

Bite-Size Info for the Produce Industry

# the SNACK

ISSUE 14 DECEMBER 2015



*Longo's*  
**60**  
**YEARS**  
& COUNTING

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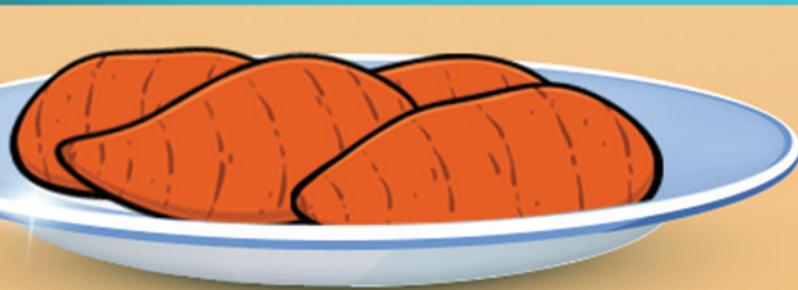
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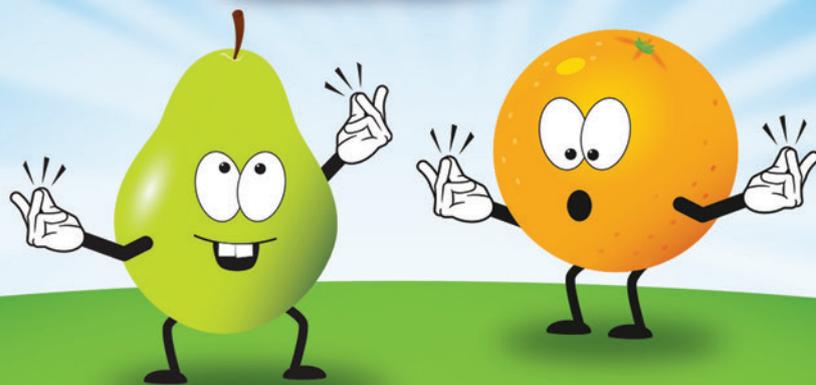
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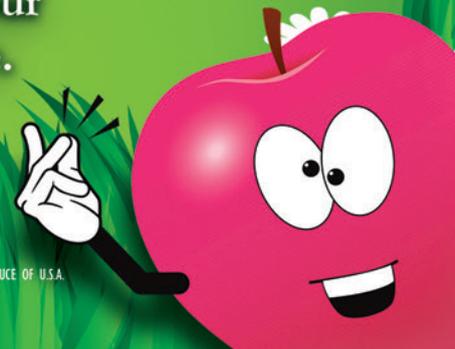
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# IF LIST

## BOB MAST

President, CMI

BY JORDAN OKUMURA

Q

**If you could imagine yourself in a different industry, what would it be?**

A

I've always loved the outdoors and probably would be an outdoor adventure guide in Colorado. Our family used to frequent the San Juan Mountains in Colorado when we lived in Phoenix; I would love to share the experience with others.

Q

**What is your favorite apple?**



A

I'm a sales guy—the one that we need to move the most, of course. But in all seriousness it's tough for me to pick just one. If I absolutely had to, it would probably be the Ambrosia.

Q

**If you had to choose one movie from your collection, what would be that film?**

A

I'm old school when it comes to movies and I enjoy the classics. These movies were all about the acting, the music, the drama that puts you on the edge of your seat, the cinematography, and the plot. Also, not a big fan of re-makes. Why mess with a classic?

Q

**What do you need to have with you at all times?**

A

Sunglasses, gum (I chew gum all the time, which started as a kid playing baseball), a cell phone (to stay in communication with my peeps and snap a photo to capture the moment), and a watch (to keep me on track). And many times an apple as well—you had to expect this!

Q

**If you were living 100 years ago, what would you be doing?**



A

Probably freezing my butt off without central heating and trying to figure out a way to change that. I enjoy looking for solutions when something doesn't make sense to me or when I think there should be a better, more efficient way to do something. I'd probably be an inventor and pioneer, seeking out new ways to do things and new lands to explore.

Q

**What talent would you most like to have?**

A

If the sky was the limit, I'd say an Olympian athlete. Meeting and competing with athletes around the world and a few gold medals on my mantle wouldn't be too shabby.

Q

**What is most important to you?**

A

Hands down, my family. I have a wonderful family and the most supportive, understanding, loving, and giving wife in the world, Sabrina. We have also been blessed with the wonderful experience of being parents as we adopted our daughter Haley 9 ½ years ago.

Q

**If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be?**

A

Sabrina and I love the outdoors—mountains like Alaska and beaches like The Virgin Islands—and also love learning about the history of both our country and abroad, say Rome, Italy, or Spain.





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**5** REASONS  
TO GO TO  
**VIVA**  
**FRESH**

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2016

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by **Melissa De Leon**



**T**his time last year The Snack Magazine introduced the very first Viva Fresh Expo, giving readers a glimpse into how this new event was not “yet another” produce show.

This year we’ll let the numbers do the talking for us. The Viva Fresh Expo did not have an impressive debut, it had a shattering one.

“The tremendous response from this past year’s expo shows the importance of the

Texas, Southwest, and Mexico growing regions,” Hugh Topper of H-E-B tells us. “This is a true regional expo with an international flair that brings value to both suppliers and customers.”

Spots were flying off the proverbial shelves faster than the Texas International Produce Association (TIPA) could sell them, with over 900 in attendance at Austin, Texas, and this year is looking to be even stronger.

But if you need more convincing than that, keep reading and find out why we say that the question isn’t “why should I go to Viva Fresh,” but “why wouldn’t you?”

---

### Where

JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country Resort & Spa in San Antonio, Texas

### When

March 31–April 2, 2016

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## 1 NETWORKING

Yes, we know this is the pro-tip every convention, expo, and event in the industry gives for why you should show up. So what sets this one apart? **For starters, the focus of Viva Fresh isn’t on the quantity of connections, but the quality.**

TIPA impressed more than anything that creating a positive networking environment that would successfully bring buyers and sellers together is always a top priority of the Viva Fresh Expo, and that making sure key suppliers are present to make the trip worth your while is a focal point when putting this experience together. And speaking of experience...

## 2 EVERYTHING’S BIGGER IN TEXAS (INCLUDING THE IDEAS)

Remember—everything is bigger in Texas, and the shows are no exception. The flavors, the displays, and the *ideas*. Last year’s cap was 900 as Viva Fresh came out of the gates, seeing 142 booth spaces sell out this past March. Because of this, TIPA has increased the capacity for this year by 26 percent, and has already sold 60 percent of the exhibitor booths.

**With over 100 booths already snatched up, it’s a strong possibility that 2016 will sell out as well, with more room for innovations in the industry.**

The ideas look to only get bigger, promising an environment that’ll look to bring you to the forefront of produce and tech trends. Which brings us to...

### 3 KEEPING AT THE FOREFRONT OF TECHNOLOGY

Last year, Viva Fresh Expo's premiere was also the debut for a virtual farm tour, bringing real-time experience with the growers and the places that the fresh produce is coming from to the comfort of the conference itself. No three hour drives, no dirt on your show clothes, with all the benefits and experiences of being right there with the crop. After this virtual experience, who wouldn't be eager to see what they have for us this year?

"Last year's Viva Fresh Expo proved to be an overwhelming success, **with triple digit retail and foodservice buyer attendance**, standing room only meeting rooms, and a busy convention hall," Bret Erickson, TIPA President & CEO, said when the association announced that the registration for the second Viva Fresh Produce Expo was officially open. But while those numbers were very impressive, especially for a show's premiere year, it was the feedback that Bret said truly resonated.

"The feedback from attendees was extremely positive highlighting the importance of this region and a well-executed show focused on quality produce."

Still sound like just another produce expo? Don't forget that opportunities to catch the beginning of a produce tradition in an industry of generations is rare. And while the capacity for Viva Fresh has kicked up to accommodate the spread of last year's success, TIPA said that it still expects spots to be snatched up quickly.

Don't miss your opportunity to be a part of this incredible show. Like we said, the question isn't "why should I," but rather, "**why wouldn't you?**" 🍌

### 4 AND OF COURSE, THE PRODUCE

Hosted at the luxurious JW Marriott Hill Country Hotel & Spa in San Antonio, Texas, this year is themed The Gateway to the Americas and highlights produce grown in Mexico, Texas, and neighboring Southwest states. It promises to leave you trying to figure out which was bigger, the ideas or the flavors? But, in all honesty, the dilemma is a win-win scenario for all who attend.

### 5 IT'S ONLY GOING TO GET BIGGER

Though this is an industry of tradition, meaning the longer you have been around the better, we can't emphasize this enough: Viva Fresh sold out completely its very first year, and will only continue to grow. Staying ahead and getting in while you still can is key, and becoming part of a new tradition is a scarce opportunity in produce and agriculture.



Viva Fresh Expo 2015

#### NOT CONVINCED?

TAKE A LOOK AT LAST YEAR'S SUCCESS.

VIVA FRESH 2015 **SOLD OUT!**

THERE WERE OVER **900 ATTENDEES.**

ATTENDEES RANGED FROM **BUYERS, GROWERS, SHIPPERS, AND PACKERS.**

VIVA FRESH OPEN 2015 **RAISED \$10,000** FOR THE LOCAL JUST KEEP LIVING FOUNDATION.





# To-Jo Foraging

by Jordan Okumura

**T**o forage or not to forage? That is the question. Chefs across the United States are continuing to demand specialty products for their menu items. One of these diversifying and emerging categories is foraged mushrooms.

“Chefs are constantly looking for items that bring interesting flavors, combinations, and a uniqueness that may have previously been unfamiliar to the masses. This trend has snowballed into an increased demand from consumers for these items at the retail level,” Todd Kostka, who runs To-Jo Mushrooms’ wild edible program, tells me.

And most importantly, retailers are responding. Offering these items provides retailers with a distinct outlet to stand out from their competitors. The great thing about utilizing a foraged mushroom program is that the varieties are always changing with the seasons, providing a never-ending mix of mushrooms that grow naturally in the wild. Consider them the ancestors of the commercially cultivated varieties we are most familiar with.

“At To-Jo, if we’re going to do something, we’re going to do it right. Our owners, Tony and Joe D’Amico, treated this no differently; fully investing themselves in this new side of our business. This past summer I spent a week foraging with the individuals we source our products from,” Todd says. “By taking part in every aspect of

their business, I increased my knowledge of the varieties, learned best handling practices, and gained invaluable experience that I was able to bring back to our customers, further strengthening our program.”

---

## Taking the Lead

Todd was familiar with foraged items prior to the start of the program and, because of this interest, Tony and Joe selected him as the lead in exploring the program’s potential.

“The culture here at To-Jo has always promoted new ideas and creativity among all employees. I developed the plans for the program and we were off and running,” he notes.

Since Foraged Fresh’s inception, Todd has had the freedom to take the program in the direction he sees is most beneficial for the business and its customers. Todd’s goal is to be an outlet for the industry when it comes to wild edibles and he hopes to continue to share the knowledge he’s gained, and continues to acquire, from the foragers that supply To-Jo with everything from Morels to Elderberries.

“At To-Jo, if we’re going to do something, we’re going to do it right. Our owners, Tony & Joe D’Amico, treated this no differently.”

- Todd Kostka

## At the Front of the Foraging Pack

So, which varieties stand out in the To-Jo program? The Chanterelle is often the first wild mushroom to be mentioned when polling knowledge and buying behaviors.

“This is due to the relatively long availability of fresh product; almost six full months when you take into account both domestic and imported product,” Todd says.

Following Chanterelles are Morel and Porcini mushrooms, varieties that have been renowned in European cuisine, including French and Italian, for ages.

“Green is typically a first sign of spring and it is the same with wild edibles,” Todd adds. “Spring starts with Stinging Nettles and varieties of Miners Lettuce and then we move into the ever-popular spring varieties of Fiddlehead Ferns and Ramps, both of which have seasons lasting roughly one full month.”



### Chanterelle

*long availability of fresh product*



### Morel

*notably the most recognizable wild mushroom*



### Porcini

*renowned in European cuisine*



Foraging Porcini mushrooms



*Fiddlehead ferns*



*Todd Kostka picking Morels in the Cascades*



*Todd Kostka*

## Todd's Favorites

# Straight from the Source

Todd has his favorites, and they are the same whether he is purveying or preparing—the Hedgehog and Cauliflower mushrooms. The Cauliflower mushroom begins appearing in mid-September and has a distinct florally/wavy, off-white texture and color.

“The Hedgehog often falls into the shadow of the Chanterelle; as Chanterelle’s season comes to an end, the Hedgehog’s begins. Both have a slightly similar appearance, but the Hedgehog’s flavor and taste are superior in every way to the Chanterelle,” says Todd.

Hedgehogs thrive in the winter months and have a pleasant fruity aroma that matches their bright orange/yellow color—“a nice offering during the darker and colder winter months, especially here on the East Coast,” notes Todd.

