oz Worcestershire sauce
- 0.1 oz hot sauce
- Season with celery
- Salt & black pepper
**GRAPE SNAPSHOT**

**SUMMER ROYAL**  
**SEASONALITY:** May-October  
**COLOR:** Blue-Black  
**SIZE:** Medium-sized  
**SHAPE:** Round to slightly oval  
**SEEDS?** No

---

**AUTUMN ROYAL**  
**SEASONALITY:** August-January  
**COLOR:** Blue-Black  
**SIZE:** Large  
**SHAPE:** Oval-elongated  
**SEEDS?** No

---

**MIDNIGHT BEAUTY® BRAND**  
**SEASONALITY:** June-September  
**COLOR:** Blue-Black  
**SIZE:** Very large  
**SHAPE:** Oval  
**SEEDS?** No

---

**VINTAGE RED**  
**SEASONALITY:** August-January  
**COLOR:** Red  
**SIZE:** Large  
**SHAPE:** Oval-elongated  
**SEEDS?** No

---

**CRIMSON SEEDLESS**  
**SEASONALITY:** August-January  
**COLOR:** Red  
**SIZE:** Medium-sized  
**SHAPE:** Cylindrical berries  
**SEEDS?** No

---

**SCARLOTTA SEEDLESS® BRAND**  
**SEASONALITY:** September-December  
**COLOR:** Red  
**SIZE:** Very large  
**SHAPE:** Oval-elongated  
**SEEDS?** No

---

**RED GLOBE**  
**SEASONALITY:** July-January  
**COLOR:** Red  
**SIZE:** Very large  
**SHAPE:** Round  
**SEEDS?** Yes

---

**SCARLET ROYAL**  
**SEASONALITY:** June-December  
**COLOR:** Red  
**SIZE:** Large  
**SHAPE:** Oval  
**SEEDS?** No
### Flame Seedless
- **Seasonality:** May-October
- **Color:** Red
- **Size:** Medium-sized
- **Shape:** Round
- **Seeds?** No

### Thompson Seedless
- **Seasonality:** June-November
- **Color:** Green
- **Size:** Medium to large
- **Shape:** Cylindrical
- **Seeds?** No

### Autumn King
- **Seasonality:** August-January
- **Color:** Green
- **Size:** Very large
- **Shape:** Cylindrical to oval
- **Seeds?** No

### SugaRone Trademarked
- **Superior Seedless**
  - **Seasonality:** May-September
  - **Color:** Green
  - **Size:** Large
  - **Shape:** Oval-elongated
  - **Seeds?** No
  - *Some fruit sold under license as Superior Seedless*

### Sheegene-4 Trademarked
- **Luisco®**
  - **Seasonality:** August-December
  - **Color:** Green
  - **Size:** Very large
  - **Shape:** Oval
  - **Seeds?** No

### Sweeties™
- **Seasonality:** July-September
- **Color:** Bright green
- **Size:** Exceptionally large
- **Shape:** Elongated
- **Seeds?** No

### BLANC Seedless Trademarked
- **Pristine®**
  - **Seasonality:** July-November
  - **Color:** Green
  - **Size:** Very large
  - **Shape:** Elongated
  - **Seeds?** No

### Green Envy® Brand
- **Seasonality:** August-September
- **Color:** Light green
- **Size:** Extra large
- **Shape:** Cylindrical
- **Seeds?** No
Grape Facts

California

GRAPE FACTS

Availability

99% of commercially-grown table grapes in the U.S. are GROWN IN CALIFORNIA

CONSUMER STATISTICS

94% of primary shoppers in the U.S. prefer grapes grown in California vs. another country when prices are the same

59% say their household eats grapes on a weekly basis

69% say they still prefer California grapes even when priced higher than grapes from other origins

110 million boxes

2015 CALIFORNIA TOTAL VOLUME

PURCHASE DRIVERS

55% IN-STORE SALES OR COUPONS

54% PRINTED CIRCULARS (MAIL, NEWSPAPER, STORE)

27% EMAILED ADS, OFFERS, OR DEALS FROM GROCERY STORE

27% SOCIAL MEDIA

27% WEBSITES

26% MOBILE PHONE APP

HOW CONSUMERS EAT GRAPES

AS A SNACK 93%

AS A DESSERT 27%

AS A SALAD TOPPING 25%

AS AN APPETIZER 23%

AS AN INGREDIENT IN A RECIPE 22%

AS A SIDE DISH 17%

AS A MAIN DISH 6%

* Consumers responded to multiple buying behaviors for this poll
Putting its best face forward, 4Earth Farms has introduced a new innovative pack as the company continues with its commitment to organic growth and evolving the retail and consumer experience. With the launch of its new organic retail line under the 4Earth Organics label, this product is packaged in unique paper/poly oversealed recyclable trays using technology only available from European suppliers. The laminated material is comprised of recycled paper with a die cut window in the shape of its branded leaf pattern and an anti-fogging clear poly film, and extends shelf-life, while taking the style and visual appeal to the next level. Rich graphics and hand-feel of the paper finish film are the perfect complement for the 4Earth Farms brand.

4Earth Farms initial launch of the oversealed products include Organic Brussels Sprouts, Green Beans, Sugar Snap Peas, Broccoli Florets and a Vegetable Medley of Broccoli, Cauliflower and Baby Carrots ranging from 8 to 12 oz. units. The line creates a destination at retail and will add another set of profitable SKUs to retail organic offerings.
MASSIMO CAPRA

BY JESSICA DONNEL

Cremona, Italy
The Toronto food scene has changed in leaps and bounds since I first joined in on the game. From 1980 until now, it seems like every ten years there is a massive shift in what our inspirations are,” Chef Massimo Capra explains to me about the city where he found culinary fame. “California-based chefs like Alice Waters and Wolfgang Puck—these are the people that reinvented modern Italian and Mediterranean-style cooking from San Francisco. We all wanted to emulate it, but when I first moved to Toronto it was impossible to get ingredients that were a quality that matched.”

In an era where consumers fill their list of demands with terms like “local,” “peak season,” “year-round,” and “cutting-edge,” chefs have found themselves in an interesting predicament. At least that’s how Italian chef, Canadian food television star, and mustachioed charmer, Massimo Capra, explains it to me. How can culinary artists like Massimo create something that tastes and looks amazing, which was also grown around the corner? The answer? Well, we’re still looking for one, quite frankly, but a temporary remedy can certainly be developing a close relationship with produce suppliers.

“Produce companies have had to evolve into something beyond just the people who bring in your iceberg lettuce and strawberries for you,” Massimo explains to me as I ask him how the role of fresh produce has changed in the restaurant industry over the years. “It’s become a delicate balance. The public now wants local and organic at all times of the year—but of course they have to come from somewhere. There’s restraints on quality, variety, consistency—all these magical things—in order to keep people satisfied.”

Because local year-round produce is not always easy to come by in Ontario, a chef must import produce while navigating international regulations and restrictions—something that’s hard to find time to do when you’re a chef who has four restaurants, appears on four television shows, has authored two books, and is food editor for a Canadian home magazine—like Massimo. As a result, produce sourcing, Massimo says, has become an integral part of his job as a chef. Knowing where his food comes from and how it is grown is something he says is imperative.

“With 10,000 restaurants looking for local and fresh, it’s a harsh reality that restaurant-goers can’t always get consistency and quality. That’s where produce suppliers come in,” Massimo laughs. “I’m in charge of having to keep several Italian food menus interesting. Without worldwide produce suppliers, it would be impossible for me to make the quality and quantity of food that consumers are demanding.”

And Massimo is no stranger to knowing the importance of having first-hand knowledge of where his food is sourced. In what sounds like a fairytale retelling of what you might think would be the background of an Italian Chef, Massimo grew up on a small farm in the Northern Italian city of Cremona—near the home of such strong flavors as Parmigiano Reggiano and Grana Padano.

“It’s just plain smart to eat seasonally. It tastes so much better, and it has to be more nutritious,”

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“It’s just plain smart to eat seasonally. It tastes so much better, and it has to be more nutritious,”
Massimo asserts as we talk about what he learned growing up in one of the richest local food cultures in the world. “I saw this up close when I was farming as a child—always being surrounded by fields of fruit, vegetables, cows—it all tastes differently according to the season. Everything I ate was from my hometown of 2,000 people because that’s where the flavors were the deepest.”

Those flavors, however, weren’t exactly the reason Massimo took up the career that would one day become his legacy. His motivations were perhaps a little more devilish.

“I was always drawn to the kitchen, but it was never the romantic tale of learning from your grandmother that most chefs will tell you,” Massimo tells me with a grin. “There was a family restaurant in my town with a few beautiful daughters. I’d always find reasons to come visit and go into the kitchen to help out the mother. Turns out I was actually good!”

So how did Massimo go from flirting with the daughters of restauranteurs to taking the Toronto food scene by storm? Reconnecting with a long lost cousin who happened to have a restaurant of his own in Toronto, he decided to leave the harsh climate of the 1970s Italian economy and head to North America without knowing a single word of English.

Soon working under Michael Carlevale at glittering Toronto hotspot, Prego della Piazza, Massimo developed his craft for the next ten years before leaving to open his own restaurant landmark, Mistura. Carlevale, who Massimo describes as “a superstar, enormously intelligent, and eccentric to the max,” was someone deeply ingrained in the restaurant business in Toronto, essentially inventing Italian cuisine in the city, and leading his young prodigy through a restaurant scene still trying to find its footing.

Massimo recalls the days where he and fellow foodie friends would make the drive all the way down the coast to Berkeley to dine at Alice Water’s Chez Panisse or Napa Valley for Thomas Keller’s The French Laundry—just to see a glimpse of what was on the cutting-edge of food culture. This was before the days of household name chefs and Food Network culture, and before consumers knew what buzzwords to demand from the people creating their meal experiences.

“It’s just plain smart to eat seasonally. It tastes so much better, and it has to be more nutritious...”

—Massimo Capra

“Right now is a very interesting time to be a chef. The trends we used to roll our eyes at are now...”
My mother’s ravioli with spinach, Swiss chard, ricotta, and Parmigiano. I, for the life of me, cannot duplicate it no matter what ingredient or technique I try. Now I’m in a place in my career where I can go eat anything I want whenever I want to, but I believe I, and all of us, will always be chasing time back to those flavors we were raised on.”