It has been one year since To-Jo launched Foraged Fresh and the program continues to expand with both volume and overall items available. With differentiation driving the innovative programs at To-Jo, we believe that you won’t have to forage too hard to find new ways to diversify your fare. **S**



### **Hedgehog**

*pleasant fruity aroma,  
orange/yellow color*



### **Cauliflower**

*distinctly floral/wavy,  
off-white texture & color*



# FINDING A LOAN

by **Robert Lambert**

I do not have enough time in my day. Yet, I have to explore all my options if I want to expand my business.

My friends built a first-of-its-kind website that matches business borrowers with traditional banks, [www.MagillaLoans.com](http://www.MagillaLoans.com).

Cut from the same cloth as Match.com or Kayak.com, it matches qualified borrowers with multiple lenders. When I go for a loan, I no longer have to shop three or four banks with three years of personal AND business tax returns AND my personal financial statement under my arm, have each of them pull my credit, rake me over the coals, only to find I am at the wrong bank or they can't offer me a loan.

With Magilla, I answer eleven questions (it took me about thirty seconds), I hit submit, and wait for banks to send me offers. When I received multiple offers they appeared on a clean, easy-to-read, MagChart (think term

sheet) where I could clearly compare all the offers in a simple apples-to-apples chart.

I never put my social security number into the site. I never put my name on the site. There was nothing specific to me except the email I gave them.

*Totally anonymous.*

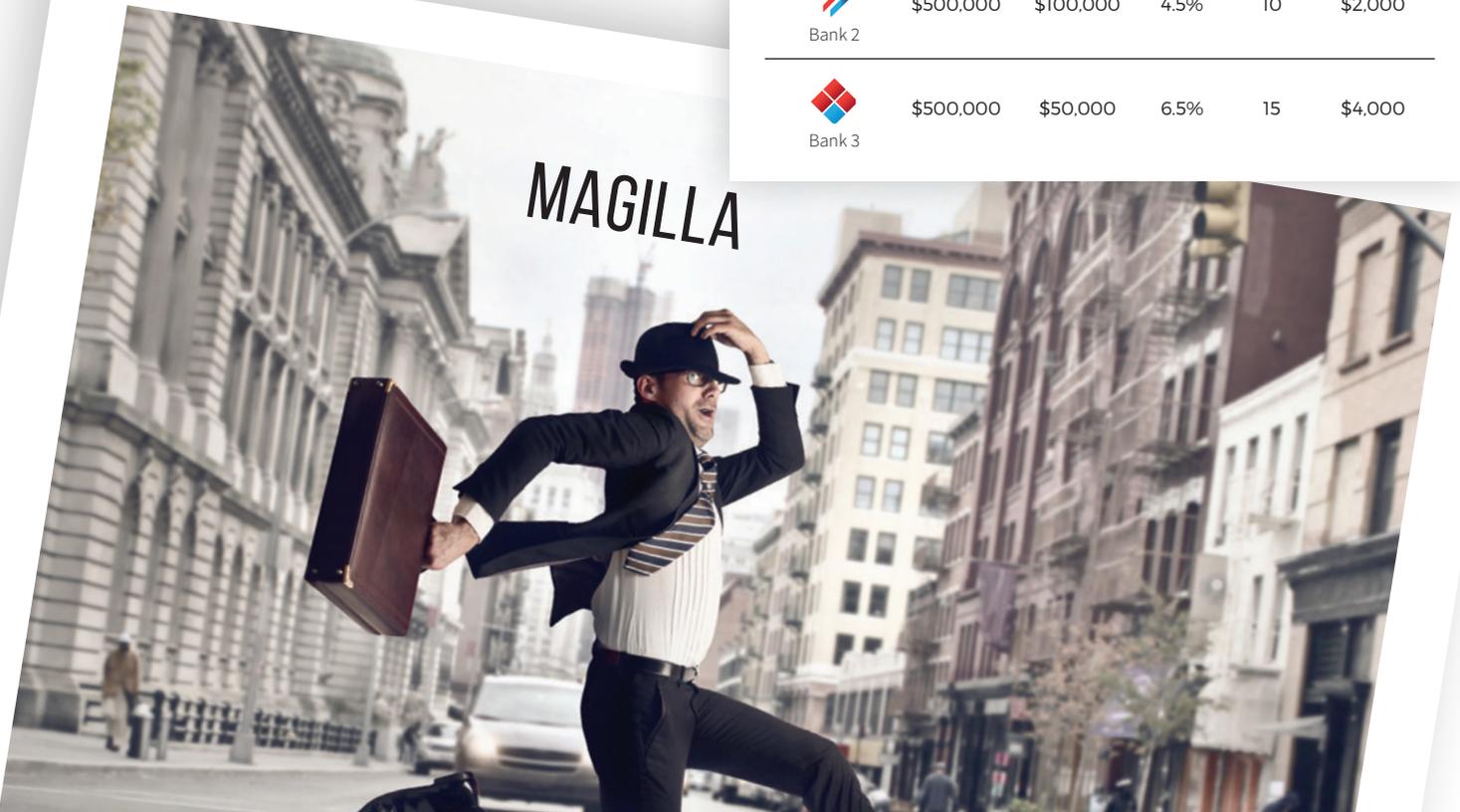
Yes, I still have to go into the bank to close the loan, but the time savings is legendary. And, I did it all from my laptop or iPhone in bed.

Check out [MagillaLoans.com](http://MagillaLoans.com) for all your lending needs; these guys are revolutionizing the business lending marketplace. 💰

## MagChart™

BANK	AMOUNT	DOWN	RATE	TERM	COSTS
 Bank 1	\$500,000	\$50,000	5.5%	10	\$5,000
 Bank 2	\$500,000	\$100,000	4.5%	10	\$2,000
 Bank 3	\$500,000	\$50,000	6.5%	15	\$4,000

MAGILLA



UP  
CLOSE



## A CLOSER LOOK AT FOXY PRODUCE'S BROCCOLEAF®.

So, what is BroccoLeaf? If you ask Foxy Produce, it's the beginning of a whole new vegetable category and a versatile addition to the organic supergreens evolution. Containing all the wonderful nutrients in broccoli, BroccoLeaf—short for broccoli leaves—elevates the eating experience of any dish with a light and sweet flavor and quality. Significant health attributes include an excellent source of Calcium, Vitamin A, folate, potassium, and delivers an adult daily dose of Vitamin C. BroccoLeaf is essential to Foxy Produce because the item promotes the consumption of the whole vegetable while also reducing food waste. And let's not forget that BroccoLeaf is organic, non-GMO certified, and packaged for distribution on the national market. At present, BroccoLeaf is sold by the bunch and in 12 oz. packages in select grocery stores.



# THE 'GIFT' OF TIME OFF

**B**eing laid off, downsized, let go, or fired is typically a horrible experience, and in terms of stress, ranks right up there with divorce or a death in the family.

For the many of us who have been put into this situation, not only have we lost our income and financial security, but also the daily contact with some of our best friends. Even worse is that our professional roles have a big impact on how we view ourselves and how we perceive that others view us. Going from VP of “Whatever” to unemployed can be a tough pill to swallow.

Hopefully, along with having family and friends to support you at this time, a few tips from Joe Produce on how to deal with your newfound free time will help you get back on the right track, and back into the workforce.

If economically possible, I suggest immediately taking some time to stop and smell the roses. That may mean catching up on some sleep, exercising, taking your kids to school, or something as simple as grocery shopping. The point is to relax, take a break, and get some perspective.

Once you do decide to start the search for your new job, here are a few recommendations:

- 1** Check out Joe Produce’s most recent article in October’s issue of The Snack, or better yet, grab our checklist on what not to forget when searching for a job by scanning the QR-code below.
- 2** Take care of yourself—when you’re hydrated, eating right, and exercising, you’d be surprised how this affects how you feel about yourself and how others perceive you.
- 3** Work on your job search during set hours and days. For example, Monday through Friday from 9 to 5.
- 4** Take advantage of this gift of free time... *Yes, gift...* Spend time with your family, read a book, get organized, get healthy, etc.

Follow these simple steps and I guarantee that you’ll be a more attractive candidate in your upcoming

Steps Not To Skip When  
Looking For A Job





interviews and your family will like you a whole lot better throughout your journey.

So you've finally found a new position—*now what?*

Once you secure your new job, if at all possible, try to schedule your first day so that you have a week or two to be off *and* employed. Think about it—no emails or piles of paper building up while you're gone; you know that you're going to a great new job, and your "job of finding a job" is over. Enjoy this time!

Even if you're not currently unemployed, there are two key points that you should keep in mind:

**1** Be nice to *all* people on your way up the ladder of success, and you're more likely to receive reciprocal help when you slide down during the rough times.

**2** Stay friendly and positive, and use this experience to help you grow as a person and professional.

Be sure to thank *everyone* who supported you throughout your "time off"; especially those who perhaps weathered a few storms while you dealt with your anxieties, frustrations, and doubts.



**Rex Lawrence,  
Founder and  
President of  
Joe Produce**

was born  
& raised in  
Salinas, CA.

His 28 years in the produce industry includes positions in senior sales, marketing & 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.

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RESUMES



*Harvest CROO Robotics'  
Strawberry Harvesting Robot*

# STRAWBOTICS

## The Next Generation in Strawberry Harvesting Technology

.....  
by **Jordan Okumura**  
.....

“**T**he produce industry is on the cusp of a major revolution in robotics. Labor-related issues are going to be addressed through technology, so why can't we be part of the solution?”

Gary Wishnatzki, Co-Founder of Harvest CROO Robotics and Owner of Wish Farms, asks me as we touch on the challenges and hurdles that face growers across the U.S.

In reality, Gary tells me that the demand is so great for a solution to alleviate labor shortages and create more cost effective in-field and harvesting technologies, that it isn't just an East Coast or West Coast problem—it's worldwide.

In Gary's eyes, the most challenging part is getting growers to think about what is possible. So, when Gary and Bob Pitzer, Chief Technology Officer and Co-Founder of Harvest CROO, decided that traditional means of labor needed to evolve, they set their sights on a strawberry bot that could harvest and pack strawberries with greater speed, accuracy, and efficiency.

“Robotics are changing the game. Our automated strawberry picker will be able to work at least 20 hours per day, and that includes weekends,” Gary laughs. “Our goal is to be able to pick 95 percent of the fruit off of any plant.”

The new Harvest CROO technology will allow growers to avoid picking during the hottest part

of the day when berries bruise the easiest. In this sense it will take less time and energy to cool the fruit by picking in the evening hours. Also, the strawberry bot will allow for better utilization of cooling facilities and increase throughput by spreading out the load of warm incoming fruit over longer harvest hours.

Gary also tells me that shippers could add acreage without having to purchase additional cooling resources. Since the volume will be more spread out, there is also the potential to double the capacity that coolers can accommodate.

So, how does this strawberry harvester work? The patented technology revolves around the concept of the Pitzer Picking Wheel, named after Gary's partner, Bob Pitzer. This wheel utilizes “conservation of motion principles” with robotic picking heads that can achieve 360 degrees of rotation and will decrease the amount of movement the robot has to accomplish to complete the picking action. A series of claws on the wheel picks the berries which are then transferred to a packing region of the harvester, where they will be inspected and packed into consumer units.



**Gary Wishnatzki**  
Owner of Wish Farms,  
Co-Founder of Harvest  
CROO Robotics

## AT A GLANCE

### Harvest CROO's strawberry picker...

Is able to work at least  
**20 HOURS** / day

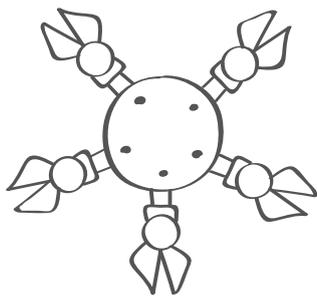
Can potentially reduce  
**PLASTIC WASTE**  
by **30%**

Allows growers to  
**AVOID PICKING**  
during the **HOTTEST**  
part of the day



Investors Danny Gresser of Central West & Greg France of Red Dog Management

### The **PITZER** **PICKING WHEEL**



• Utilizes “**conservation of motion**” principles

• Robotic picking heads can achieve **360 degrees of rotation**

• Uses Stereo Vision with **two cameras to identify the berry's color, mass, and size** to decide whether or not it should be harvested.



To support the ever-evolving prototype, Gary and Bob have created a logo to accompany the new harvest technology and have appropriately named it Harv.

This picker also uses Stereo Vision with two cameras mounted on the harvester, with the lead camera situated to identify the berry's color, mass, and size to decide whether or not it should be harvested. The second camera uses triangulation to pinpoint the berry for the claw to gently pick and place in the packaging.

“What we hope to accomplish is to lower harvest costs by increasing the speed and duration at which it can pick and pack berries in the field,” Gary explains as we continue to discuss the harvester's far-reaching benefits for growers.

Weighing packages will be a huge savings to growers as well. Typically packed until visually full, over-packs can be up to 10 percent or more than their goal weight. Larger packs are estimated to be over-packed by as much as 20-30 percent, Gary



shares. On the opposite side of the spectrum, this technology can also eliminate rejections due to being short weight.

Another possibility? Growers can potentially reduce their plastic usage by over 30 percent by using a film lid versus a clamshell pack, which the program plans to provide.

In regards to precision agriculture, the machine will be able to scout as it travels through the field, taking images of plants which will then be aligned with a database of hundreds of images that can provide early warnings of things like pest presence or plant damage.

“Once we get this project streamlined, it will open the doors for other opportunities,” Gary says. “There are automated lettuce harvesters, strides in pepper harvesting... This design could potentially be applied to other produce categories.”



**“OUR GOAL IS TO BE ABLE TO PICK 95% OF THE FRUIT OFF OF ANY PLANT.”**

**- Gary Wishnatzki**



**The Harvest CROO team. ....**

At present, the harvester is only a solution for strawberries, but Harvest CROO's team of engineers that Gary and Bob have been assembling will be looking to branch out into other categories in the future.

“We have a game plan that ensures that this prototype will continue to evolve. Technological advancements have allowed the harvester to progress in leaps and bounds, even in just the relatively short timeline that this project has been off the ground,” Gary adds.

Some of the robot's recent developments include new designs for the picking wheel and leaf manipulator in order to improve accuracy and efficiency. With new and improved software, embedded electronics, and new motors, Harvest CROO is hoping to accelerate the picking process and pick a plant in under eight seconds. And the team is shooting to get faster than that. The inspection process of the plant takes a mere two seconds of that eight-second window. Also this winter, Harvest CROO is working on a new GPS

program on a mobile platform for the production model.

“As we test this prototype out with strawberry growers, we are also making it our goal to try and adapt the machine to as many different varieties as we can,” Gary says.

The team has also improved on the ability to align the tractor to perform repeatable actions within a half of an inch.

“We have 16 picking wheels on one platform working in concert, and that is the goal,” Gary says. “Everything has to work in concert.”

All these prototypes are working towards a totally autonomous machine moving through the field. It is an exciting time.

“This whole entire project, while spearheaded by Bob and I, is truly a giant collaboration between the best minds in harvest technology,” Gary says.

Take Dr. Rex Lee of Pyramid Imaging, who has been working with Harvest CROO on the imaging platform and helping to develop the vision for the program moving forward. Dr. Lee has not only

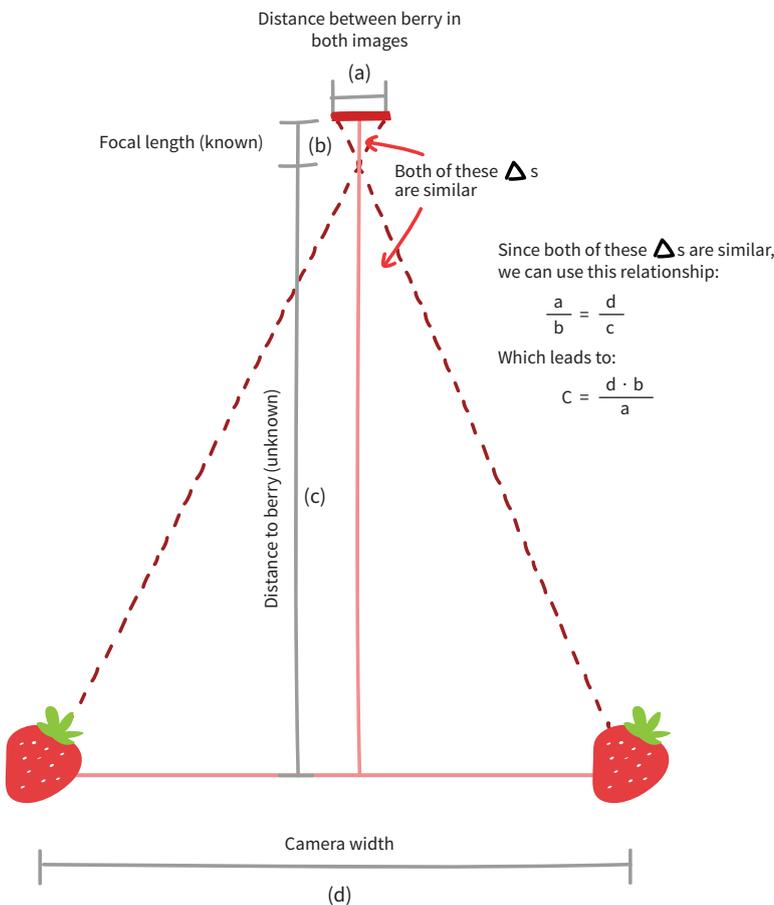
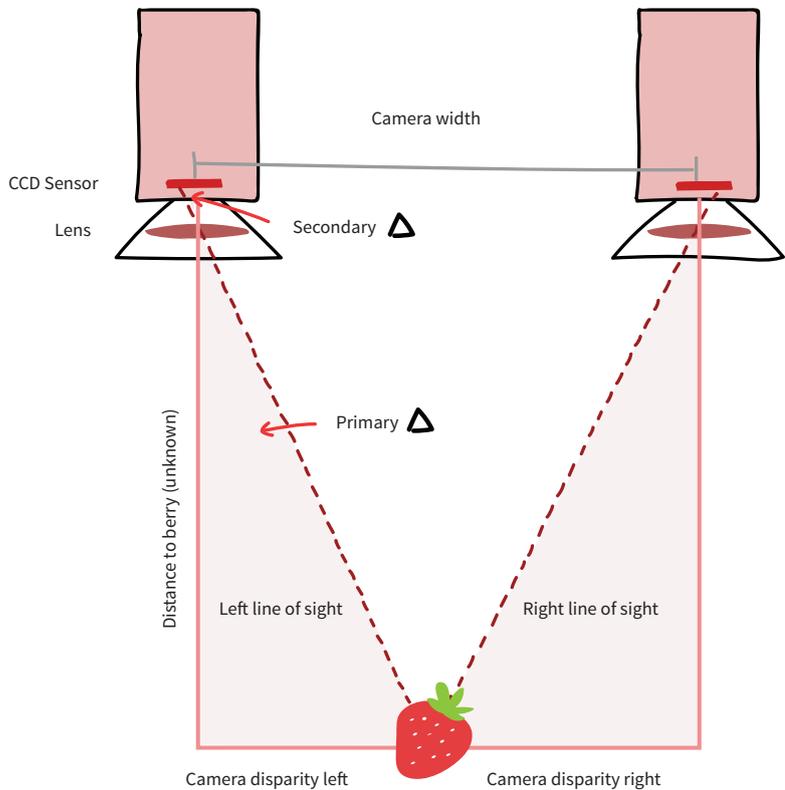
brought the latest and greatest in machine vision technologies to the project but the kind of like-minded, advanced thinking that is driving the bot's progress.

“If a solution requires laws of physics to be broken, then it is impossible. Otherwise it's just an engineering problem and nothing is impossible.” This is one of Gary's favorite quotes from Dr. Lee on vision, and, may I say, quite an inspiring one.

Bob's background has also helped fuel the collaboration through multiple industries. “My involvement in the early Robot Combat television shows has helped me connect with many people in the robotics community,” Bob tells me.

Bob's experience includes time in the Navy as a tech on a nuclear sub as well as attending the University of Florida, where he started multiple student robotics groups, and graduated with a mechanical engineering degree. Out of college, Bob was recruited to

## A LOOK INSIDE



work for Intel in Arizona as an automation design specialist and later started his business, 4FX Design, which has worked with many companies to develop new and exciting technologies.

These experiences put Bob in a place where he spent years developing the technology to run the FIRST Robotics STEM education events which are developing the next generation of highly qualified engineers for the future while providing some of the brain power that now pushes Harvest CROO forward. Some of those relationships are part of the company's current vendor list also. The man has been busy.

"Collaborating on this effort with people that I have a history with, gives me confidence," Bob tells me. "An example is Velodyne's founder, Dave Hall. Velodyne is a leader in LIDAR technology used on autonomous vehicles and they are very excited about the possibilities represented by the agricultural industries. There are many opportunities to enhance this prototype and it all depends on the support of many."

The Harvest CROO team recently tested the prototype this fall in Santa Maria, California, with a grower affiliated with California Giant Berry Farms. The initial debut has been great so far and the number of investors has grown exponentially since Gary and Bob began sharing the design with fellow strawberry growers in the industry. As the team moves the strawberry bot into the next phase of development, they are looking to continue perfecting the technology using varied prototypes to prove out different aspects of the project.

"There has been a tremendous reception for our strawberry harvester among some of the largest strawberry growers in the U.S.," Gary says.

Harvest CROO has opened a funding round for those in the industry that want to invest in the program and has also established an early adopter program which gives investors priority during the initial phases of the launch as well as a nine percent discount for the first three years.

"Harvest CROO Robotics will be in a position to become the leader in ag robotics with the successful deployment of our picking robots. That is the vision," Bob says.

At Wish Farms and Harvest CROO Robotics, innovation in agriculture doesn't hope to replace the human element. But, if there are berries to be picked, you can be sure that this team will continue to find new ways to press on and up. 



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# THE ORGANIC DESIGN: A PERSONAL MISSION



By **MELISSA DE LEON**

**“It’s not that I’m so smart, it’s just that I stay with problems longer.”**

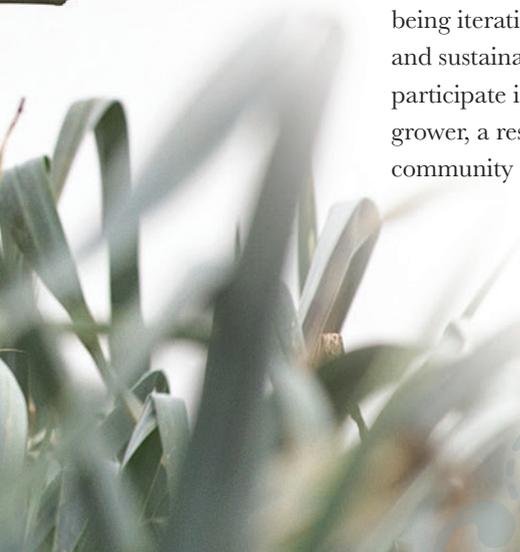
- Albert Einstein

**“P**ick a focus, be an expert—for me this is organic seed, the foundation of sustainable agriculture,” Dr. Erica Renaud, PhD in Planting Breeding, SENASICA Representative, and Regional Business Manager for Vitalis Organic Seeds, North America, tells me as she quotes Albert Einstein. She likes the idea of processes being iterative. “My perspective on organic and sustainable agriculture has changed as I participate in it within different contexts—a grower, a researcher, a policymaker and community organizer, even a homesteader.”

The organic produce market is rapidly growing, not just outward as far as countries and policies, but upward in dollars. The sector has skyrocketed 14 percent in the last year alone, and now claims 6.9 percent of produce consumption in the U.S.

Vitalis, the organic division of the Netherlands-based breeding and seed production company Enza Zaden, is the global leader in organic seed production and breeding, as well as one of the pioneers for demonstrating that organic seed is not sub-standard to conventional seed.

“100 percent certified-organic agriculture has to start with certified organic seed. We want to be at the forefront, with the best





Erica with Marcel van Diemen, Organic Plant Breeder at Vitalis

genetics aligning to organic market trends and ensuring the genetic material is best adapted to organic growing conditions,” Erica says.

Despite the infinite growth of the organic produce industry, huge challenges remain for the contender. After all, agriculture is one of the original industries of the U.S. (and the world) and conventional growing is deeply rooted in plant culture. Vitalis seeks to improve that image and make more room for a new chapter in produce.



“There was, and is, a perception that organic seed is all open-pollinated, lacks quality in germination, purity and pathology or diseases, and is limited in quantity available for professional growers,” Erica explains, saying this is one of the largest trials Vitalis faces.

To essentially prove this stigma wrong, the company goes to great lengths through science and practices to prove that organic seeds hold their own against conventional. While this aspect is a battle, it’s hardly a summary of the war.

To be truly organic, as Erica has said, you have to start from the seed, which isn’t always so easy to access in areas that may want part of the \$60+ billion industry that organic growing has become.

“Organic growers must use organic seed when

**“In order to keep the organic label authentic, the certification will be more rigorous and organic growers will be required more and more to use organic seed.”**

- Erica Renaud

commercially available, however, their primary seed supplier may not sell organic seed and/or their variety of preference may not be available in organic form,” Erica tells me.

An example of this is the organic produce industry in Mexico, where two major regulations were recently redefined to make organic farming easier for growers.

“The Mexican government has made two major regulatory changes in direct response to the growth of the organic sector. After a decade long process, Mexico (SENASICA) (Activity of National Health Service, Food Safety and Quality) has launched a domestic organic standard for organic production and processing, while, almost simultaneously, SAGARPA (Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food) has modified its mandatory chemical seed treatment requirement for imported seed.”



Inconsistent enforcement of the organic seed regulation, which is defined by each nation state's government even though it's interpreted by organic certification agencies and inspectors, is what Erica says leads to inconsistent regulatory enforcement. Vitalis and the broader organic seed movement are working with organic certifiers to train inspectors on how to encourage using organic seed while enforcing the USDA NOP organic seed regulatory language (CFR 205-204).

An active member and past-chair of the organic seed committee of the American Seed Trade Association (ASTA), and currently engaged in multiple project initiatives with the Organic Seed Alliance (OSA), Erica spends a considerable amount of time working with policymakers, growers, and breeders to clarify these aspects and address obstacles and opportunities for organic seed sector growth.