And those flavors, Massimo wisely smiles—whether they be a freshly-picked strawberry from California, a chef-cultivated Mediterranean meal in a trendy Toronto restaurant, or your mother’s handcrafted ravioli—remain part of your personal experience throughout your life.

what you can charge customers double for, but I’ve always remained close to my classic Italian roots,” Massimo assures me as he delves into his explanation on modern food culture. “There are too many people with tweezers spending time perfectly balancing a microgreen on top of an already fantastic dish. I think you lose some of the soul of the food when you try too hard to position food as art—it needs to have soul.”

On cooking competition show Chopped: Canada, where Massimo has served as a judge since early 2015, he constantly sees chefs miss the mark here—ignoring the development of flavors and ingredients in favor of style.

“On Chopped, I’m seeing people make these mistakes all the time. They are trying so hard to dazzle us, that of course they’re going to fail. Just focus on cultivating a beautiful sauce. When you see how popular things like food trucks have become now, you can see the evidence that it’s all about using strong ingredients like salt and fat. It takes big flavors and a more down-to-earth technique to really connect with people,” says the chef who takes “down-to-earth” to heart while he performs his routine of cooking to the psychedelic musical stylings of Pink Floyd.

It’s that emotional connection to flavors and ingredients that Massimo keeps harkening back to during our conversation. Even as I try to goad the world traveling chef into revealing his favorite city he’s visited, or what his final meal would be in an end-of-days-type situation, he continues to insist that it’s the flavors of his past that resonate the most.

“Listen,” he says to me assuredly. “I’ve been away from my home in Italy for forty years now, but what am I still trying to make in my restaurants?
**Duda Farm Fresh Foods**

With school now back in session, Dandy Celery Snackers are top-of-mind and include several items designed to support a busy lifestyle. Try the Ready to Snack Celery Sticks with a 1.6 oz. package of fresh-cut celery sticks portioned for an individual serving size. Or, Dandy Celery and Peanut Butter Packs, available in 2.3 oz. and 4.15 oz. packs; great for lunch boxes, after school, and weekend activities. And my favorite: Crunch Cups. With this line, Duda partnered with top brands to create snack items with a variety of flavor and high quality ingredients—available in Ranch, Lite Ranch, Sriracha Ranch, and smooth Peanut Butter, with more varieties planned in the near future.

**Stemilt Growers**

This company’s apple and pear harvests have great timing for back-to-school promotions at retail. The ideal, kid-friendly size, Lil Snappers® Apples and Pears come in convenient 3 lb. pouch bags and introduce kids to new varieties and tasty fruit options. Grown by Stemilt in Washington State, Lil Snappers Apples and Pears come in a range of apple and pear varieties from Fuji and Honeycrisp, Piñata®, and Pink Lady® apples, to Bartlett and Concorde pears. This year, Stemilt is also launching a complete organic apple line of Lil Snappers® Apple products available in 3 lb. bags. Lil Snappers® Apples alone have noted record numbers with volume up 131.1 percent over last year, dollars up 123 percent and distribution points (total weeks available in unique store count) up 194 percent.

**Bay Baby Produce**

These unique, small pumpkins are perfect for shoppers to grab while back-to-school shopping. Carving pumpkins typically starts in the fall, but at Bay Baby Produce, the motto is “Save the pumpkin, spare the knife. Paint the pumpkin, give it life.” The company’s proprietary painting process puts vibrant images such as faces, silhouettes, and skulls on Wee-Bee and Pie-Size pumpkins. Talk about differentiation inside of a tradition that has been around for years, this line will spice up produce departments and get kids thinking differently about pumpkins for the fall category.

**SUNSET® Produce**

Healthy, flavorful, and packaged to-go, SUNSET’s line of one-pint snacking tomatoes are at the forefront of the snacking category. Between the company’s One Sweet®, Zima® and Angel Sweet® tomatoes, SUNSET® is helping kids go ‘snack-to-school’, and inspiring parents to make quick and healthy weekday dinners. This snacking tomato spread offers a different dimension of flavor, representing some of the most innovative brands in the category.

**Sun Pacific Cuties®**

I absolutely love fruit that is already grown in its own self-contained little package. Easy-to-peel, seedless, and perfect for little hands, Cuties have become synonymous with convenience, nutrition, and kid-friendly fun. Cuties are made up of several delicious varieties including Clementines, W. Murcotts, and Tangos—all a part of the Mandarin family.

With incredible growth across snacking trends as well as citrus, Cuties create a great opportunity to tap into back-to-school shoppers, the health-conscious consumer, and the Mandarin-lover who is looking for fun and a-peel.
WOK-TOSSED HOT WINGS

INGREDIENTS

Wings:
- 2 lb chicken wings
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 1½ tsp freshly ground black pepper

Sauce:
- 2 tbsp whole dried Pequin peppers
- 2 tbsp shallots, chopped
- 2 cups SUNSET® Angel Sweet® tomatoes, chopped
- 2 tbsp honey
- ¼ cup cilantro, chopped
- ½ tsp lime zest
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Reserved drippings from cooking chicken wings

SERVINGS: 4

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Break down each wing into 2 pieces by splitting at the joint using a chef’s knife. Remove and discard wing tips. In a medium bowl, toss wings in olive oil, salt, and pepper, then place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
3. Bake for 45–60 minutes, or until wings are fully cooked and browned, flipping once halfway through. Set aside.
4. In a hot dry wok over medium heat, toss Pequin peppers carefully—ensure the whole dried chili stays intact; this step creates the essence of the chili and adds a smokiness to the wok. Add shallots and cook for 1 minute, then add tomatoes and toss until heated through.
5. Toss in wings, then add honey and chicken juices, tossing evenly more to evenly coat. Add cilantro and lime zest, then season with salt and pepper to taste. Toss and serve on a platter with fresh lime wedges to garnish.

Chef’s note: Don’t eat the chilis unless you like a challenge. They are there for flavor only.

For more delicious, healthy, & easy-to-prepare recipes visit www.sunsetgrown.com.
Delight your customers with this tasty trio!

Good Life Organic™ offers a full line of organic fresh fruits and vegetables. Whether you are looking for organic grapes, melons, citrus, peppers, onions, or berries (and everything in between). Good Life Organic™ can be your full service provider.

Live the good life™

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INGREDIENTS

2 cups cooked chicken, cubed (BBQ chicken is a tasty choice)
2 stalks celery, diced
½ cup Good Life Organic™ red, green, and black grapes sliced in half
¼ cup candied pecans, chopped
Fresh Italian parsley, chopped
1 tbsp poppy seeds
2 apples, chilled

Dressing:
1 tbsp mayonnaise
1 tbsp Dijon mustard
1 tbsp coarse ground mustard
2 tbsp red wine vinegar
Salt and pepper to taste

SERVINGS: 6

DIRECTIONS

1. Mix together the dressing ingredients in a small bowl and place in refrigerator to chill.
2. Combine the remaining ingredients in a large bowl and fold the dressing into the chicken salad. Return to the fridge to chill.
3. When ready to serve, slice apples horizontally into rings (cut out core and seeds) and spoon the grape chicken salad on each ring.
4. Arrange on a platter and serve.

For more organic, delicious, healthy, & easy-to-prepare recipes visit www.good-life-organic.com.
The New Bard of Bard Valley

BY JESSICA DONNEL
OU CAN NEVER underestimate the power of brand and consumer loyalty when you create an emotional connection with your fans,” Director of Marketing for Bard Valley Date Growers, Erin Hanagan-Muths, explains to me as she reflects on her 26 years of experience creating powerful product branding campaigns. “Ultimately, I have learned that consumers are drawn towards brands that not only deliver exceptional product experiences, but also offer opportunities to connect on a deeper emotional level.”

For the woman whose career includes working on high-profile campaigns for companies like Neutrogena and The Walt Disney Company, creating connections with consumers is something that comes naturally to Erin. Whether it’s building trust and authenticity around beauty and skin care products, or delivering an integrated brand experience in the entertainment industry, Erin has seen firsthand the power of successful consumer brands.

So how can we bring world-class branding power into the produce aisle? If anyone is up to such a challenge, it’s Erin Hanagan-Muths.

“I think what a lot of people in our industry haven’t yet realized is the power of a brand in the eyes of a consumer. Consumers are savvy—while we put our products in categories like center store, produce and deli and the like, shoppers don’t make purchasing decisions along these lines,” Erin tells me. “We have a tremendous opportunity in the produce industry to break out of our traditional category norms and market our products like some of the world’s best consumer packaged goods (CPG) brands.”

Amid a year filled with four integrated consumer and trade campaigns that span print, digital, mobile, and social media channels, strong sales have resulted in Natural Delights rising as a top Medjool Date brand. So how did Erin’s story unfold as she gained the skills it would take to implement such strong national campaigns? From a classroom, to skin care, to entertainment, and, finally, to the world of produce, Erin’s tale is much different than those born-and-raised farmers whose passion was born on a tractor.

“I know I don’t have what you might call the traditional produce marketer’s story. My father was a teacher, so my college training was focused on a career in education. Looking back on it, I learned that if you can make math interesting to a room full of unruly seventh graders, a boardroom is suddenly no problem,” she laughs as we talk about her roots. “An important thing you have to learn as an educator is getting straight to the ‘what’s in it for me’ aspect of marketing. You have to see your product from a consumer’s perspective, and I do that all the time for the Natural Delights brand at Bard Valley Date Growers.”
Erin’s teaching career was cut short by an opportunity to step into the corporate world as an Assistant Marketer for one of the largest skincare brands in the country, the Neutrogena division of Johnson & Johnson. Erin was soon promoted to Director of Training. Finding herself adept at evaluating trends within the marketplace, she used her time at the world-renowned pharmaceutical and consumer packaged goods multinational to hone her marketing skills—skills she says were integral in the development of her methodology for brand management and new product development at Bard Valley Date Growers.