“The organic market is broad—servicing both local, direct to consumer markets, and larger-scale retail markets. The former is highly diversity-driven, wanting unique varieties for their organic markets, while the latter is more uniformity-driven and wants a consistent, high performing product that can be produced year-round for their retail outlets,” Erica explains of organics’ reach. Vitalis services both of these market types by not only working through seed distributors who service smaller growers, but directly with larger-scale professional growers in Canada, the U.S., and Mexico as well.

“We are, and will continue to be, the #1 certified organic seed breeding and production company in the North American region due to our dedication to developing cultivars that are adapted to organic managements systems,” Erica says.

As for the future of the organic market, and the changes that leaders like Vitalis are continuing to chip away at, she explains that organic growers need to know that the regulations will get tighter as time progresses and governing bodies continue to pursue a harmonized, global context for the organic market.

“In order to keep the organic label authentic, the certification will be more rigorous and organic



Erica with Maarten Vrenson, Sales Manager at Vitalis

growers will be required more and more to use organic seed.”

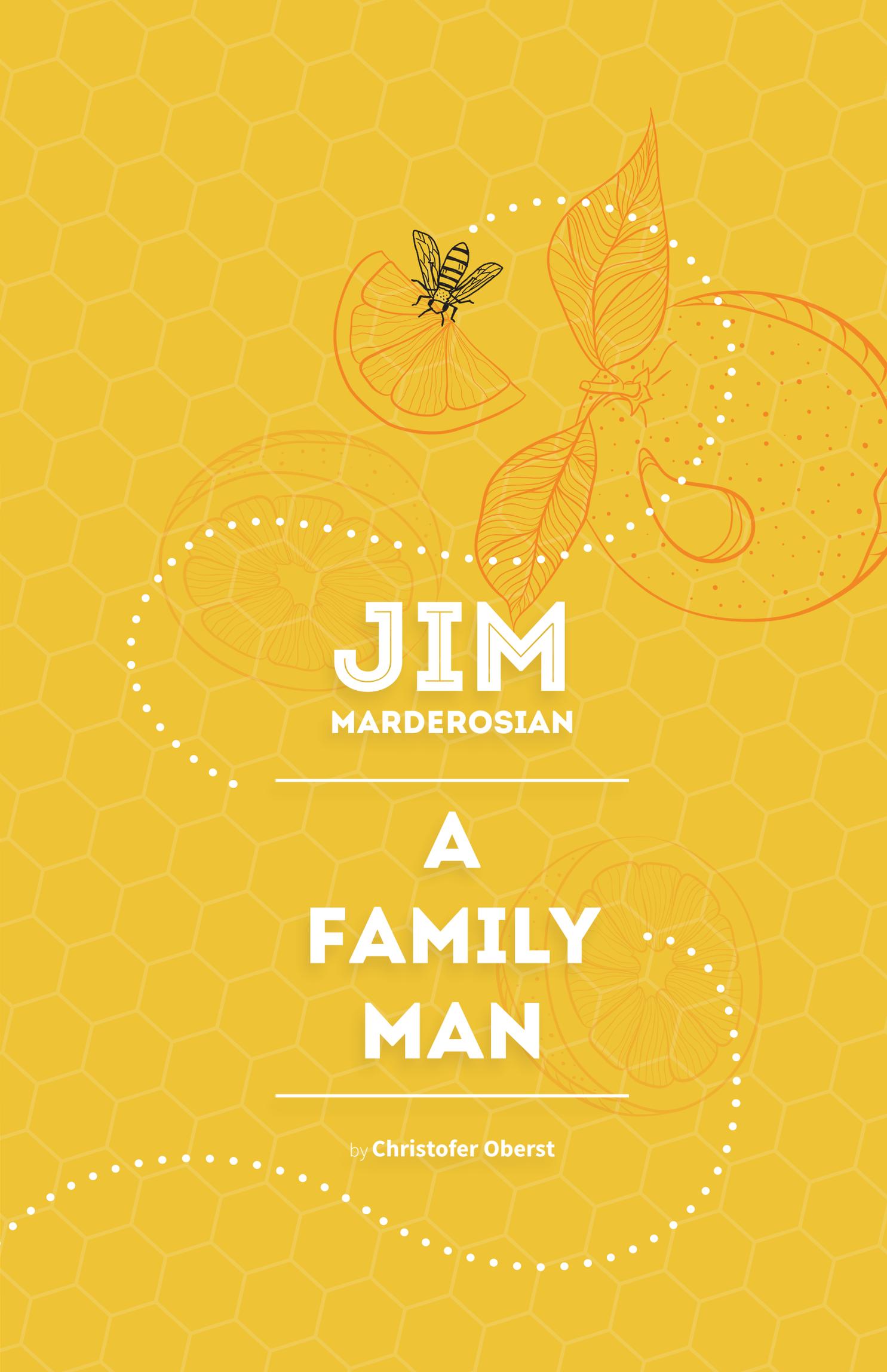
While this may seem daunting, the result will be quality and consistency across the board as North America expands its organic trade.

“Vitalis is actively developing professional relationships with key organic growers and distributors, staying engaged with the market, following the trends, and putting genetic material in front of the market leaders to see how we can translate these varieties into organic market concepts.”

The organic market exists due to pioneers who wanted an alternative to the dominant paradigm in the food system. Being on what she calls the right side of history and contributing to positive change, Erica says passionately, is a personal mission. And, like Albert Einstein, she will continue to stay with it for as long as it takes. 







**JIM**

**MARDEROSIAN**

---

**A  
FAMILY  
MAN**

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by **Christofer Oberst**



own in the lush, green and sprawling orchards that span the San Joaquin Valley, hundreds of bustling workers are assembling together in the early morning to prepare for another busy citrus season. If you ask Jim Marderosian, Founder and Owner of Fowler, California-based Bee Sweet Citrus, to sum up this broad mix of personalities and demographics, the answer is a lot simpler than you may think. They're a family.

There's hardly a better word to describe it.

"It's an honor and privilege to work with the men and women that make up our company every day," Jim tells me. "Everyone here is like family to me. I want our employees to feel comfortable coming to me and I enjoy introducing myself to everyone that works at Bee Sweet. Knowing what we do for our community and the work we put in to grow, pack, and ship great citrus year-round, you can't help but feel like we're all family here. That's just who we are. I wouldn't have it any other way."

At the heart of this close-knit team is a unique, forward-thinking work culture that keeps the local community top of mind with initiatives that support not just the employees, but their friends and families as well. If you were to crack open the honeycomb that composes the company's DNA, you will find that Bee Sweet is built upon three core concepts—family, philanthropy, and of course, citrus.

"When I come into work every morning, there's no better feeling than knowing that we're setting a great example for our community," he says. "Whether we're donating, or providing healthy, great-tasting products; what could be a better motivator than that?"

When you take everything that Bee Sweet has done for the burgeoning Fowler community into consideration, you quickly realize just how much of an investment the company has put into all of its altruistic initiatives.

One of the largest contributions of them all was Bee Sweet's one million dollar donation to Valley Children's Healthcare this past April. Inspired to provide better access to high quality care for families living in rural areas, such as Fowler, Jim presented

**“ When I come into work every morning, there’s no better feeling than knowing that we’re setting a great example for our community. ”**

- Jim Marderosian,  
Founder & Owner

the million dollar check to Valley Children's Healthcare during a special employee celebration at the company's headquarters. The donation will be used to support Valley Children's new outpatient

specialty care center in 2016, which is to be named in honor of Bee Sweet Citrus.

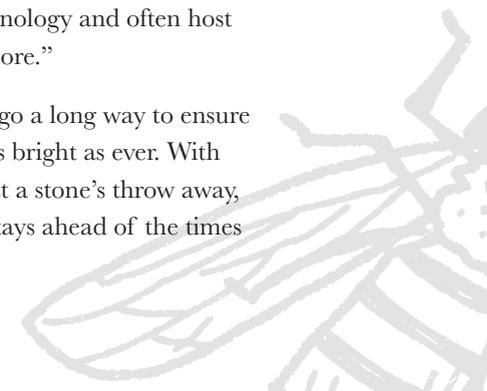
"Jim loves treating everyone like family," Monique Bienvenue, Bee Sweet's Director of Communications, tells me. "When the idea of building a new pediatric center in Fowler came up, he immediately jumped on the opportunity. He is very big on giving back to the local community, especially when you consider that most of our employees are from the area."

With so many employees working together in the same community, it's no wonder they are inclined to treat each other as family as well. This cultural principle is further preserved because of Jim's willingness to provide young students in the area with various internships and employment opportunities. Bee Sweet works closely with local universities like California State University, Fresno and Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, to provide undergraduate students throughout the Central Valley a chance to show they have the skills necessary to take the company to the next level.

"We want to give back to the students and let them know they have an opportunity here at our company," Jim said. "There are a lot of different areas they can get involved with, from sales all the way to our IT department."

Monique explained, "In addition to helping the career services department at California State University, Fresno, we also give presentations to the students enlisted in the agricultural industrial technology department at the university's Jordan College of Agricultural Sciences & Technology and often host facility tours for them to explore."

These community initiatives go a long way to ensure Bee Sweet's future remains as bright as ever. With young, enthusiastic minds just a stone's throw away, Jim ensures that Bee Sweet stays ahead of the times



all while contributing a large portion of the company's energy back into the community.

"Social and corporate responsibility is a top priority for us because we want to do our part by giving back to everyone that works at Bee Sweet, as well as our neighbors like Valley Children's Healthcare," said Jim. "We know what our employees' housing and family situations are like, and we want to do what we can to help them not only in the work atmosphere, but outside as well."

Over the past 28 years that Bee Sweet has been in business, Jim has discovered that if you invest in the community, the community will invest in you. Looking back from where the company first got its bearings, it's easy to see why he's so proud of Bee Sweet today.

Before it had matured into a "one-stop-shop" for all things citrus, Bee Sweet found its humble beginnings in 1987 as a small independent packer and shipper of California oranges. Driven by his tenacious will to succeed and his determination to prove that he had what it takes to be successful in the agriculture industry, Jim took it upon himself to plant the seeds of what would become one of the premier growers, packers, and shippers of fresh California citrus in the fertile soil of Fowler.

"When I got my start in this business, one of the first things I realized is just how quickly the agriculture industry changes," he said. "Not only do policies change, but consumer wants and needs, technology, and climate never stay stagnant. I learned early on that if I wanted to stay ahead of the game, I needed to do a lot of research and keep up-to-date on things going on in the industry. Complacency was not an option."

Input from employees over the years has not gone unheard. One character trait you'll often hear about Jim is that he's very progressive. It's not uncommon to see him talk with new employees about any fresh ideas they have that may one day revolutionize the company.

It was because of Jim's persistent, open-minded mentality that he was able to make the right connections and begin cultivating a company culture built on giving back to the community that helped grow the business into the industry giant it is today.



Jim with Sales Representative, Joe Berberian



**“ Jim loves treating everyone like family... He is very big on giving back to the local community, especially when you consider that most of our employees are from the area. ”**

- Monique Bienvenue,  
Director of Communications



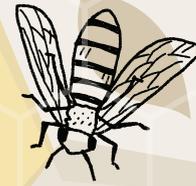
Having evolved into a successful, year-round “one-stop-shop” for all kinds of citrus items, including navel and Valencia oranges, lemons, grapefruit, mandarins, and specialty varieties, such as minneolas and pummelos, it is comforting to see that the company still offers a hands-on approach to growing, packing, marketing, and shipping. Though Bee Sweet has grown into a worldwide operation, shipping throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and several Pacific Rim countries, including Japan, the company still functions like the small, independent business it was over two decades ago.

It’s clear that Bee Sweet cares about its community, but even more so, the company has been able to retain its “mom and pop” appeal because most of its initiatives have a personal touch to them. Take for example Bee Sweet’s recent donations to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation (BCRF). Now in their second year of partnership, Bee Sweet has raised a total of \$100,000 for the organization’s efforts to find a cure for breast cancer. Each Sweetheart Mandarins pack carries the BCRF’s logo to further promote this cause. It’s a program that any retailer or consumer can get behind.

“Sweetheart Mandarins are a huge category for us right now,” Monique tells me. “Not only do they help raise awareness for a serious issue in our society, but consumers also enjoy them because they’re the perfect on-the-go or back-to-school snack. They’re small and sweet, easy-to-peel, seedless, and they taste great.”

Another larger initiative Bee Sweet looks to become an industry leader in is sustainability. Not only is it their goal to provide the world with fresh, delicious citrus, but they strive to be an environmental steward as well.

Having recently completed work on a 2.4 Megawatt solar system as well as a newly-installed water pump designed to collect water in a facility cold storage defroster for landscaping purposes, Bee Sweet is taking every measure to reduce its environmental footprint. This also means incorporating the use of electric forklifts and utilizing recyclable packaging materials.



Jim with Industrial Technology Manager Tommy Marderosian and Joe Berberian

“We are absolutely committed to going green. Reducing our carbon footprint and water usage is just one more way we can help the community and the industry at large,” Jim tells me.

As we march into 2016 and beyond, Bee Sweet has its eyes on expanding further into organics and continuing its community-driven initiatives.

“There are still a lot of things we want to make happen,” Jim tells me. “We may be over twenty years old, but we’re still a developing company. I know we can’t change the world overnight, but I couldn’t be more proud of the team that we have here. I feel so privileged knowing that we’re doing great things for our community and for our industry.”

Looking back over the past three decades, it’s hard to say that Bee Sweet’s evolution has been anything but astounding. It’s a history that’s backed by a strong connection to the community, family-values, and an extensive line of fresh citrus. You can bet there will be even more to come from Bee Sweet as it looks to enhance its core values and expand its citrus program. The future can’t look any sweeter than that. 



▶ MY FAVORITE THINGS ◀

# KRISTIN YERECIC

Marketing Manager, Yerecic Label

This up-and-comer has been working in the family-owned and operated business since she was 15 years old. Now, climbing up through the ranks, Kristin is bringing Yerecic's visibility and marketing department to a whole new level. From Tamma Watermelon Juice to Modern Family, we asked Kristin to take a few minutes and let us in on some of her favorite things.

1

*"I'm honored to be a third generation Yerecic in the family business."*



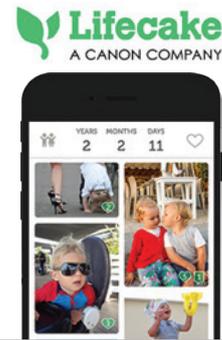
2

*"Throwing your grapes in the freezer creates a quick, delicious and refreshing snack."*



3

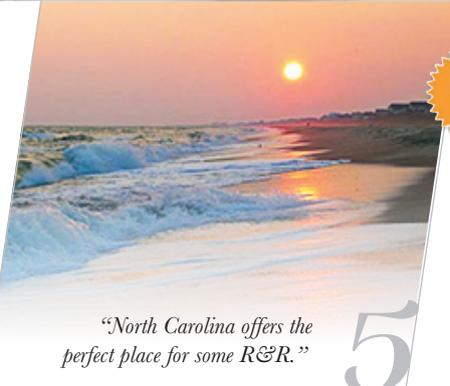
*"This app lets me shamelessly show off my nephews without blowing up my Facebook feed or Instagram."*



*"Frey Farm's new Watermelon Juice has me on the bandwagon!"*



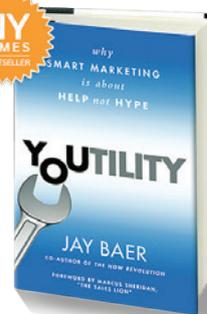
4



*"North Carolina offers the perfect place for some R&R."*

5

NY TIMES BESTSELLER



6

*"This book significantly altered my view of marketing and is a constant reference for long-term goals for me."*

7

*"I wanted to give back to the sport that taught me so much and I now coach at my highschool alma mater."*



modernfamily



*"I can always count on the Dunphy family for a good laugh!"*

8



9

*"I love to cook, but who has the time for a three course meal each night?!"*

- 1 My Family Legacy
- 2 Frozen Grapes
- 3 Lifecake App
- 4 Tamma Juice
- 5 Emerald Isle, North Carolina
- 6 Youtility by Jay Baer
- 7 Competitive Cheerleading
- 8 Modern Family
- 9 Crockpots



## YEAR IN REVIEW

# MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

by **Melissa De Leon**

**I**t was a year of shakeups, breakups, and makeups that resulted in knitting together some of our industry's biggest competitors. Looking back over the year, these are some of the moves that had the industry talking from open to close.

**1**

## SAFeway/ALBERTSONS

VALUED AT \$9.2 BIL — JANUARY

The FTC had a challenge with this one, and so the industry waited. But by offering to sell assets to up-and-comers like Haggen to minimize their store count, the two were granted the go-ahead to create one of the largest retail chains in the U.S.

**2**

## AHOLD/DELHAIZE

VALUED AT \$28 BIL — JUNE

This was a quick, quiet deal that held more weight than it flaunted, perhaps because practice makes perfect. The two European-based retailers with footholds in the U.S. market tried to get together in 2007, but failed to reach a consensus. This time, however, it only took weeks for the two heads to agree and knit their names together.

**3**

## CHIQUITA/CULTRALE SAFRA

VALUED AT \$1.3 BIL — DECEMBER/JANUARY

Though this deal was sealed in January, the ripple effects continued well into 2015. Tender offer agreement negotiations went into January, as well as adjustments like Chiquita's need to leave its Charlotte headquarters earlier than planned. In the end, all wrinkles were smoothed out between both parties, now becoming a single bi-national power.



4

## KROGER/ROUNDY'S

VALUED AT \$800 MIL — NOVEMBER

With this late-in-the-year acquisition Kroger entered the Wisconsin market and expanded its footprint in the Chicago retail sector.

Though the growing chain only paid \$178 million to bring Roundy's into the family, it stated that it valued the merger up to as much as \$800 million, debt included. With this came several banners, including Pick 'n Save, Copps, Metro Market, and the urban Mariano's.

### LET'S TAKE A STEP BACK...

What did these companies look like before partnering up? Take a look at these pre-merger statistics.

#### SAFeway

1,335 stores

13 distribution centers

20 manufacturing plants

#### ALBERTSONS

1,075 stores

14 distribution centers

#### AHOLD

3,008 stores worldwide

#### DELHAIZE

3,534 stores worldwide

#### CHIQUITA

20,000 employees

#### CUTRALE SAFRA

27,000 employees

#### KROGER

2,623 stores

#### ROUNDY'S

151 stores  
2 distribution centers

## MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS THAT NEVER WERE, BUT HAD US TALKING

5

## US FOODS/SYSCO

VALUED AT \$8.2 BIL — JUNE

There was a lot of back and forth as the two competitors tried to convince the FTC that this was a union that was for, not against, the market. The case did, however, end up in court, where Sysco finally determined that the reward was not worth the costs and walked away in June.

6

## MONSANTO/SYNGENTA

VALUED AT \$47 BIL — AUGUST

The European company turned down a number of Monsanto's offers, believing they undervalued its potential. Eventually, Monsanto walked away from the deal entirely at the end of August, days after making a final \$47 billion attempt.

# Chinese NEW YEAR



## CHINESE LONG BEANS

Also known as Yardlong Beans, this produce item is firmer than regular green beans, and is actually more closely related to Blackeyed Peas. In addition, Chinese Long Beans provide a great source of fiber, Vitamin A, and Vitamin C. This versatile vegetable can be used in multiple preparation methods from stir-frying, steaming, and boiling as a snack or salad ingredient.



## NAPA CABBAGE

A staple ingredient in many Asian cuisines—this cabbage has a sweet, soft flavor that can be used in soups, as a filling in egg rolls, and eaten raw in salads. The crunchy, unique texture of its leaves continue to make this cabbage one of the most sought-after ingredients in Asian cuisine.



## WATER CHESTNUTS

This holiday favorite is usually found in marshes and its crunchy texture is associated with a mildly sweet flavor. Try boiling or steaming this veg to use in soups, salads, and stews. Peel before use in stir-fries.



## KUMQUATS

Literally translating to “golden orange” in Chinese, this tiny specialty citrus item has sweet, edible skin and a tart inner flesh. Kumquats also provide an excellent source of Vitamin C and fiber, as well as calcium and iron. Like Navel oranges and mandarins, this citrus item is said to bring luck, wealth, and prosperity.



## SNOW PEAS + SNOW PEA SHOOTS

Most often either sautéed or stir-fried, snow peas are one of the easiest vegetables to prepare and have a sweet, crisp flavor. Their versatility and plentiful health benefits make snow peas a great addition to a healthy diet.

Snow pea shoots are a bit grassier but crisp in flavor and freshness. Try them out in soups, stir-fried, or steamed.



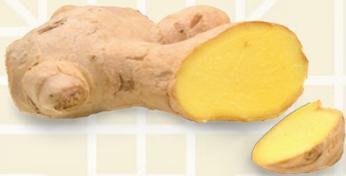
## DAIKON RADISH

Looking for good fortune? This vegetable is a traditionally beneficial symbol to have around. This veg has a mild flavor, crispy texture, and an overpowering earthy aroma. This flavor tends to vary throughout the vegetable, as the bottom is usually the most poignant and the top is the sweetest.

## BUDDHA'S HAND CITRON



What looks to be more of a Halloween-suited fruit, this item is one of the oldest citrus fruits on record. Coveted for its sweet floral fragrance, mild zest with little to no flesh or juice, Buddha's Hand is all rind and pith. Think of it as more of a presentation piece; although, the rind can be candied or used in baking and other recipes. Buddha's hands are also used as offerings in the temple during the holiday. Like cocktails? This is also a great ingredient for infusing into spirits.



## GINGER

Valued for its spicy flavor and medicinal benefits, ginger can be sliced or grated to add zest to Asian dishes. Try combining ginger with soy sauce, olive oil, and garlic to make a flavorful salad dressing.

## BABY SHANGHAI BOK CHOY + BABY BOK CHOY

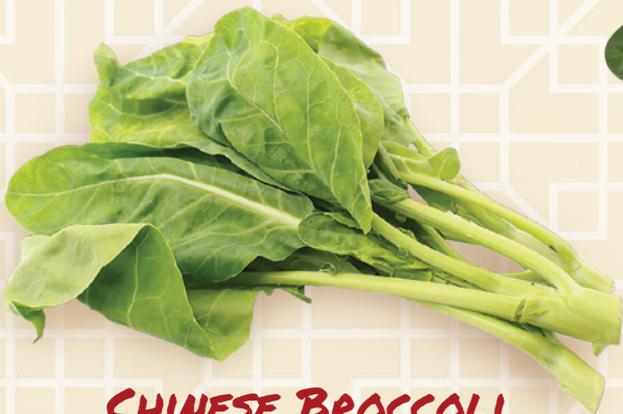
A common misconception is that these two varieties are one in the same, with interchangeable names. Truth is, these two vegetables are both visually and flavorfully different. In Asian stores, Baby Bok Choy is the most popular of the two as the more widely used variety, while Shanghai Baby Bok Choy is more popular in Shanghai cuisine. Baby Bok Choy has white crunchy stems and dark, spinach-like leaves. Baby Shanghai Bok Choy has uniform light green stems and spoon-shaped leaves and a more mild flavor than Baby Bok Choy. Perfect in soups, or stir-fried, braised, roasted, and grilled; these items offer subtle cabbage-like flavors that can be adapted to a range of different culinary creations. Bok Choy signifies family unity, which only adds to its appeal and versatility.



*Baby Shanghai Bok Choy*



*Baby Bok Choy*



## CHINESE BROCCOLI (GAI LAN)

Chinese broccoli's distinct, sharp flavor and its long, leafy characteristics set this broccoli apart from more common varieties. Steamed, boiled, or stir-fried, this vegetable is a great addition to any dish.

## POMEGRANATES

Pomegranates are a leathery, red-skinned fruit that are filled with delicious and delicate tiny, tangy-sweet edible seeds called arils. Not only is this popular for Chinese New Year, but it has become a front runner in healthy eating, flavor diversification, and culinary creativity. And let's not forget, pomegranates are a symbol for the abundance of children.



## CHINESE EGGPLANT

Tender, versatile, and widely used across multiple cuisines, Chinese Eggplant is unlike many eggplant varieties as the skin preserves the texture, taste, and shape, and is traditionally not removed in Chinese cooking. The item has several different preparation methods to fit your fancy, from baking and broiling, to stir-frying or deep-frying.



## FLAVOR TREND

I'm a sucker for a good flavor trend, but now pickling is officially a full-blown global culinary art. From kosher cucumber pickles in New York City, chutneys in India, kimchi in Korea and salted duck eggs in China, to pickled herring in Scandinavia, corned beef in Ireland, and salsa in Mexico—there are few types of cuisine out there that don't seek to enhance its flavors by pickling.

At its heart, pickling is simply soaking different foods in solutions to prevent spoilage—but pickling foods does much more than simply preserve them. Through the pickling process, fresh produce can also change in both taste and texture in innumerable different ways. In fact, chefs from across the globe are still experimenting with possible flavors that can be coaxed out by pickling.

Just a few pickled items I've tried in great local restaurants recently are dill pickled green beans, ginger pickled carrots, and traditionally pickled rhubarb and cauliflower. And this is just in the produce category. Unlike some of its more complicated flavor trend counterparts, pickling offers its fans a sense of returning to an era where food was authentic—something that truly resonates with this age of millennials. With so many different types of combinations available to great culinary minds across the globe, pickling is uniquely positioned to be one of the next great flavor trends in the industry, and I, for one, am excited to see where it goes.

# PICKLING

BY JESSICA DONNEL

Kosher dill pickle

## LEADING TRENDS IN FOOD PREPARATION METHODS

United States 2015

+61%

Pickling

+60%

Fermenting

+49%

Smoking

+46%

Sous vide  
(sue-veed)

# WTF

# DO I DO WITH

{ WHAT THE FORK }

# Limoneira® Lemons ?



LIMONEIRA® LEMON SHRIMP PASTA

## INGREDIENTS

3 Limoneira® Lemons  
¼ cup juice from Limoneira® Lemons  
6 large garlic cloves, chopped  
1 lb medium shrimp, shelled  
¼ cup grated parmesan cheese  
½ cup finely chopped parsley  
1 pkg fresh linguine pasta  
½ cup butter  
2 tsp dried basil  
2 whole green onions, chopped  
½ tsp hot red pepper flakes & oregano  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Grated zest from fresh Limoneira® Lemons

SERVINGS: 6-8

## DIRECTIONS

- 1 Melt butter in large, heavy skillet.
- 2 Add lemon zest, garlic red pepper flakes, basil and oregano, and cook for 2 minutes.
- 3 Add shrimp and sauté until opaque (about 4 minutes).
- 4 Add parsley, green onions, salt and pepper, and cook for 1 minute.
- 5 Stir in Limoneira® fresh lemon juice and cook for another minute.
- 6 Toss with hot pasta and parmesan cheese, and serve.