“About six years into my career at Neutrogena, the company decided to take on cosmetics for the first time. Before then, our brand had only been focused on a dermatologist-approved line of skin-care products. Imagine trying to assuage the fears of a network of dermatologists who believe that cosmetics are actually a detriment to skin health,” Erin reminisces about one of her biggest early challenges. “I was met with a lot of uncertainty when I told our team that getting the dermatologists on board was critical to the product’s success. But I quickly learned that you can’t make decisions about your product without vetting it with both your customers and your stakeholders. Alienating your base is the worst thing you can do as a marketer.”

Under the supervision of one of her biggest early mentors, former Neutrogena VP of Marketing Lori Bush, Erin ended up bringing in dermatologists as endorsers of the product by creating stakeholder dialogue—essentially having a major hand in creating the Neutrogena line of cosmetics that is still wildly successful today. And if that wasn’t already an impressive enough resume, let’s talk Erin’s years with the branding masters at The Walt Disney Company.

Erin’s five-year tenure with one of the largest media and entertainment companies in the world gave her the opportunity to work in corporate product licensing and the brand partnerships division. Not only did she develop programs to expand the reach of the Disney brand, she worked to create powerful synergies through partnerships with other mega brands like Kellogg’s and Lego®.

“One of the most important things I learned at Disney was the power of creating memories and emotional connections for people and the impact this has on brand trust and loyalty,” Erin reflects. “Brands like Disney helped me understand that a brand’s work is never done. There is always opportunity to improve and work every single day to delight your customer.”

At this point you’re probably still wondering how someone with such strong experience in corporate marketing found themselves at a family-owned cooperative of date growers in Yuma, Arizona, but to Erin, the job was just a natural progression in the career she had wanted to build for herself. After an opportunity presented itself to her and her husband to move to Yuma, Erin landed an interview that would not only reaffirm her love of marketing, but also reintroduce her to a love she had as a child—Medjool dates.

“My interview with Bard Valley was one of the most interesting I’d had in my life. Here I was, coming from a large corporate marketing background, and I found myself in a pickup truck driving around the most beautiful Medjool date groves I could imagine,” Erin remembers, noting how amazed she was that these 8,000 acres of Medjool date groves came from just six mother trees. “I was instantly brought back to my grandma’s kitchen where she baked dates into her cookies, and right away I thought, ‘This is where I need to be, I’m home.’”

After learning about Erin’s impressive marketing experience, Grower-Owner and Founding Member of Bard Valley Date Growers Association, David Nelson, asked her, “It’s obvious you fit everything we’re looking for in a Marketing Director, but do you think you can love this brand?” It was then that Erin says she was sure this was the natural next step for her. She knew that you have to love what you do and be able to love the brand you are managing. Just like a young child’s (or yes, even us adult fans) love for the World of Disney, these emotional connections tie everything together.

“Every single person I had met that day had such passion and belief in what they were doing. It makes the job so much more satisfying,” Erin tells me about her move to Bard Valley. “I must tell you, moving from big corporations to an organization that is more connected to the land was really a breath of fresh air. Everyone here is deeply involved in every aspect of the business and we are all connected with a shared love for the brand and desire to deliver a product experience that our customers can connect with.”
So, what are some of these marketing initiatives that Erin has on the books for the Natural Delights brand in 2016? As mentioned earlier, Erin has not one, but four consumer campaigns running this calendar year. All four campaigns will run nationally, focus on different lifestyle themes, and utilize one of the tried-and-true tactics employed by successful CPG brands—emotional connectivity.

Starting with “Your Date With Fitness,” Natural Delights kicked off the year with a campaign designed to drive retail sales among health-minded shoppers. The campaign was supported with a full suite of retail partnership opportunities designed to increase store level performance and connect with consumers.

“We believe in supporting our retail partners with all the tools they need to carry our brand values and experiences to the end consumer. While it’s been a challenge to get a few retailers out of the old produce commodity paradigm, our more progressive and performance oriented partners have seen real success by working with us to integrate our programs into their platform,” Erin explains. “It’s just like my days at Disney where we are leveraging the power of two great brands to the betterment of both.”

Next up was a campaign called “Let the Good Times Roll” that was positioned to drive awareness for a series of new Medjool Date Roll flavor offerings to healthy snackers. This was followed up with a consumer favorite called “My First Date” which rewards the creation of user-generated video content.

“My First Date is one of our favorite promotions. Not only because we love seeing all of the fun content our consumers create but it’s what it does for our brand,” Erin tells me. “According to Nielsen, 92% of consumers believe recommendations from friends and family over all forms of advertising. We have found that this type of word-of-mouth promotion not only helps increase consumption, but also new trial from shoppers who have never enjoyed Medjool dates before.”

Finally, 2016 will end with the “Naughty or Nice” campaign—a recipe promotion with a theme of holiday entertaining.

With more plantings and a larger crop output projected in the coming years, Erin is going to have her hands full continuing to push the growing demand for Medjool dates. She is relying on her big brand experience to develop new markets and drive consumer demand. She has her eyes set on not only connecting the brand to healthy lifestyles and active people, but also tapping into the growing purchasing power of the millennial shopper.

“Millennials are spending more time in the produce aisle than other segments, and are looking for fruits, vegetables, and healthy foods with minimal processing. They’re looking for products that fit into their busy lives and are gravitating towards healthy and fresh snack items like Medjool dates,” Erin tells me. “Millennial shoppers are ultra-connected and can spot a gimmick a mile away, so it is important that we communicate with them with authenticity and transparency.”

Erin’s enthusiasm about the company’s new website, deploying in Q4, was also apparent. The website will highlight consumer-oriented lifestyle video content, bright new recipes, and inspiring photography to help Natural Delights connect with a youthful, health-minded consumer, while allowing a stronger influence in driving demand at retail.

“As a brand we need to drive emotional connections with our target audiences,” Erin shares. “To do this we can’t just stay static and follow the status quo of the produce industry. With the knowledge I have gained working at some of the biggest brands in the world, I’ll keep pushing forward and thinking of new ways we can delight, inspire, and deliver an exceptional product experience with our consumers.”

For some reason, I don’t see this as being too much of a problem for someone with Erin’s enthusiasm, experience, and drive. 🙏
As trends in citrus heat up with at-home chefs inside the snacking category and on foodservice menus, Bee Sweet Citrus, a California one-stop-shop for specialty citrus varieties, is taking advantage of increasing consumer buying behaviors with its expansive citrus program. On the horizon is one of the citrus category’s on-trend varieties, Cara Cara navel oranges. Not only does the bright pinkish-red interior pop when sliced or peeled, but the juicy, sweet, low-acid flavor makes it popular across the board and especially with chefs. A great source of vitamin C, folate, and potassium, Cara Caras are the perfect addition to the snacking line-up, or as part of a summer or fall culinary creation. In addition to the fruit’s flavorful and nutritious nature, Bee Sweet features Cara Caras in vibrant, high-graphic, grab-and-go packaging, with a mesh pouch for aesthetic appeal and ease at retail. The packaging comes in weight options between 1-8 lbs. Available from November to March, and again during the summer import season, be sure to check out this vibrant treat with eye-catching packaging to match.
BeeSweet Citrus

Spring & Summer

Autumn

Winter

Lemons, mandarins, oranges year-round and specialty varieties during fall and spring!

Fresh citrus all year ‘round..

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Intelligent Oven

BY MELISSA DE LEON

San Francisco, CA-based company June touts bringing intelligence to the tools of the kitchen, looking to up the cooking game for the lay-chef with its cutting edge Intelligent Oven. If you put together equal parts toaster oven and a microwave with one part smartphone, you might have some idea of what this latest appliance has to offer. One perk of the June Intelligent Oven is that it hooks up to the consumer’s wifi and saves recipes for later use, even adding it to meal.

Before delving into the energy-saving options this particular gadget offers, let’s discuss why it can help push fresh produce in the consumer kitchen. June says it’s looking to bring both, with a splash of sustainability, to the consumer kitchen via cutting edge technology.

“Do you get when you cook with precision sensors and more computing power than some laptops? More control fewer surprises and more enjoyable results than ever before,” June says of its metallic chef. A chef’s chefs continue to lead flavor-trend and food preparation waves, and one modern appliance company is looking to bring both, with a splash of sustainability, to the consumer kitchen via cutting edge technology.

San Francisco, CA-based company June touts bringing intelligence to the tools of the kitchen, looking to up the cooking game for the lay-chef with its cutting edge Intelligent Oven. If you put together equal parts toaster oven and a microwave with one part smartphone, you might have some idea of what this latest appliance has to offer.

“A chef’s chefs continue to lead flavor-trend and food preparation waves, and one modern appliance company is looking to bring both, with a splash of sustainability, to the consumer kitchen via cutting edge technology.”

Include software updates, remote control, and streaming video.

Full HD Camera

- IDs food and streaming live video to your smartphone.

Meal Logging

- Tracks photos and stats to promote healthier practices.

Wi-Fi Connectivity

- Includes software updates, remote control, and streaming video.

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BY MELISSA DE LEON

Intelligent Oven

Discover:

A chef’s chefs continue to lead flavor-trend and food preparation waves, and one modern appliance company is looking to bring both, with a splash of sustainability, to the consumer kitchen via cutting edge technology.
Weight Sensors
Load cells in the feet turn the top of the oven into a kitchen scale.

This auto-smart oven logs meals for consumers, keeping photos and cooking stats of everything they make and automatically helping to promote those healthier practices in the kitchen. One less step consumers have to take to tie more fruits and veggies into their diet.

As for sustainability, an initiative sweeping all sides of the industry, this piece of machinery touts the ability to cook food faster and more efficiently, while using precision thermal engineering to use less energy than traditional ovens.

Unfortunately, June’s technology doesn’t seem to include the ability to talk back as a clever kitchen-Jarvis or give any adorable beeps and expressions just yet, but if one more high-tech addition to the consumer household helps tip the scales ever-more in fresh produce’s favor, why not?

calendars. This means that all the recipes the industry has created to inspire consumers to use their produce more, as well as more creatively, can be programmed directly into the appliance used to bring those recipes to the table.

Additionally, the company notes that logging meals is a recommended strategy by nutritionists for healthier eating.
Picture this: Two brothers at a roadside produce stand in Southern California in 1968. Rod and Bob Grimm at the humblest of beginnings—a small plot of carrots on their parents’ chicken farm in Orange, California. Nearly 48 years later, family-owned and operated Grimmway Farms is driving unprecedented growth across both its conventional and organic categories as one of North America’s largest carrot growers, packers, and shippers.

The founders’ story is rooted in a vision that has been carried through the generations and remains today, the pillar upon which the company bases its business model, “To take care of our customer’s needs every day of the year with consistent quality, service, and competitive pricing.”

These are the words of brothers Rod and Bob Grimm, words they shared with their sons Brandon, Brett, and Bryan who have now taken their seats at the Grimmway table to grow the legacy that their fathers could only have envisioned so many years ago.

“I always knew I wanted to come into the family business. In the ten years that I have been with Grimmway, I have watched the company evolve, and what makes me even more proud, is that I have a role in it,” Brandon Grimm tells me.

Brandon and Brett are the sons of Founder Bob Grimm. Brandon currently holds the position of General Manager of Organic Operations and Brett is positioned in Organic Sales. Bryan Grimm is the son of Founder Rod Grimm and Product
Co-ordinator for the Pacific Northwest. As Grimmway looks to the future, these three are at the forefront of the company’s legacy and are learning the business from the ground up.

Ten years ago, Brandon started with Grimmway after receiving his business degree at Concordia University, Irvine. He began by working in the company’s organic baby carrot operation and from there eventually took over operations for the frozen division. Recently, Brandon became the GM for Grimmway’s Organic Division, which includes Grimmway’s Cal-Organic Vegetable company. As GM, Brandon oversees various activities taking place between the organic baby carrot facility and Cal-Organic facility in Bakersfield, California, essentially managing receiving through shipping. Brandon brings a spirited approach to his role and the business with a work ethic that really sets a standard.

Bryan is an extremely passionate and driven individual, like his cousins. In a lot of ways, Bryan is that “thinking outside the box” guy, bringing new perspectives and viewpoints to issues and tasks that you probably wouldn’t consider on the regular. While I talk to Bryan, he is currently residing in the Tri-cities area that he calls home for part of the year as he works at Grimmway’s production facility in Washington. But, Bryan has covered a lot of ground in his first 25 years.
on earth. He graduated from Texas Christian University with a degree in Entrepreneurial Management, where he also studied Spanish. Bryan worked for Congressman Kevin McCarthy to better understand how the system worked, essentially how the political environment affects the business environment. After a short stint he decided to refocus his career and ended up working on a family friend’s avocado farm in Peru. Bryan played a pivotal role in building the infrastructure, central purchasing system, and logistics capabilities. This is where Bryan gained the experience he wanted—boots on the ground—to make his way to Grimmway.

If Brandon and Bryan are the problem solvers, Brett is the people person. Brett attended Arizona State University to earn an Ag Business degree and, without fail, came back to work at Grimmway each summer in everything from quality assurance to carrot sales; which eventually led him to his current role in organic sales. He truly is a people person. The level of caring and compassion he brings to the table has helped him build the kinds of relationships that are at the core of Grimmway’s business. His continued commitment to the growth of the company and the support of those core values, have made him an asset to the Grimmway team. Whether that is investing in the people internally who make the machine run, or driving the brand to the buyer and establishing a relationship of trust and loyalty, Brett is your guy. While only a year and a half in, he, like Brandon and Bryan, has that Grimmway spirit stitched deeply into his history and the passion for Grimmway’s people and his family.

“It is the people that make this business work. If you don’t have people putting sprinkler pipes in the field, then you don’t have water for your product and then everything comes to a grinding halt,” Brett says. “We all play an important role here, from the field to the packing house, and we respect the role that each member plays.”

It is easy to see that Grimmway is built around pillars that value hard work, integrity, passion, and community – something the Grimm family has had embedded in their lives since they were children, and then as teenagers working summers at the company.

Brandon tells me that their standard of quality is what has helped the company evolve into, and remain, a growing, relevant company over the years. “It is a good thing to be known for,” he smiles. “We want to get the best and most consistent product to customers and take the reputation my dad and uncle created and continue building the brand.”

**Innovating the Product Mix**

So what does the future of Grimmway look like? The company is always looking at its impact on the land and the sustained growth that can dictate its future. Whether that is through proprietary water and energy saving technologies, or embracing new strategies for upping productivity on the farm.
Grimmway’s research and development projects will ensure that we are as effective and efficient as we can be with land utilization,” Brandon adds.

In addition, Grimmway is always looking to new items to get buyers excited and keep the customer engaged and interested. Take the launch of organic rainbow baby carrots for example, to engage those consumers and chefs who eat with their eyes as much as with their palates.

And it doesn’t stop there. Grimmway’s Cal-Organic arm continues to research and develop new varieties of organic vegetables and organic products that complement the company’s lineup.

Consider TRUE Organic, Grimmway’s super-premium organic juice line, an example of this constant drive for differentiation. With this latest move, the company is growing its stronghold in produce and creating its own niche in the super premium juice category.

If you ask the Grimmway team, they are always looking for new, innovative products and packaging that will benefit their customers and consumers.

A Driving Force

“Baby carrots are our bread and butter,” Bryan tells me. “We continue to capture more and more market share but have evolved the company into organics in response to increased demand. Now that Cal-Organic is taking off, we see incredible potential for growth over the next 10-15 years.”

And organic growth is on the rise. Just take a look at some of these stats: the Organic Trade Association reported organic produce sales of $13 billion: $5.7 billion from mass market, $4.7 billion from specialty and natural retailers, and $2.6 billion from direct sales. Since 2011, produce total dollar sales increased by 25 percent.

With numbers like these, the future looks promising.

Bryan tells me that, “The organic program is extensive, with more than 60-plus items at present and gives us an opportunity to branch into new food trends which are driving more organic produce to the center of the plate. It is all about building excitement.”

The company also expanded its organic and conventional growing operations in recent years into the Tri-cities area of Washington State where they are growing baby carrots.

“This is a big stepping stone for us as we enter our third year of growing,” Bryan tells me. “Now, we can cut, clean, and pack baby carrots instead of shipping them back down to our Bakersfield operations.”

Empowering a Community

The Grimm family has always had the goal of remaining deeply involved in every aspect of the business, from visiting the processing facilities, meeting with every employee semi-annually, to assuring that every product meets the strictest quality standards.

The story behind Grimmway is as innovative as it is personal, to all the members involved.

“To be a part of that legacy is a true gift. People connect more with a product if there is a face and story and a life behind it, and that is what we strive to do each day,” Brett tells me.

While the company is concentrating on its growth models, product innovation, field technology advancements, and continuing to build a loyal customer base; Grimmway is also continuing to grow its programs to give back to the community. Brandon adds that the employees are really the ones that have built Grimmway into the company it is today.

They are the thread that holds the fabric together.

Positioned for growth, Brandon, Bryan, and Brett Grimm are now helping to write that next chapter in this family legacy.

One passionate word, one baby carrot, and one generation at a time.
RELATIVE HUMIDITY:
An Often Forgotten Factor for High-Quality Produce

by LAURA HILLEN
So, you’ve gotten your fruits and veggies from the field, but how do you get them to the fork in freshly-picked shape?

Adding to the already predominant supply chain initiative of good temperature control for maintaining the post-harvest freshness of fruits and vegetables, Sensitech Inc. affirms that keeping other factors at the forefront of cold chain technology is just as necessary for effective transportation; from packing, all the way to the store shelf.

Sensitech Inc., a leading global cold chain technology company, joins us to discuss the importance of preserving a suitable relative humidity in the tracking, measurement, and control of fresh produce shipments throughout the supply chain.

**Q:** So, what exactly is relative humidity, and why is maintaining it key for shipped fresh produce?

**A:** Relative humidity (RH) is the moisture content of the atmosphere, expressed as the ratio of the actual moisture content to the total possible moisture content without condensation forming. Because colder air is more capable of holding moisture than warmer air, RH is temperature dependent. Knowing the RH inside of a shipping container can be crucial for maintaining freshness, especially for produce with high water content like lettuce, cucumbers, mushrooms, strawberries, and watermelons. Both low RH and high RH may have negative impacts on produce quality, particularly if RH levels are out of the recommended specifications for long periods of time.

**Q:** Why should suppliers and receivers in the industry look to avoid low RH in their produce?

**A:** Produce handled at RH levels lower than its relative water content may experience dehydration, shriveling, decreased gloss, decrease in market value, and higher susceptibility to disease. This may lead to brand erosion for the supplier and the retailer, as quality is a key driver for shopper behavior. In addition, for products sold by weight, water loss can lead to salable weight loss and reduced profit. A 2 percent weight loss may not affect the appearance quality of a product, but the cost of that lost weight can be significant. For example, for a pallet weighing 500 kg, 2 percent accounts for a loss of 10 kg per pallet. If the product is valued at $10 per kg, at retail pricing this weight loss results in a loss of $100 per pallet.

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Q: What kind of distinguishable effects can you see in produce with low RH?

A: Low RH can be seen in fresh produce in a variety of ways (e.g. shrinking of the skin or shriveling) and water loss due to low RH can also be affected by the following characteristics:

- **SKIN**: An apple, for example, will lose moisture at a slower rate than a head of lettuce due to its skin thickness.
- **SURFACE/VOLUME PROPORTION**: Leafy vegetables, like lettuce or spinach, which typically have a high surface-to-volume ratio, are more susceptible to dehydration than cylindrical-shaped produce, such as a potato.
- **DAMAGE**: Cuts, lesions, and marks on the surface of the product due to mishandling can lead to higher water loss and increase the product’s susceptibility to disease and decay.
- **VAPOR PRESSURE DEFFICIET (VPD)**: VPD is the force which drives water from the product to the surrounding air. The VPD is influenced by the difference between the temperature of the produce, and the temperature and RH of the surrounding air. Higher temperature and RH differences lead to higher water loss.

Q: So, alternatively, does this mean too high of an RH also has an effect on fresh produce?

A: On the other end of the spectrum, produce handled at RH levels higher than its relative water content is likely to encounter condensation, disease development, or physiological disorders, resulting in an increased rate of product senescence.