For more delicious, healthy, & easy-to-prepare recipes visit [www.lemonsforlife.com](http://www.lemonsforlife.com).

# SNAPSHOT CITRUS



## DJAI PIXIE TANGERINES

**Seasonality:** Mid March–May

**Attributes:** Generally smaller than an average tangerine, pebbly, light orange skin, easy to peel, and 100 percent seedless

**Aroma:** Sweet, Floral

**Flavor Profile:** Intensely sweet, deep citrus flavor



## NAVEL ORANGES

**Seasonality:** November–June

**Attributes:** Small navel formation on the blossom end, easy to peel, and virtually seedless

**Aroma:** Sweet, floral

**Flavor Profile:** Refreshingly tart with rich vanilla finish



## PAGE MANDARIN

**Seasonality:** December–January

**Attributes:** Prominent circle on blossom end

**Aroma:** Crisp, citrus scent

**Flavor Profile:** Wonderful rich flavor



## MEYER LEMONS

**Seasonality:** Year-round

**Attributes:** Cross between a regular lemon and a mandarin orange; bright yellow or rich and orange-yellow color

**Aroma:** Rich, lemon blossom/floral, sweet lime, lemon, and mandarin

**Flavor Profile:** Unique sweeter taste and lower acidity, hints of sweet lime, lemon, and mandarin



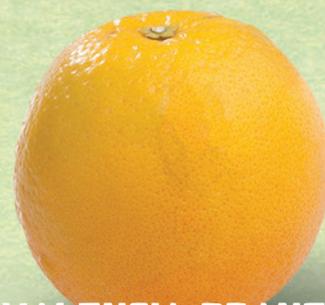
## PINK VARIEGATED LEMON

**Seasonality:** Year-round

**Attributes:** These lemons are prized as much for their beauty as they are for their flavor. Pink on the inside with a yellow and green striped rind.

**Aroma:** Bright, crisp

**Flavor Profile:** Slightly less acidic than conventional lemons



## VALENCIA ORANGES

**Seasonality:** February–early November

**Attributes:** Differentiated from other orange varieties by thin, slightly pebbly rind and occasional seeds

**Aroma:** Orange blossom

**Flavor Profile:** Known for their perfect balance of sweet and tart flavors and high juice content



## SATSUMA MANDARINS

**Seasonality:** Mid October–December

**Attributes:** Varying in shape from flat to necked, peel and segment easily, and are seedless

**Aroma:** Sweet honeysuckle aroma

**Flavor Profile:** Refreshing with warm, tropical hints



## GOLD NUGGET MANDARINS

**Seasonality:** Mid March–mid May

**Attributes:** Bright and slightly bumpy rind, and are seedless, sweet, and easy to peel

**Aroma:** Sweet citrus

**Flavor Profile:** Rich, extremely sweet flavor



## MINNEOLA TANGELOS

**Seasonality:** Mid December–April

**Attributes:** Cross between a grapefruit and tangerine, a deep orange with a knob-like formation at the stem end; few if any seeds, peels easily

**Aroma:** Robust, tart orange aroma

**Flavor Profile:** Bold, tangy flavor and bursting with juice



## BLOOD ORANGES

**Seasonality:** December–mid April

**Attributes:** Deep maroon interior with very few seeds and orange/red blushed exterior, easy to peel

**Aroma:** Mildly floral with earthy papaya fragrance

**Flavor Profile:** Rich, tart plum flavor with wild raspberry overtones



## CLEMENTINE & W. MURCOTT & TANGO MANDARINS

**Seasonality:** November–May

**Attributes:** Unique rounded middle, flat top and bottom medium sized fruit with deep orange smooth, glossy skin, seedless, easy to peel

**Aroma:** Sweet, wildflower, pomegranate aroma

**Flavor Profile:** Crisp apricot nectar flavor and a rich “raisin-y” aftertaste



## CARA CARA NAVEL ORANGES

**Seasonality:** December–mid May

**Attributes:** Rich pink pulp with orange exterior with few if any seeds

**Aroma:** Pleasingly tropical

**Flavor Profile:** Extremely sweet with a tangy cranberry-like zing and cherry undertones



## EUREKA & LISBON LEMONS

**Seasonality:** Year-round

**Attributes:** Two different types are virtually indistinguishable from each other, bright yellow with medium to slightly pebbly skin, most popular citrus fruit used in cooking today

**Aroma:** Crisp, floral smell

**Flavor Profile:** Distinct tangy flavor that compliments both sweet and savory foods

## GRAPEFRUIT

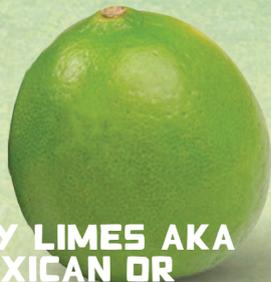
**Seasonality:** Year-round

**Attributes:** Minor differences in rind color, texture, and thickness; ruby and red varieties have yellow skin which develop a deep rose blush; major distinction found in the flesh, which ranges from very light pink in early Marsh Rubies to a rich, dark red in the Rio and Star varieties.

**Aroma:** Subtly sweet, sour cherry

**Flavor Profile:** Perfect balance of sweet and tart flavors, extremely juicy





### KEY LIMES AKA MEXICAN OR WEST INDIAN LIME

**Seasonality:** Year-round

**Attributes:** Generally round with straw yellow flesh and a thin, leathery skin, ranging from light green to yellow

**Aroma:** Highly crisp aromatic attributes

**Flavor Profile:** Fresh, tangy taste



### CITRIBURST FINGER LIMES

**Seasonality:** Mid-July through late December/early January

**Attributes:** Not related to a lemon or a lime, considered a micro-citrus with tiny fruit pearls in a wide range of colors

**Aroma:** Unique refreshing lime, citrus

**Flavor Profile:** Similar to a lemon-lime-grapefruit combination



### PERSIAN LIMES

**Seasonality:** Year-round

**Attributes:** Typically sold while still dark green in color, gradually turn light green as they ripen; virtually seedless

**Aroma:** Spicy, floral

**Flavor Profile:** Distinctive piney flavor

### ORO BLANCO/MELO GOLD

**Seasonality:** Oro: Oct-Dec, Melo: Nov-Jan

**Attributes:** Oro: Slightly larger than grapefruit, thick green-yellow rind; Melo: Larger than Oro, thinner rind

**Aroma:** Sweet for both

**Flavor Profile:**

Oro: Juicy sweet, bitter membranes; Melo: Sweet, but less than pummelo



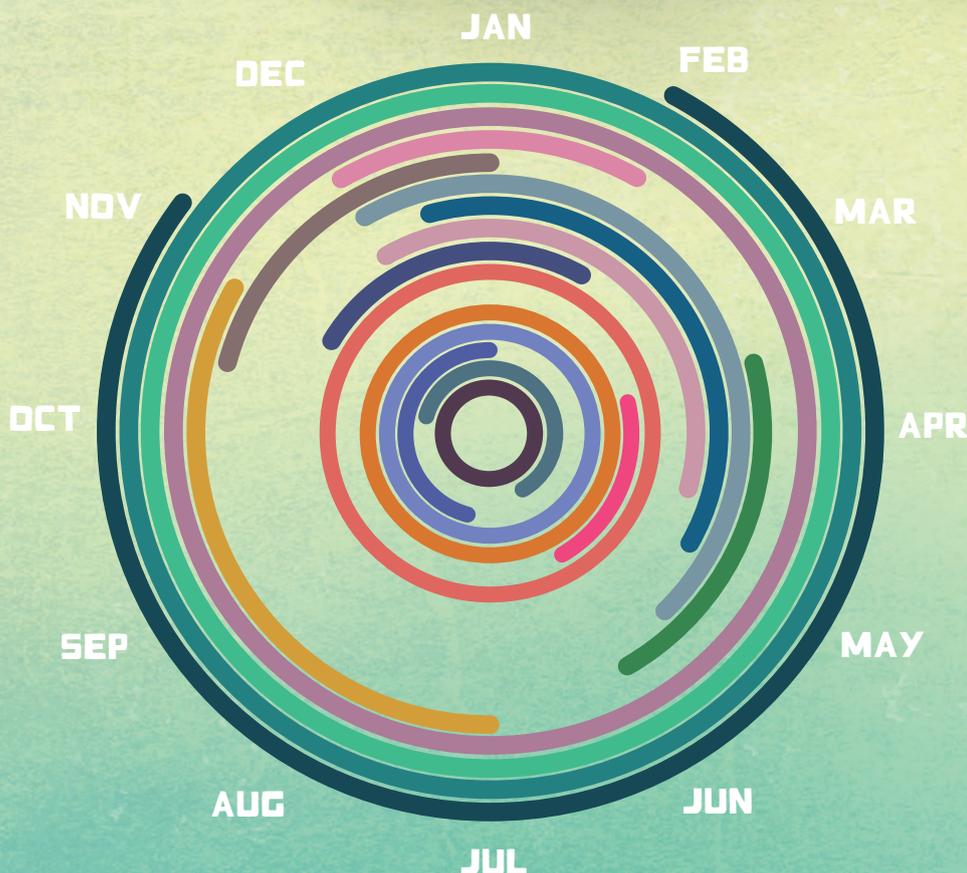
### PUMMELOS

**Seasonality:** Mid October-mid May

**Attributes:** Largest of all citrus fruit, thick, dark green peel that fades to yellow as season progresses

**Aroma:** Zesty, slightly tropical with a hint of jasmine and lime

**Flavor Profile:** Sweet with a candied almond aftertaste



### CITRUS CALENDAR

- Valencia Oranges
- Pink Variegated Lemon
- Meyer Lemons
- Eureka and Lisbon Lemons
- Navel Oranges
- Page Mandarins
- Satsuma Mandarins
- Gold Nugget Mandarins
- Cara Cara Navel Oranges
- Minneola Tangelos
- Blood Oranges
- Clementine/W. Murcott Mandarins
- Grapefruit
- Ojai Pixie Tangerines
- Key Limes
- Persian Limes
- Citriburst Finger Limes
- Pummelos
- Oro Blanco/Melo Gold



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# THE TEXAS NEXUS

BY JESSICA DONNEL

“It’s time for Texas to take its place on the national stage,” Tommy Wilkins, Director of Sales at Grow Farms Texas tells me, as we talk about the incredible growth and opportunities within the Lone Star State. “I believe that’s how we can best serve the industry—through the produce we grow in Texas, and through the resources we have to facilitate faster and more efficient transportation of produce from Mexico. We are building the bridges necessary to make this state a nexus for Texas and Mexican produce.”

Tommy is Texas at his core. Born and raised in the larger-than-life state, the produce veteran is now thriving and making his living in Texas. With his warm, can-do attitude, Tommy brings the best of both worlds to his role with Grow Farms, having cut his teeth on both the buy-side of the industry with the United Family of Stores, and now the supply-side with Grow Farms. With over 40 years of produce

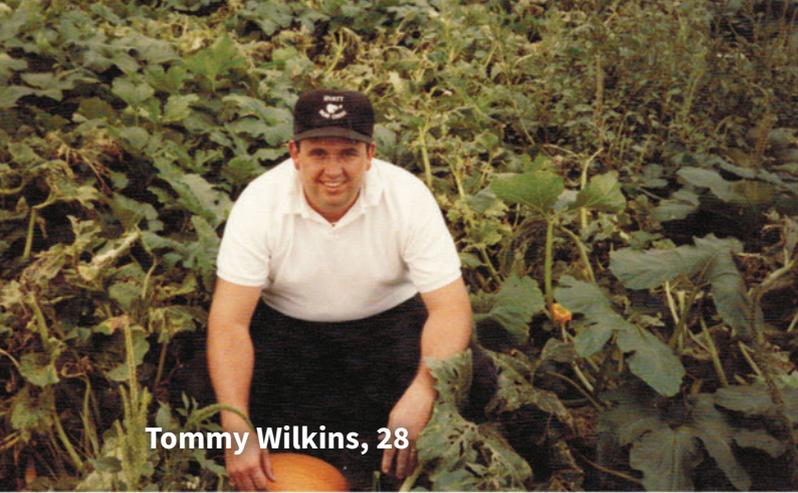
experience to bring to the table, Tommy has a mission to put the state he loves on the metaphorical map.

“Right now, Grow Farms is working on a wider strategy to expand both operations and availability in Texas and Mexico, as well as expanding in McAllen,” Tommy shares. “Currently, we’re finding just what items will allow us to answer the call for a bigger piece of the pie in both nationwide produce offerings with our year-round Mexican program, as well as a more substantial presence in our local Texas program.”