When the RH of the atmosphere reaches saturation (100 percent), water vapor will condense on the surface of the produce. The temperature at which condensation forms is called the dew point, and it is the most useful humidity parameter when dealing with condensation problems. Psychrometric charts are often used to determine the relationship between temperature, RH, and dew point. Unwanted condensation on products may encourage faster disease development or physiological disorders, resulting in decay and loss of product. Condensation can also damage labels or cardboard packaging materials, resulting in problems when unloading the cargo.

Q: Are high RH levels considered undesirable for all fresh produce items?

A: High RH levels (85-95 percent) are usually recommended for transporting most fresh fruits and vegetables in order to prevent moisture loss. However, produce such as dried onions, garlic, dates, dried fruits, and nuts need to be transported in conditions of lower relative humidity. For example, the optimal RH range for dried onions and garlic is 65-70 percent.

Q: Can you tell me what kind of benefits the supply chain can expect to see with a properly maintained RH?

A: Maintaining both temperature and RH at the ideal recommended specifications (specific for each produce type) during transport and storage is vitally important to ensure freshness and an increased shelf life. Seriously dehydrated or decayed produce is generally considered unmarketable and rejected. A well-maintained RH, along with other factors within the supply chain can optimize freshness, reduce food waste, and thereby maximize profit margins.
### HONEY CRISP
- **Flavor:** Honey sweet
- **Texture:** Firm, fine grain; very crisp
- **Size:** Medium–Large
- **Color:** Reddish stripes; slight red blush over yellow background
- **Season:** Late August to Mid July (Domestic)

### SWEET TANGO®
- **Flavor:** Crisp, citrus notes, and a lively touch of spice; complements of a sweet honey finish
- **Texture:** Firm, fine; crisp
- **Size:** Medium–Large
- **Color:** Reddish on yellow, to light green background
- **Season:** August–December

### AMBROSIA™
- **Flavor:** Sweet, honey-like
- **Texture:** Crisp, fine-grained flesh
- **Size:** Varies
- **Color:** Red, sun-kissed
- **Season:** Year-round (Domestic) May–September (Import)

### GRANNY SMITH
- **Flavor:** Strong tartness
- **Texture:** Firm, medium grain; very crisp
- **Size:** Medium–Large
- **Color:** Green, slight pink blush
- **Season:** Year-round

### JAZZ™
- **Flavor:** Sweet, tart
- **Texture:** Dense, crunchy
- **Size:** Varies
- **Color:** Bright red with subtle yellow under-stripping
- **Season:** October–June (WA) June–September (Southern Hemisphere)

### PINK LADY®
- **Flavor:** Zippy and tart
- **Texture:** Crisp and firm
- **Size:** Varies
- **Color:** Reddish-pink blush with yellow background
- **Season:** Year-round (Domestic)

From candy-sweet to face-scrunchingly tart, sometimes there’s nothing quite like an apple to satisfy your fruity cravings. Here are just a few of the many varieties that make up the multi-billion dollar produce category.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>GALA</strong></th>
<th><strong>FLAVOR</strong></th>
<th>Mildly sweet with floral aroma</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEXTURE</strong></td>
<td>Crunchy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SIZE</strong></td>
<td>Small–Medium</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>COLOR</strong></td>
<td>Pale golden yellow, with stripy to full red blush</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SEASON</strong></td>
<td>Year-round</td>
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</tr>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>GOLDEN DELICIOUS</strong></th>
<th><strong>FLAVOR</strong></th>
<th>Sweet and mellow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEXTURE</strong></td>
<td>Silky with crisp, thin skin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIZE</strong></td>
<td>Medium–Large</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COLOR</strong></td>
<td>Golden yellow to white</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEASON</strong></td>
<td>Year-round</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PIÑATA®</strong></th>
<th><strong>FLAVOR</strong></th>
<th>Crisp and juicy with classic apple flavors and a tropical twist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEXTURE</strong></td>
<td>Firm with crisp, thin skin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIZE</strong></td>
<td>Medium–Large</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COLOR</strong></td>
<td>Red with yellow-orange background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEASON</strong></td>
<td>November–May</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>KIKU®</strong></th>
<th><strong>FLAVOR</strong></th>
<th>Super sweet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEXTURE</strong></td>
<td>Crunchy, fresh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIZE</strong></td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COLOR</strong></td>
<td>Red-striped</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEASON</strong></td>
<td>October–April (Domestic) May–August (Import)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>RED DELICIOUS</strong></th>
<th><strong>FLAVOR</strong></th>
<th>Sweet and mellow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEXTURE</strong></td>
<td>Silky with thin, crisp skin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIZE</strong></td>
<td>Medium–Large</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COLOR</strong></td>
<td>Scarlet red</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEASON</strong></td>
<td>Year-round</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>FUJI</strong></th>
<th><strong>FLAVOR</strong></th>
<th>Sugary sweet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEXTURE</strong></td>
<td>Firm, fine grain; very crisp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIZE</strong></td>
<td>Medium–Large</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COLOR</strong></td>
<td>Reddish stripes, slight red blush over yellow background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEASON</strong></td>
<td>Year-round</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>BRAEBURN</strong></th>
<th><strong>FLAVOR</strong></th>
<th>Rich, sweet-tart, spicy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEXTURE</strong></td>
<td>Juicy, and crisp flesh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIZE</strong></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COLOR</strong></td>
<td>Varies from orange to red over a yellow background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEASON</strong></td>
<td>October–May</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MCINTOSH</strong></th>
<th><strong>FLAVOR</strong></th>
<th>Fresh apple cider flavor and mild tartness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEXTURE</strong></td>
<td>Thick yet tender skin, crisp, juicy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIZE</strong></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COLOR</strong></td>
<td>Bright to deep red over a green background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEASON</strong></td>
<td>September–June</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>KANZI®</strong></th>
<th><strong>FLAVOR</strong></th>
<th>Sweetly tart, exotic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEXTURE</strong></td>
<td>Firm, fine grain, very crisp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIZE</strong></td>
<td>Varies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COLOR</strong></td>
<td>Red with yellow hues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEASON</strong></td>
<td>November (Domestic) End of May–August (Import)</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
In the past year apple sales reached $2.9 bil.

Out of that total, the Gala apple is the most popular, contributing to 22.5% of total apple sales.

How did the other varieties do? 

Honeycrisp 17.1%  
Fuji 15.1%  
Granny Smith 11.1%  
Red Delicious 10.9%  
Pink Lady 5.3%  
Golden Delicious 4.5%  
Mcintosh 8.7%  
Ambrosia 2.3%  
Jazz Apples 1.9%  
All Other 5.7%

Source | Nielsen Perishables Group
INGREDIENTS

1 Stemilt Lil Snappers™ apple
1 marshmallow
Apple corer (for marshmallow “eyes”)

SERVINGS: 1

For more delicious, healthy, & easy-to-prepare recipes visit www.stemilt.com.

DIRECTIONS

1. Make two lengthwise, vertical cuts to the apple on either side of the stem to divide your apple into three parts; two domed “halves” from each side of the core, and a middle slice of apple containing the core itself.

2. Slice one of the domed halves into 6-8 wedges to serve as the critter’s legs.

3. Set aside the other apple half to use as the critter’s body.

4. Place the middle slice of apple containing the core on your cutting board, and make two cuts on either side of the core from stem to base. These two new slices will now become your critter’s claws. Discard the apple core, and make a few simple zig-zag cuts into the flesh of the slices to create a “claw-like” shape.

5. Arrange your critter’s legs on a plate, fanning them out (as shown in the photo), then place the “claws” in front of the legs with your reserved apple half on top for the head.

6. Cut a marshmallow in half. Use an apple corer to cut small rounds from the insides of each marshmallow half. Then stick the “goopy” side of each round of marshmallow to the critter’s head to serve as its eyes.
By now, you’ve undoubtedly heard of umami, the fifth taste which skated by unheard of for almost a century until its recent explosion onto the foodservice scene. But what do you really know about it?

By definition, tastes are physical sensations in your taste buds caused by chemical compounds from food on your tongue, while flavors are the overall impressions you get from taste combined with smell. These chemical compounds from food are like keys to the keyholes on our tongue, unlocking certain tastes. The umami taste comes from compounds called glutamates, especially in the presence of ribonucleotides, both of which are byproducts of long, slow culinary processes like roasting, aging, drying, and fermenting. Interestingly, our appreciation for umami could be biologically based, considering human breast milk may have the highest glutamate concentration of any mammal.

The term “umami” was coined in 1908, but it wasn’t until 2006 that neuroscientists located the corresponding taste bud receptors and validated it as the fifth taste. For years umami was lumped in with savoriness, a flavor, and thereby went unrecognized as its own taste. So, like Pluto, umami has always been there, but we haven’t known how to classify it.

It is hard to nail down exactly what the umami taste is, but you know it when you encounter it. It is a hearty, robust, rich taste you might associate with bone broths, aged beef, or soy sauce. When you feel a wholly satisfying sensation from a bite that summons a deep “Mmmmmm,” you’re likely having a transcendental experience with umami.

You might consider it like this; salt is not a good substitute for soy sauce because soy sauce isn’t just salty, it has high glutamate content due to the fermentation process used to make it. So that extra “umph” you get from using soy sauce over salt in cooking is due to the glutamate.

Umami eludes the tongue, in both palate and vocabulary. And it’s definitely not just a fad you can wait out; umami has helped expand culinary understanding and broaden flavor profiles in food. But with such an ambiguous reputation, how can you harness this hip taste for your own purposes?
There are lots of ways to add umami to your recipes. However, the trend to focus on fresh ingredients and natural flavors makes glutamate-rich mushrooms a powerful tool for unlocking umami. They are a low calorie, nutrient-dense option which punctuate the earthy notes in any dish. Some companies, like Monterey Mushrooms and the Mushroom Council, are creating umami tsunamis with innovative recipes such as mushroom and beef tacos, lamb and mushroom ragout, or baby bella, fig, brie, and honey bruschetta.

Adding mushrooms in any form will underscore the umami in a recipe. However, processes like sautéing, grilling, roasting, and drying will release more glutamates and ribonucleotides. Additionally, varieties like shiitake, portobello, crimini, and button mushrooms naturally contain more glutamate than others.

No matter which way you slice them, mushrooms are a great way to start experimenting with umami.

For more recipes like this visit: MONTEREYMUSHROOMS.COM & MUSHROOMINFO.COM

Photo Credit: Culinary Institute of America & The Mushroom Council.
A RICH Heritage

BY MELISSA DE LEON
Deeply committed to maintaining its culture of integrity while producing fresh market tomatoes, great morale has helped the Lipman family to grow a nimble company that reacts quickly to changing demands in the marketplace.

Darren Micelle, Lipman’s Chief Operating Officer says, “We are in a very commodity-oriented business, and delivering fresh tomatoes and vegetables of the highest quality and consistency to our customers is our driving focus.”

Mark Barineau (center) and his Research & Development team

Speaking with three key members of the team, Darren Micelle, Mark Barineau, and Gerry Odell, I hear firsthand how Lipman Produce grew from core values of customer service, product quality, staff retention, innovation, and food safety.

It is now “a melting pot of families” born of and governed by progeny of Max Lipman, who exemplified respect for clients and employees alike.

“WE ARE A CUSTOMER-DRIVEN COMPANY, AND IT’S NOT DIFFICULT TO SEE WHAT CONSUMERS WANT.”

—MARK BARINEAU
The more places you grow, the better you grow.

Mark Barineau, Lipman’s Director of Research and Development (R&D), has constructed the program from which the company’s proprietary varieties are born. The best example is Crimson Queen, Lipman’s tomato which is full of the flavor and color characteristics customers demand from field-grown tomatoes.

“I’ve developed about 70 commercial hybrids during my career that have been sold around the world. From a product standpoint, I would say that the best innovation, the one I am most proud of, is Lipman’s Crimson Queen,” states Barineau. “It’s the largest-volume fresh market tomato that Lipman sells because it has a unique red coloration, pleasant flavor, and is high in lycopene. I am proud to say our customers ask for it by name.”

While the Crimson Queen holds the crown, Lipman’s R&D department has grown to more than 30 proprietary hybrid varieties, including the newly-born Ripe Bites and
Vintage Ripes, both of which grow year-round, and are bred for both high-flavor and versatility.

Throughout that growth, Barineau has seen his department grow to a familial group that strives to succeed and continues to drive flavor in conventionally-grown tomatoes and vegetables.

With a process that is a delicate balance of practice and personality, it is with care that central employees are added. Barineau explains that he hand-selected key members of his staff, having worked with them for several years, to ensure that an essential equilibrium between remaining professional and working as a team is maintained.

Another significant member is Chief Farming Officer Gerry Odell, who has been in the tomato business since 1985. Odell says that one of the key evolutions he’s witnessed in his tenure with the company is the unification of the Lipman brand, executed by Kent Shoemaker, Chief Executive Officer. “Before Kent, we had different names, locations… Now, we have a more cohesive message and approach, and our customers know who we are and what they can expect from us.”

That cohesiveness has become even more apparent, and perhaps more necessary due to the amount of growth and reach Lipman has experienced in recent years.

Lipman has made great strides acquiring companies across the country that align with its vision, drive, and culture of respect. Some of these companies include family-oriented, quality-focused names like Phoenix, Arizona-based Legend Distributing, grower and distributor The Produce Exchange, and, more recently, Denver, Colorado-based Sam’s Produce, which have added to Lipman’s acreage and distribution.

“We’ve acquired several companies across the country in the last five years, and one of the key factors in an interview for us to acquire a company is whether the principles and the employees will be a cultural fit,” Micelle tells me.

When discussing the process, he paints a picture of a “melting pot of families,” rather than a merging of businesses, with the company’s structure always coming back to the foundation laid, and still governed by, the original Lipman family.

Odell echoes this, explaining, “The Lipman family is very committed to the business and enjoys staying
involved. Their biggest focus has always been fresh market tomatoes. They are very supportive and keenly interested in the business.”

That feeling seems to resonate with each member of the team, as each individual tells me that treating employees well is not only important in how the company operates, but it echoes in the respect and devotion each client receives every day.

“We are a customer-driven company, and it’s not difficult to see what consumers want,” says Barineau. “They want safe, attractive, and nutritious foods, but they may not realize that all of these traits require managing very complicated physiology and genetics.”

“Food safety is something we simply must continue to excel in,” Micelle says emphatically when discussing meeting consumer desires. “We want total confidence that when a customer takes a Lipman product off the shelf they are fully assured that they can trust that it’s going to be safe and healthy.”

Barineau emphasizes, “We continue to drive food safety initiatives not only in our company, but for every tomato company in the business. As an industry, Lipman is only as good as the weakest link, so, as far as we’re concerned, we are going to do all we can to bring everybody up.”

Another area where Lipman is helping to hone and refine industry standards is packaging technology, a time-consuming challenge. While growing new and improved fresh products and successfully getting them to market is an ongoing challenge, the company embraces it fully.

In more than 80 years, Max Lipman’s tomato seed has sprouted into a proud, transparent company that practices integrity-informed business while accommodating the changing needs and demands of grateful customers. As for what additional fields of innovation are on the horizon, we will have to wait and see.

“LIPMAN IS ONLY AS GOOD AS THE WEAKEST LINK, SO, AS FAR AS WE’RE CONCERNED, WE ARE GOING TO DO ALL WE CAN TO BRING EVERYBODY UP.”

—MARK BARINEAU
Looking to build a winning destination in produce departments? If you ask the team behind Braga Fresh how to do it, the company will tell you that the two main sales drivers of the retail salad category over the last couple of years have been organics and conventional chopped salads. Braga Fresh had a vision, plus the expertise and resources, to create a new product line that satisfies the intersection of these leading trends. With the debut of Josie’s Organics Sweet Kale Chopped Salad and Asian Chopped Salad, the company is doing just that.

The company’s Organic Sweet Kale Chopped Salad (10 oz.) comes complete with dried cranberries, roasted pumpkin seeds, and poppy seed dressing, combined with kale, broccoli, green cabbage, and radicchio to truly round out the highly-demanded flavor profile.

In addition, the Organic Asian Chopped Salad (12 oz.) brings together wonton strips, sliced almonds, and sesame dressing along with green onions, cilantro, celery, carrots, and green cabbage. Available in the Josie’s Organics signature blue polka dot, high-graphic bags, these new items from Braga Fresh are winning over consumers in the taste-test arena.

With this initial launch, Braga’s goal was four fold: Make them organic, make them "craveable," make them flavorful, and create value at retail. With more organic chopped salads in the pipeline, Braga Fresh is helping to keep produce departments at the forefront of trending categories. Check out bragafresh.com and josiesorganics.com for the latest on both trade-facing and consumer-focused products and innovations.
Julie Krivanek: Move On Up

by Laura Hillen
What keeps me up at night? Nothing,” Julie Krivanek smiles calmly as I ask her what concerns remain at the forefront of her motivation. With accolades and achievements adorning her history, Julie has carved herself a successful spot not only in the fresh produce industry, but in professional realms beyond. So, for those who know the thriving businesswoman, her answer is right on track.

Julie heads and drives her own strategy consulting firm, Krivanek Consulting, specifically tailored to the produce industry and the executives who lead it. With a heap of notable names to enrich her client list, such as Naturipe Farms, To-Jo Mushrooms, Sunkist, Get Fresh Sales, Mission Produce, SunFed, Mann Packing, Pro*Act, and Kraft Foods, Julie brings the same focus and dedication to success for herself to the clients she serves, launching them further towards business growth, national platforms, and beyond.

Julie’s direct involvement and hands-on approach with her clients is what sets her firm apart from the professional consulting that most companies are used to—trademarks that have helped her company reach its 25th anniversary with ease.

“Every company is different, so each program is custom-made to achieve the most profitable growth for their unique model,” Julie says.

Julie zeroes in on strategy as a management tool for her clients, but warns that her focus has a different connotation than what people might normally expect.

“What happened with the word ‘strategy,’ is that people don’t actually know what it means. It’s been overused and oversimplified. Especially in our urgent, fast-paced industry. People make mistakes when they start at the short term tactical level and move directly into creating ‘the plan.’ Strategic and critical thinking about the future comes first,” Julie asserts.

With Julie at its head, Krivanek Consulting helps produce companies rigorously examine their own businesses, analyze the marketplace, and recognize trends on a domestic and global level. By focusing on where a company is at now, and where it wants to be in five years, Julie says that a company is able to develop a plan that engages all company leaders in implementing a clear path to success.

“Strategy tells a business how to aim their human, financial, and operational resources to achieve something tangible in
the future. But it is complicated because it also requires deep analysis of competition, consumer and supply chain trends, and what customers tell us about how to improve the business,” Julie says. “It’s the hunt for obstacles and opportunities that lead to good decisions and, lastly, a plan for execution.”

Julie provides her clients with invaluable and straightforward feedback as she calculates the executive skills and management practices needed throughout each department in a company. These assessments, although they may not be easy to hear initially, guarantee that each produce business can reach its peak performance by recognizing what is working in its business model and fixing what isn’t.

“I won’t tell you what to do, I’ll show you how to do it,” Julie tells me, clearly outlining what makes her style so distinct and effective as she spearheads the road to profitable growth unique to each fresh produce company.

“So, how did Julie rise to where she stands now, head of her own firm with a sharp reputation in produce, picking up distinctions along the way such as youngest and first female Vice President in the Fortune 10, and United Fresh’s 2016 Women In Produce Honoree?”

Born the daughter of first generation Czech-Americans immigrated from Prague, Julie first called “home” Chicago, Illinois. Julie credits her family’s rigid Czech and “old country” structures for her success. The fearless businesswoman learned the values of prioritization and persistence through the values of her family, especially her grandmother, “Babi,” as Julie calls her.

“She was the inspiration for my life; very funny, and tough as nails,” Julie remembers. “I have Babi’s DNA. Fearless, resilient, never quitting, and an immigrant’s drive. I had to be better than good.”

These traits went further than just laying the foundation for Julie’s future success, as Babi also introduced her to an industry that Julie would later fall in love with. This career destination, though it would be years before she cemented her foothold there, was the fresh produce industry.