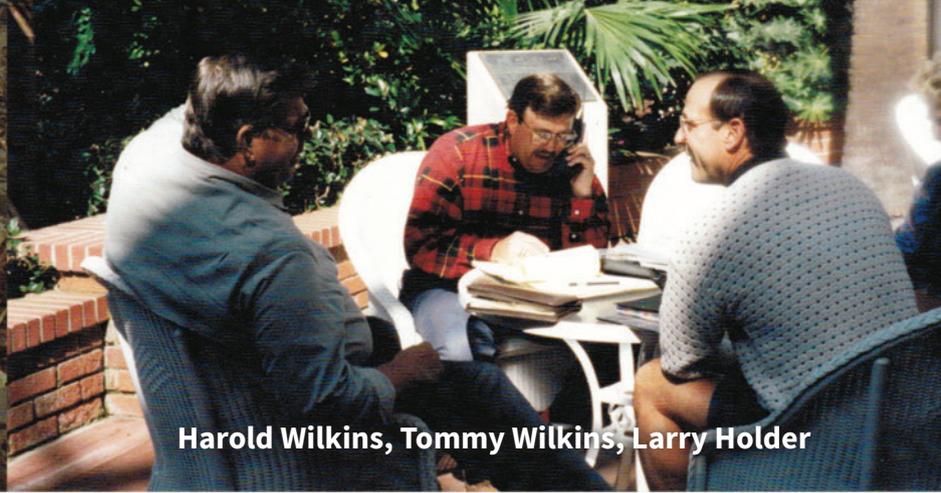
The areas between McAllen and Donna, Texas, where Tommy is based, are seeing an era of rapid expansion and innovation—making this short stretch of land off Mexico’s border a focal point for all things fruit and veg.



grow  
TEXAS



**Tommy Wilkins, 28**



**Harold Wilkins, Tommy Wilkins, Larry Holder**

Along with providing year-round traditionally grown Mexican produce imports like bell peppers, cucumbers, squash, green beans, and eggplant, Tommy's unique personal and retail experience has prepared him to take on emerging items like Texas red onions, napa cabbage, bok choy, kale, spinach, and cilantro.

And the work Tommy has been doing with Grow Farms is just a small part of the produce revolution taking place in South Texas right now. The Pharr-Reynosa International Bridge serves as one of the most important ports of entry for the U.S.-Mexico border, and while the growth has already been substantial, it has only seen the beginning as far as business opportunities for produce companies, manufacturing plants, and expansions through short and long term projects. And with the help of the new Mazatlan-Matamoros superhighway—connecting Mazatlan, Sinaloa, Mexico to Pharr, Texas—this new route for produce transportation can save up to \$3,000 in fuel and nearly 16 hours in travel time round-trip.

In this vein of revamping the South Texas produce scene, Tommy says his main focuses definitely encompass Grow Farms and Texas produce—partnering with like-minded growers who share the company's views on quality, wholesomeness, service, and transparency. It's about supporting the little guy, Tommy tells me, and it's about getting the retailers to support the little guy, too.

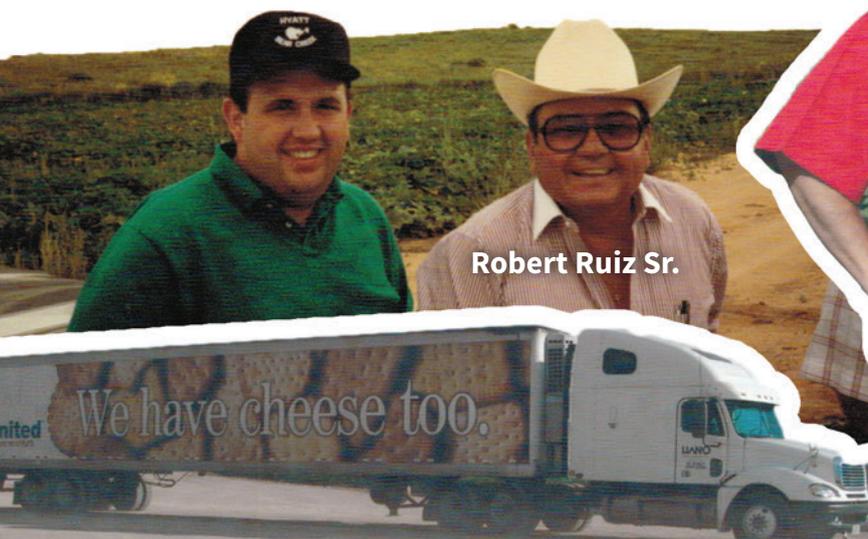
"Texans have an enormous ego, so of course when you say it's always bigger and better in Texas, that also applies to

produce," Tommy says. "When you say Texas-grown to a Texan that carries a lot more weight than it would in other parts of the country. Robert Taylor, the President of United, always says, 'If it's grown in Texas and it's good, we should carry it,' and that's something I think can be a win-win for the retailer."

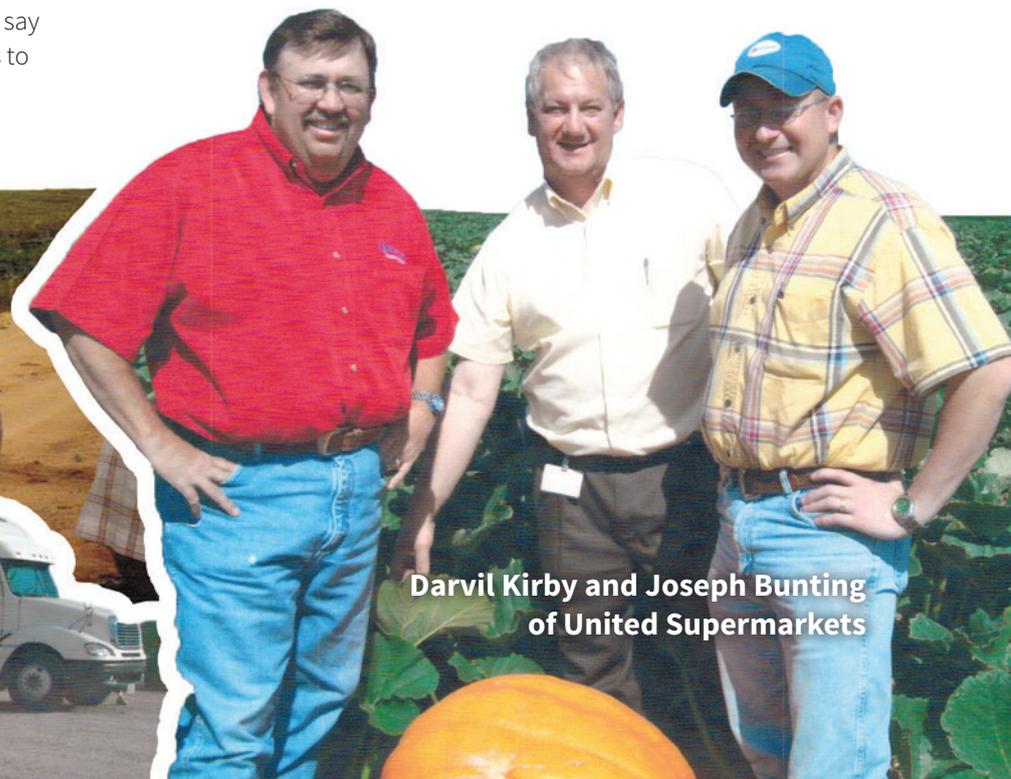
And where does the seemingly traditional Texas powerhouse get his penchant for trying his out-of-the-box methods? His playbook may come from having nearly every possible situation in the produce industry thrown at him. Following his father, a West Texas retailer with Furr's Supermarkets, into the business over four decades ago, there's really nothing Tommy has yet to see.



Tommy's nearly eight years as Director of Produce Procurement at United Supermarkets and his over a decade of working with them under his and his father's company Wilkins/Genova clearly gave the man some powerful insights on how to provide value for consumers—some he was more than happy to share with me.



**Robert Ruiz Sr.**



**Darvil Kirby and Joseph Bunting of United Supermarkets**



**Tommy and George Barzilleri Jr  
of Albert's Organics**



**Bret Erickson, President of TIPA (Texas  
International Produce Association)**

“When you spend that much time with consumers, it’s invaluable what you learn. Over the years I have seen things evolve and go away—you always have to have that pulse on your customer, and develop solutions that will help satisfy that consumer,” Tommy explains. “I feel that being so closely involved with the final consumer also pushes you to put a better product in your box. I have been in the trenches trying to satisfy that consumer, and it drives me toward solutions for our product menu.”

Beyond the consumer, Tommy has also spent many years perfecting his relationships with his grower-partner partners; “partners” being the key word he brings to my attention. Tommy, above all else, is someone who deeply values the relationships he’s built within the industry, and these relationships are exactly what has made him successful in both the buy-side and the supply-side of his career.

“Between growers and retailers, it’s absolutely key to develop an environment where it’s a partnership,” Tommy tells me when I prod him for his advice. “Both sides of the coin have their needs—the grower needs to feel like he’s getting a fair return for his product and a retailer has to feel like he’s giving the consumer something they truly need. The way to do this is for growers to make the process seem easier for the buyers and take some of the hurdles out of the game. When you eliminate some of the problems going in, that’s how you can get everyone what they want.”

It’s in part because of that spirit to help retailers and growers connect, that Tommy was inspired to get

involved with the Viva Fresh Produce Expo. He’s been on the organization’s steering committee since its inception, and eventually took the lead on Viva Fresh’s Sponsorship Committee as well, using the connections he’s garnered throughout his career to support the produce show.

“I am very proud of what Viva Fresh has to offer the produce community. As an industry, I believe we must absolutely educate retailers and foodservice professionals just what we have to offer,” Tommy explains. “The people involved with the show have so much passion for the opportunity to change the consumption of our products. I have been so blessed over the years, I feel that it’s my duty to give back to an industry that gave me that opportunity.”

While leaving the Lubbock, Texas-based United Supermarkets to start work with Grow Farms further south doesn’t seem like a life-altering change to anyone who lives outside the massive state, the two cities are actually 630 miles apart from one another—essentially the distance of leaving New York City for Charlotte, NC.

But it turns out this new opportunity in Tommy’s life couldn’t have been presented at a better time. With Tommy’s daughter getting married this past July and his son graduating from law school last year, he says this was the perfect time for him and his wife Barbara to start the next chapter in their lives as well.

“We left behind family and 20 plus years in Lubbock, but life has an interesting way of playing out. I have a strong faith and believe doors have opened and closed by a greater power. My journey has taken Barbara and I from Lubbock, to Dallas, to Visalia, to L.A., back to Lubbock, now to the Rio Grande Valley. After 40 years in the business, I believe my story still has some chapters to write. We found a wonderful home, a church, and I believe Grow Farms will give me an opportunity to leave a mark on this industry. How good is that?”

If Tommy’s next few decades in the industry are anything like his last, it sounds like a pretty good plan to me, too. 



**Lawrence Kroman,  
I Kunic Company**



NEW

# CELERY SNACKERS

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## DANDY® + PEANUT BUTTER

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# WTF DO I DO WITH Radishes ?

{ WHAT THE FORK }



**DANDY® RADISH MINISTICK & HEIRLOOM APPLE SALAD WITH TOASTED PECANS & CHEDDAR CORNBREAD CRUMBLE**

## INGREDIENTS

*For salad:*

- 1 pkg** Dandy® Radish Ministicks
- 2 heirloom apples such as Gravenstein, Granny Smith, or Pippin
- Juice of 2 Dandy® Meyer Lemons
- ¼ cup** red onion, very thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp** agave nectar
- 1 tsp** coarse sea salt
- 1 dash** cayenne pepper
- 1 dash** ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp** extra virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup** flat leaf Italian parsley leaves
- ½ cup** pecans, toasted
- ½ cup** cheddar cornbread, crumbled

*For cheddar cornbread:*

- 1 cup** all purpose flour
- 1 cup** yellow cornmeal
- ¼ cup** sugar
- 2 tsp** baking powder
- 1 tsp** baking soda
- 1 tsp** salt
- 1 cup** (packed) coarsely grated extra-sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 cup** buttermilk
- 2 large eggs
- ¼ cup** (½ stick) unsalted butter, melted, cooled slightly

**SERVINGS:** 4

## DIRECTIONS

*For salad:*

- 1 In a large bowl, whisk together the Meyer lemon juice, agave nectar, salt, cayenne, black pepper, and olive oil. Add the sliced onion and allow them to soak in the dressing mixture for 5 minutes.
- 2 Using a mandolin, shave the apples over the marinated onions, add the Dandy® Radish Ministicks and the Italian parsley leaves and toss to combine.
- 3 To serve, separate the salad onto 4 plates and sprinkle with candied pecans and crumbled cheddar cornbread.

*For cheddar cornbread:*

- 4 Preheat oven to 400°F. Butter 8x8x2-inch metal baking pan.
- 5 Whisk first 6 ingredients in medium bowl to blend. Mix in cheese.
- 6 Whisk buttermilk, eggs, and melted butter in another medium bowl to blend. Add buttermilk mixture to dry ingredients and stir just until incorporated; do not overmix.
- 7 Transfer batter to prepared pan. Bake until bread is golden on top and tester inserted into center comes out clean, about 22 minutes.
- 8 Serve warm or at room temperature. (Can be made 1 day ahead. Cool completely in pan on rack. Cover with foil and store at room temperature.)