“My grandparents were farmers in Czechoslovakia, and then opened a grocery store in the Czech neighborhood when they moved to Chicago,” Julie says, naming her relationship with her grandparents as her heritage in fresh produce. “They worked 18 hours a day in that store, and they always had the best vegetables in the city.”

Julie’s hereditary drive was evident as her grandparents lamentably lost everything to the Great Depression before rebuilding their entire fortune to open the first natural food store chain in Chicago.

“I was a produce baby before I was even in the industry,” she laughs, referring to produce as the “family business.”

Before Julie could secure her own stature in the produce industry, however, she had other professional arenas to conquer first.

Julie attended Purdue University’s Krannert School of Business where she was educated to be a General Manager for Fortune 500 companies, then launched straight into industries where few women had been before; oil and coal.

“The first few years were brutal and I constantly wanted to quit. After work, I’d call Babi and she’d always say the same thing: ‘Pull yourself together!’” Julie says.

Pull herself together she did, and Julie’s drive and professional assets soon helped her transition from being an unwelcome, token female in the industry, to a secret weapon. But, landing in her last position on the merger and acquisition team as the Senior Vice President of the “crown jewel” sector, the coal division, Julie says that she couldn’t shake the feeling that neither coal nor oil were her dream path.

“I wanted my own business. I was at the top of my game, but I was miserable. So I drove to work one morning and resigned,” Julie asserts.

Julie originally started her own firm cultivating management programs for all industries, which came to include noted names such as Oracle, Hewlett Packard, and AT&T.
However, following a call from United Fresh asking her to be the keynote speaker for the inaugural DuPont leadership program, Julie realized she had found her legacy. As Julie’s reputation in the industry flourished, she began consciously cutting out other companies, leaving only produce on her professional plate.

“My first career made me tough. Produce made me grateful,” Julie ruminates.

So, ultimately, why produce?

“If this industry doesn’t inspire, nothing will. We are the epicenter of health and wellness, taste, and flavor—all with an entrepreneurial spirit that stands head and shoulders above all other industries,” Julie says, showing her passion for the industry that wooed her enough to settle within it, but not settle for stagnant results.

This passionate dedication has seen Julie through 25 sets of worn out luggage as she travels throughout the world, adding destinations such as Canada, Mexico, Israel, Chile, and Colombia to her professional portfolio.

“I’m personally inspired by my world travels to unique places and cultures. The more different we may feel from others in other countries, the more we are exactly the same,” says Julie. “Being a world traveler has also given me unique insights into the global food industry, and regional farm-to-fork movements.”

For a driven business woman such as Julie, her “work hard” mentality instilled in her from the beginning, paired with her canny leadership perceptions has seen her beyond just advising top-level executives to mentoring the next group of produce leaders as well.

“It’s not just about me, though. It’s all about the people’s journeys that I’ve shared,” Julie says of her over 20 years working to shape the United Fresh leadership program, its alums, and the realms they’ve moved on to. “The industry has been seeded with these leaders who are making lasting and meaningful contributions, it’s really just exquisite.”

As Julie continues to think ahead, instead of focusing on the past or being limited by the present, she says that the advice most commonly given to the next wave of innovators is something she’s well practiced in herself.

“Jump in with both feet! The opportunities simply stagger in this industry, and in order to stay relevant we always have to keep growing and progressing,” she says, drawing on decades of mentorship, strategy, and produce knowledge. “I don’t want to see this industry stagnant.”

With her professional gaze set far ahead on visualized successes that others would barely have begun to outline, there’s one excerpt from Julie’s focused wisdom that’s stuck with me the most, and promises to carry the industry even further:

“Obstacles do not block the path, they are the path.” And what an exciting path it has been.
We are actively pursuing sites across the Mid-Atlantic, from Pennsylvania and New Jersey down to Georgia,” Will Harwood tells me as we discuss the buzz about Lidl’s expansion into the U.S. The competitive retail space may have its challenges here in the states, but Lidl’s even more competitive pricing strategy is one of the many components that will help it to adapt.

And the company isn’t shy in telling you exactly what it wants out of the perfect locale. With a listed requirement of at least 3.5 acres to accommodate a 36,000-sq.-ft. stand-alone store with a minimum 150 dedicated car parking spaces and a signalized, full access intersection with high-visibility preferred, on a site positioned in an established retail location, Lidl US has created a business strategy that has been analyzed and revised down to the last detail. You can add a dense population area within three miles and traffic counts of more than 20,000 vehicles per day to that list of requirements as well. Currently, with 10,000 stores in 27 countries, that strategy seems to be working.

While still in the early stages of U.S. expansion, the company is already building its vendor base across the country.

“We work directly with suppliers, and are always interested in connecting with like-minded partners and a broad range of companies who share our commitment to quality,” Will adds. “What we hope for is to grow a great supplier base with companies who want to grow with us as we expand.”

It has been important for Lidl US from the get-go to have those direct relationships with suppliers, to understand the supply chain, and build the relationships necessary to not only build toward success, but to ensure it. Lidl US’ centralized distribution model allows the company to cut down on travel costs for a shorter, quicker supply chain, which is why the company took this approach. In addition, Lidl US’ long-term
contracts allow the company to spend less time on negotiations, and more energy on executing a diverse product base with high-quality products at what the company considers incredibly low prices.

“Our produce experts assess each supplier on a case-by-case basis,” Will tells me. “We welcome communication from all suppliers, regardless of size, who are interested in working and growing with us as we expand. If suppliers have specific certifications, such as Organic or Fair Trade, we’re eager to hear about it, and factor that into our decision making as appropriate.”

“What we hope for is to grow a great supplier base with companies who want to grow with us as we expand.”

—Will Harwood
The first Lidl stores were opened in 1973 and as the company entered the 1980s, it was establishing itself as a household name throughout Germany. Lidl started to open stores outside Germany during the 1990s, and today Lidl stores can be found in nearly every country in Europe. Since establishing itself in the U.K. in 1994, Lidl has grown consistently and always with the goal of continuing to play a major role in the exploration of new markets in Europe and beyond.

Will adds that, at the core, “Our expansion is driven by our belief that Lidl will be a great option and shopping destination for customers here. We are committed to delivering the highest quality products at the lowest possible prices, and this promise will apply not only to our produce selection—which will be robust—but also to our entire range.”

Along with a treasured vendor base, Lidl US is also committed to the highest standards of social and environmental responsibility and ethical conduct. Among those efforts from supplier-partners are that they must provide safe working conditions, treat workers with dignity and respect, conduct business in a fair and ethical manner, and use environmentally sustainable practices at all locations from which they supply products or perform services for Lidl US.

Don’t believe me? Check out the company’s Code of Conduct. Lidl US has developed this Vendor Code of Conduct to encourage the goal of improving social and environmental standards practiced by the company’s vendors across multiple countries.

“As a concept, we are building on the foundation that has made Lidl successful in Europe while creating a unique shopping experience for customers in the U.S. that is unlike anything in the market,” Will says.

For more than 40 years, Lidl has been a growing presence in the European grocery marketplace but has a history dating back to the 1930s, when the company was founded in Germany as a grocery wholesaler. The first Lidl stores were opened in 1973 and as the company entered the 1980s, it was establishing itself as a household name throughout Germany. Lidl started to open stores outside Germany during the 1990s, and today Lidl stores can be found in nearly every country in Europe. Since establishing itself in the U.K. in 1994, Lidl has grown consistently and always with the goal of continuing to play a major role in the exploration of new markets in Europe and beyond.
“We are building on the foundation that has made Lidl successful in Europe while creating a unique shopping experience for customers in the U.S.”

—Will Harwood

In addition to the upcoming U.S. launch, the company has broken ground on three regional headquarters and distribution hubs, having selected Alamance County, North Carolina, for its new $125 million operation. Lidl US has also chosen Arlington County, Virginia, for its U.S. headquarters, and Spotsylvania County, Virginia, for a second regional headquarters and distribution center. The grocer is spending more than $202 million on those facilities in Virginia.

“We are confident our offering will be very attractive to customers in the U.S., and we look forward to introducing them to a unique shopping experience and expanding organically to meet demand for our stores,” Wills adds.

Lidl’s move into the U.S. market comes on the heels of the accelerating expansion of ALDI here in the states. Both, U.K. powerhouse retailers. With ALDI planning to operate approximately 45 California stores by the end of 2016 just here in our home state, and more than 2,000 stores nationwide by the end of 2018, we will be sure to keep our finger on the pulse of all things grocery.

For Lidl, entering such a competitive retail space, is all in the planning. Having the right team to execute the company’s initial roots in the U.S. is essential.

And it’s roots that Lidl US is aiming to grow now, and growth it seems, we have in store.
Carnival is an acorn squash named for its beautiful color. Small—Spotted with striped colors of white, orange, yellow, and green—Red Kuri has a rich, buttery flesh and savory flavor. The nice thing about Red Kuri is that when cooked you can eat the skin, too.

Turks Turban is the nuttiest of the winter squash. Its flavor is often compared to a hazelnut and goes well with East Indian ingredients such as tahini. Medium—Range from mottled green, orange, to yellow—Consumers can enjoy squash and pumpkins in any number of ways. In addition to the squash category’s stand-bys of zucchini, yellow, and grey summer squash, here are some more varieties to brighten produce departments. And check out some pumpkin tidbits as well.
**Kabocha**

**Flavor:** Our favorite description we’ve heard of for Kabocha is a sweet potato crossed with pie pumpkin, then sprinkled with nuttiness.

**Size:** Medium

**Color:** Dull finish with dark green skin and bright yellow-orange flesh

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**Delicata**

**Flavor:** This is the sweet potato of the winter squash world. Its skins are softer than the other squash, and its meat is very sweet.

**Size:** Medium

**Color:** Cream-to-yellow-colored skin with green stripes, and orange-yellow flesh

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**Butternut**

**Flavor:** Butternut squash has a similar taste profile to a sweet potato, but not as sweet. It works well in savory or sweet dishes.

**Size:** Medium

**Color:** Cream-colored exterior with bright orange flesh

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**Acorn / Danish**

**Flavor:** Acorn squash has a sweet, nutty flavor.

**Size:** Small

**Color:** Rich butter-colored interior and thick, dark green and orange skin

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**Spaghetti**

**Flavor:** Spaghetti squash has a very mild flavor and is not sweet like many other winter squashes. It is known for its stringy, pasta-like threads.

**Size:** Medium-Large

**Color:** Ranges from pale cream, to bright yellow

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**Pie Pumpkins**

**Flavor:** With different sub-varieties from Jack Sprat and Cannon Ball to Little Giant and Mischief, Pie Pumpkins offer a range of eating experiences from sugary or starchy, and string-less to velvety and dense.

**Size:** Small-Large, depending on variety

**Color:** Ranges from traditional pumpkin orange to deep, rich orange
**SQUASH STATISTICS**

**TOTAL DOLLAR**

- Summer: $397.6 MIL (0.6% increase)
- Winter: $158.4 MIL (0.3% increase)
- Pumpkin: $116.1 MIL (0.2% increase)
- Total: $672.1 MIL (4.1% increase)

**VOLUME**

- Summer: 423.6 MIL
- Winter: 130.3 MIL
- Pumpkin: 246.8 MIL

**AVERAGE RETAIL**

- Summer: $1.61
- Winter: $1.22
- Pumpkin: $2.49

Source: Nielsen Perishables Group
Producing, Picking and Packing More Pecks of Peppers than Peter Piper

25 years ago, Prime Time International was formed — to specialize in the growing and marketing of a booming new category — colored peppers.

Based in Southern California’s Coachella Valley, through our many years of experience, we have located and secured optimum growing locations in California as well as Mexico to ensure availability of green, yellow, orange and red peppers 365 days a year. And we’ve now added Sweet Mini-Peppers to the mix.

But we didn’t do this alone. Thanks to our dedicated team of employees, our hard-working associates and vendors, and our growing list of loyal customers, we are proud to be the largest year-round grower, packer and shipper of colored peppers in the United States.

And that’s why we’ve been known as The Pepper People for twenty-five years.
SINFULLY SWEET & SPICY GAZPACHO

INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 lb (½ pkg) sinfully sweet campari®
- 1 lb (½ pkg) true rebel mix tomatoes®
- 2 sweet bells – yellow & orange bell peppers
- 2 luscious seedless long english® cucumbers
- 1 bunch green onion (greens only)
- ½ cup fresh grated horseradish
- 1 bunch cilantro
- 2 jalapeños
- 2 limes, juice and zest
- ½ tsp black pepper
- ½ tsp sea salt

DIRECTIONS

1. Wash each vegetable.
2. Trim the green onions and remove the whites.
3. Split the jalapeños, then remove and discard the seeds.
4. Peel and grate the fresh horseradish (reserve 2 tbsp for garnish later).
5. Zest and juice the lime.
6. Combine all ingredients in blender (except a couple tbsp of the horseradish).
7. Chill and serve extremely cold in chilled glasses, with fresh horseradish stirred in at the last moment.

For more delicious, healthy, & easy-to-prepare recipes visit www.villagefarms.com.
Melissa’s Picks

PMA FOODSERVICE 2016

A NEW LOCATION didn’t stop organizers for the annual PMA Foodservice Convention from keeping a beat on flavor and fashion trends in produce. From packaging to products, here are a few that resonated as I browsed the floor:

1 Shanley Farms’ Citriburst Finger Lime Pearls | These finger lime pearls don’t only look like an attractive alternative to caviar, but are also aptly named for the burst of flavor that ensues when you squeeze the citrus into your mouth. I can easily picture these garnishing a cocktail or a sushi dish, and rumor on the floor was pearls can act as an appetite suppressant, too. No research yet, so the jury is out, but it certainly helped sate me whilst I browsed the show.

2 Gourmet Garden’s New Lightly Dried Herbs & Spices | I’ll admit that when I first heard “dried herbs,” I felt a little out of my depth, but then another phrase was added to my vocabulary that pushed this produce into the picks: wilt guilt.

That’s exactly what Gourmet Garden has to offer with this new launch—all the benefits of cooking with freshly-picked herbs that happen to be able to withstand the shelf for up to two weeks... after they’re opened. Washed, chopped, and packed within 18 hours of being plucked from the earth, I’m happy to report a broadening of my horizons when it comes to what makes a product “fresh.”

3 Gold Coast Packing’s Caulifornia Snow | I once thought mashed potatoes were my comfort food, until I came across Caulifornia Snow. Already value-added into a tiny cauliflower rice, Gold Coast’s new product makes such substitutes as mashed potatoes or riced cauliflower pizza crusts easier than I could have ever hoped for. Convenience, added nutrition, and maintaining my comfort foods? What more could anyone ask for?

4 SunFed’s Organics | As a first-time exhibitor at the show, I guess you could call this pick my “rookie of the year.” SunFed has expanded the focus of its Perfect Produce® program to incorporate a wide reach of organics, introducing four new offerings; Organic Roma Tomatoes, Organic Cherry Tomatoes, Organic Mini Sweet Peppers, and Organic Melonheads. It was not only a stellar, on-trend debut, but a flavorful one that sported that ever-present SunFed flair of color and personality. Amongst the vast array of exhibitors, this was not a stop I would soon forget.
ORGANIC GRAPE TOMATOES & ROASTED PEPPER SALAD

INGREDIENTS

1 pint Pure Flavor® Organic Juno Bites Snacking Tomatoes, halved
2 Pure Flavor® Organic Sweet Bell Peppers
1 small garlic clove, minced
1 fresh lemon, juiced
1 tsp balsamic vinaigrette
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil

Sea salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

SERVINGS: 1

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425° F.
2. Line a baking sheet or baking pan with aluminum foil. Place Pure Flavor® Organic Sweet Bell Peppers on pan.
3. Bake for 30–40 mins or until darkened, turning peppers halfway through. Set aside to cool.
4. In a large bowl add garlic, lemon juice, balsamic vinaigrette, olive oil, salt, and pepper. Mix well. Add Pure Flavor® Organic Juno Bites Snacking Tomatoes to bowl to marinate.
5. Remove stem and seeds from peppers. Slice to a desired width.
6. Add peppers to the tomatoes and marinade. Mix well and serve.

Tip: For additional flavoring, add finely chopped basil to the mix.

For more delicious, healthy, & easy-to-prepare recipes visit www.pure-flavor.com
Jessica’s Picks
PMA FOODSERVICE 2016

Innovative new produce items aren’t just for retail. The PMA Foodservice show reminds us of this year after year, with 2016 being no exception. Here’s a sneak peak at just a few of the items from the floor that you may be seeing in the foodservice arena soon:

1. Mann’s Roma Crunch | One thing I’ve truly been crazy for lately are lettuce cups, and with Mann’s Roma crunch I think I may have found the perfect leafy vehicle. A combination of romaine and iceberg, it has the beautiful color and nutritional value you’d expect from a romaine, with the crisp and compact texture of an iceberg. Throw a tofu and green onion lettuce wrap mixture in there, or a quinoa and pomegranate blend.

2. Ippolito Value-Added Brussels Sprouts | In a perfect world, every foodservice operator on earth would be readily-prepared to shove Brussels sprouts creations directly into my mouth. Thankfully, Ippolito has made it a little bit easier with its value-added sprout packs for foodservice. Using the sprout packs, the Ippolito team combined two of my favorite things—martinis and Brussels sprouts—to give attendees of the show a snack to remember long after the floor died down.

3. WTRMLN WTR | Readers of AndNowUKnow may be aware that I have a bit of an obsession with Beyoncé, who recently became one of the celebrity investors behind produce super drink, WTRMLN WTR. Not only does the water taste great alone and with tequila, the company partners with farmers to make the product from 800 million pounds of “less-than-perfect” watermelon. Also, appealing to my girl power senses, the company is woman-owned, ran by Co-Founder and Creative Director, Jody Levy. Beyoncé, food waste prevention, and a girl boss? Sign me up!

4. Pero Mini Sweet Peppers with Green Beans | While I am rarely ever bored with any combination of veggies, I know that not all eaters are as open minded as I am. One thing I know that can get those less than enthusiastic veggie eaters to pump up their consumption is a beautiful array of colors. In Pero’s Mini Sweet Peppers with Green Beans foodservice packs, there are four colors in every serving! Not to mention the awesome taste of the company’s signature sweet peppers against the crisp texture of the green beans.
TERIYAKI STIR FRY

INGREDIENTS

1 Taylor Farms Teriyaki Stir Fry® Kit
1 package firm tofu, cut into 1-inch cubes, marinated
1 cup red quinoa
¼ cup chopped green onions
½ cup soy sauce
¼ cup rice wine vinegar
1 large garlic clove, minced
½ tsp sesame oil
½ tsp red pepper flakes

Protein options:
2 grilled chicken breast, diced
or
1 lb pork loin or boneless pork chops

SERVINGS: 2

DIRECTIONS

1 In a medium bowl, add tofu cubes, red chili flakes, soy sauce, and rice wine vinegar. Stir, making sure tofu is coated. Let tofu sit for 10 minutes.

2 Cook red quinoa to package directions and set aside.

3 In a wok or sauté pan, add one tablespoon oil and heat over medium-high. Add vegetables to pan and cook for 5-6 minutes stirring frequently.

4 Mix in red quinoa, stir fry veggies, and tofu in wok or sauté pan. Drizzle teriyaki sauce packet from stir fry kit, and stir in wok or sauté pan. Serve warm and enjoy!

For more delicious, healthy, & easy-to-prepare recipes visit www.taylorfarms.com.
LEVERAGING THE POWER OF KITS TO VALUE-ADDED VEGETABLES

Complete Salad kits are the primary drivers of salad category growth - representing 23% of all salad category dollar sales.

Stir Fry kits are positioned to increase sales and consumption of value added vegetables similar to the growth of salad kits with our Original chopped salad kits

- $40 million in sales in 2012 and over $460 million in sales 2016

Discover all 4 varieties which include “on-trend” Brussels Sprouts, Kale, Bok Choy and Peas all perfectly balanced with flavorful stir fry sauce

Consumers today seek healthy food options with little to no mess – stir fry cooks in minutes in one pan

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SNACK TO SCHOOL

Start the school year off right with these amazingly sweet tomatoes.