Recipe by Chef Todd Fisher. For more delicious, healthy, & easy-to-prepare recipes visit [www.dudafresh.com](http://www.dudafresh.com).

UP  
CLOSE

**frieda's**<sup>™</sup>  
inspire. taste. love.

### INSPIRE. TASTE. LOVE. MEET THE NEW FRIEDA'S.

Frieda's Specialty Produce is bringing inspiration to the table. Always innovating, this company is enhancing its connection with shoppers and elevating the specialty produce category yet again this year, this time by highlighting the new branding and packaging for its versatile produce line. Frieda's has partnered with strategic branding consultants Edmundson Martin, and together, they have launched

a consumer insights initiative, competitive analysis, and in-store reviews.

With those insights in hand, and driven by the company's new aspirational brand promise, "inspiring new food experiences," and slogan, "Inspire. Taste. Love.," Frieda's has developed a new voice that is friendly, smart, and playful, as the company looks to welcome consumers into the fold.

For Frieda's, the approachability is important. Given the unique and sometimes odd look of specialty products, they want people to feel comfortable about trying something different. Frieda's family has been turning people onto new food experiences since 1962 and with the new brand, they are positioned to grow the category and inspire friends, families, and new food lovers everywhere.



# WTF DO I DO WITH

Avocados paired  
with Mangos ?

{ WHAT THE FORK }



MAHI MANGO TOSTADAS

## INGREDIENTS

*For cream:*

- 3 cloves of garlic, finely minced
- 2 chipotle chilies en adobo, seeded and chopped
- ½ tsp adobo sauce from can of chipotle chilies
- 2 lemons, divided
- ½ tsp cumin powder
- 8 oz 2% fat strained Greek yogurt

*For salsa:*

- 2 mangos, peeled, pitted, and diced (about 1½ cup)
- 6 scallions, thinly sliced (white and light green parts only)
- ½ cup fresh cilantro leaves, chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh orange juice
- 1 ripe avocado, diced

*For fish:*

- 1 tbsp cumin powder
- 1 tbsp chili powder
- 1 lb mahi mahi (or other firm white fish, 1½" thick) at room temperature
- 1 tbsp olive oil, divided
- Coarse salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

*Additional ingredients:*

- 4 tostada shells
- 1 cup shredded lettuce

SERVINGS: 4

## DIRECTIONS

- 1 For the cream, combine garlic, chipotle chilies, adobo sauce, juice from 1 lemon, and cumin powder in a food processor. Blend to form a smooth paste.
- 2 Add yogurt and pulse until thoroughly combined. Season with salt and pepper and set aside.
- 3 For the salsa, combine mango, scallions, cilantro, orange juice, and salt and pepper in a medium bowl. Stir well.
- 4 Just before serving, gently fold in avocado. In a small mixing bowl, combine cumin, chili powder, and salt and pepper.
- 5 For the fish, brush fish with ½ tablespoon of olive oil and coat with spice mixture. Let it stand for 15 minutes.
- 6 Lightly brush grill pan or cast iron skillet with remaining olive oil and heat over high flame.
- 7 Cook the fish, turning once, 3 minutes per side for medium rare (or 4½ minutes per side for medium). Remove from heat and slice into ½" thick pieces.
- 8 To assemble tostadas, arrange shredded lettuce and cubes of fish over tostada on a plate.
- 9 Top with 3 generous tablespoons of salsa and spoon cream liberally on top. Serve with lemon wedge.

For more delicious, healthy, & easy-to-prepare recipes visit [www.freska.com](http://www.freska.com).



# 60 YEARS



## & COUNTING

by **Jordan Okumura**

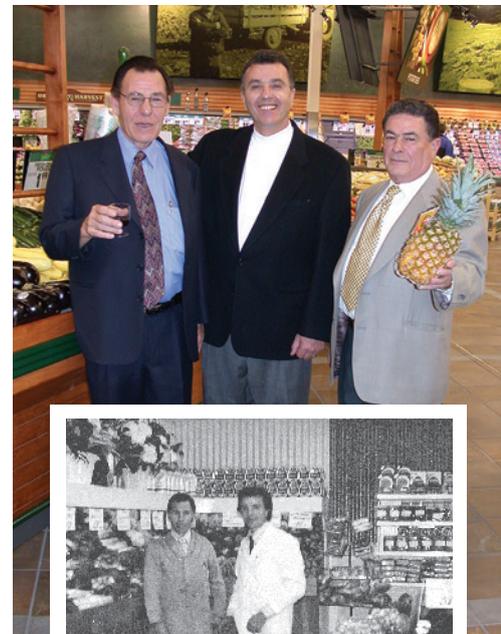
**It almost sounds like the beginning of a fable.** The Eagle, The Lion, and The Hawk—Longo's founding three, affectionately named by their employees and family members.

**T**hat is where it all began, three brothers pedaling produce over summer streets as they built their way towards one of today's most well-known and respected retail companies in Canada. More than 20 family members later, and you not only have the history of a company, but also the history of a family.

Tommy, Joe, and Gus Longo; the trifecta of fresh produce founders brought vision and ingenuity into the family fold, which eventually led to a single fruit market in midtown Toronto.

"The Founders built the company around four pillars—ease of service, education and ideas, fresh and unique products, and everyday foods," Mimmo Franzone, Director of Produce and Floral, tells me as he reminisces about the leaps and bounds that the company has made in the past 60 years. "When executed properly for any business, you can really differentiate yourself from competitors."

We talk a lot about family legacy. It's important to us. Much of this industry is based on the roots that two, three, or four generations have



**Opposite:** Tommy setting up outdoor display at the Broadway in 1960. **Above (top):** Joe, Gus, and Tommy Longo. **Above (bottom):** Joe and Gus in 1973.



space for a shopping cart, he always keeps a bird's-eye-view of the retail landscape.

Tommy and Joe have since passed, but the two brothers really were the driving force behind that early foundation of what Longo's would become today. Tommy and Joe are credited with borrowing \$10,000 in 1956 to buy a five-year lease on the Broadway Fruit Market—a meager 2,000 square-feet in a building at Yonge and Castlefield Streets. They couldn't have known at the time that leap of faith would forever alter the course of the Longo family legacy.

### The Roots of Success

But the Longo's family roots in fresh produce began even earlier than that in the small village of Termini Imerese on the north coast of Sicily. Antonino Longo was a farmer in the distant locale during the 1930s and 1940s who grew and harvested artichokes, grapes, tomatoes, wheat, watermelon, peaches, and olives depending upon the season.

Generations emerged and necessity eventually brought them to Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Now, three generations later, Longo's has grown its footprint to encompass 24 conventional stores, five smaller urban format stores branded The Market by Longo's, and an online grocery business dubbed Grocery Gateway. Grocery Gateway is essentially a service that Longo's took on eleven years ago which has proven to be a very successful venture for the retailer. Longo's is currently the largest online grocery

“ **Produce is our signature.**

Everything is lifestyle focused and driven to exceed expectations and that begins by setting the bar in our produce department. ”

– Mimmo Franzone



**Above (top):** Joe stocking shelves at Broadway. **Above (bottom):** Artist rendering of the Broadway store in 1956.

planted and cultivated, and that is what makes produce so incredibly unique. They are stewards of the land and they are our storytellers.

Tommy was known as The Eagle for his wisdom, leadership skills, work ethic, generosity, strength, and diligence. Joe was dubbed The Lion, which some will say arose from his thick dark mane of hair, but mostly because he was known to roam his produce displays, always in search of perfection. Always on the prowl, and today, living on through the growth and evolution of Longo's. Gus, known as The Hawk, has the eye to spot when something isn't quite right. Whether scoping out the geography of the grocery store, or creating more

retailer in Canada. Everything, to this day, is built around fresh.

The company has taken its growth in stride. In those early days, growth meant something personal and remains a cornerstone in the company's evolution moving forward. New locations were strategically chosen to address different demographics. But they were also chosen as a way to provide career opportunities to team members and retain that family of talented individuals that made the company so successful.

“The choices that the three Founders made were based on their family values, and those choices also shaped their ideas of what value meant. They saw this as produce. Produce is our signature. Everything is lifestyle focused and driven to exceed expectations and that begins by setting the bar in our produce department,” Mimmo notes.

The company's 280,000 square-foot facility and 11,000 square-foot Central Kitchen function as the company's distribution center and head office.

**The Longos in 1955. Back row:** Zina, Tommy, Rosa, Antonino, Mary, and Joe. **Front row:** Gus and Sam





Tim Gibson, Mimmo Franzone, and Bruno Bertucci, Longo's Produce Experts.

“We make sure never to shy away from the four pillars. For example, we still walk the food terminal at the Toronto Market six days a week. We live produce every day,” he adds. “The team is always looking for the freshest finds to support our growing program with our local vendor partners. We are incredibly hands-on and diligent, something we’ve learned by example from Longo’s amazing Founders.”

### Fresh Is Key

Longo’s ensures that a majority of its produce program is sourced locally when each category is in season and whenever the conditions allow for them to support the local community. The Ontario grocer is also continuing to cultivate its relationships all over the world, building great partnerships with international growers and bringing product in direct. Produce has always been the backbone of Longo’s, and its family of fresh-forward stores is seamless in its vision.

As the company evolved from that single fruit market in midtown Toronto, Longo’s has always held true to their fresh purpose. The trends evolved, and though

they are now a full service grocery chain they still rely on the foundation they laid to carry the company’s message—fresh is key. Longo’s has continued to elevate and differentiate its fresh departments as well as its progressive programs and unique features.

### Customer For Life

“We are celebrating our 60th anniversary throughout 2016 with year-long promotions that engage consumers, along with team members, vendors, and family members,” Mimmo says. “Our ultimate goal over the course of the year is to increase social media participation in a cross platform conversation, drive sales and profits, and ultimately support our ‘Customer for Life’ strategy.”

The company will also be creating collateral around its flyers, magazine, reusable bags, and activities like local chef charity events.

This year, Longo’s will be putting out limited edition products as the team works closely with vendors to feature

monthly items for a limited time, and exclusively, for its anniversary. These products will traverse all departments, with the emphasis as we would expect, on produce. While the company is not quite ready to announce the delicious and unique items that its fruitful partnerships have created, I can say that they are something to aspire to. Off the record, of course.

“I like to think of our stores as great testing grounds for new products as well,” Mimmo adds. “We will be continuing our work with vendors partners to bring new items to market.”

“ **We want to actively engage all our team members...**

Our success is built around our employees. ”

– Mimmo Franzone



**Mimmo Franzone**  
Director of Produce and Floral

Whether it is a trial crop of new grape varieties, or a new added-value produce component, we look to celebrate our partners as much as the consumer at the end of the day.”

Longo’s Flavour Corner is a perfect example of this. Here, the company features new varieties of produce for its consumer base, from grapes bred for new flavors to tomatoes that bring a different taste or texture to the plate.

In addition to exclusive anniversary branded products to keep an eye out for, Longo’s will also highlight its vendor partners in mass media executions as well as featuring their brands and products prominently throughout the year.

Another important part of Longo’s tradition, and a focus as well for the upcoming year of celebrations, is the Longo’s team itself.

“We want to actively engage all our team members, whether it is with specially designed decade t-shirts throughout the year, or with in-store events, activities or contests, our success is built around our employees,” Mimmo says. “For the family, it is about recording and celebrating the Longo’s legacy and ensuring that future generations will never forget the past when helping to plan the future and continuing the legacy in the communities that we have built.”

## Looking Forward

So what does the future look like for Longo’s?

Mimmo tells me that as Canada’s demographics change, Longo’s must change with it. Produce, being the focal point and claim-to-fame for Longo’s, will be leading the charge as the produce team looks to tailor its offerings to different international groups within its own communities.

Enter the company’s new International Flavours initiative. Mimmo tells me that his team has been growing this sub-department within produce to include different items specific to a community’s



Tommy, Joe, and Gus in 1990.

demographics. Currently, 80 percent of the International Flavours program is based around Asian and South Asian produce commodities, with the other 20 percent built to fit the demographic, or rather, a community-based assortment.

“For a location that is in an Eastern European community, let’s say, we make sure that we have the right variety of cabbage for making sauerkraut or ensuring we have the right variety of okra in stock whether we’re in an Asian or South Asian market or community,” Mimmo says.

Speaking of sub-departments, the growth in organics has accelerated as well, as consumer behaviors have changed. Longo’s now has over 100 items guaranteed.

“It’s important to stay ahead of trends but also still continue building our vendor partnerships and relationships within the diverse communities that make up Canada’s growing population,” he says.

Built on a dedication to fresh, quality food offerings, Longo’s doesn’t seem to be slowing down its evolution anytime soon. Between renovating store locations, establishing new strategically placed footholds in local communities, and growing along with the changing demographics in Canada, the team at Longo’s has their plate full.

But with a Longo’s family that continues to grow along with the retail powerhouse, I am sure that this story is far from over. **S**

# THE PRODUCE PLAYBOOK

## FEB 2015 vs FEB 2014

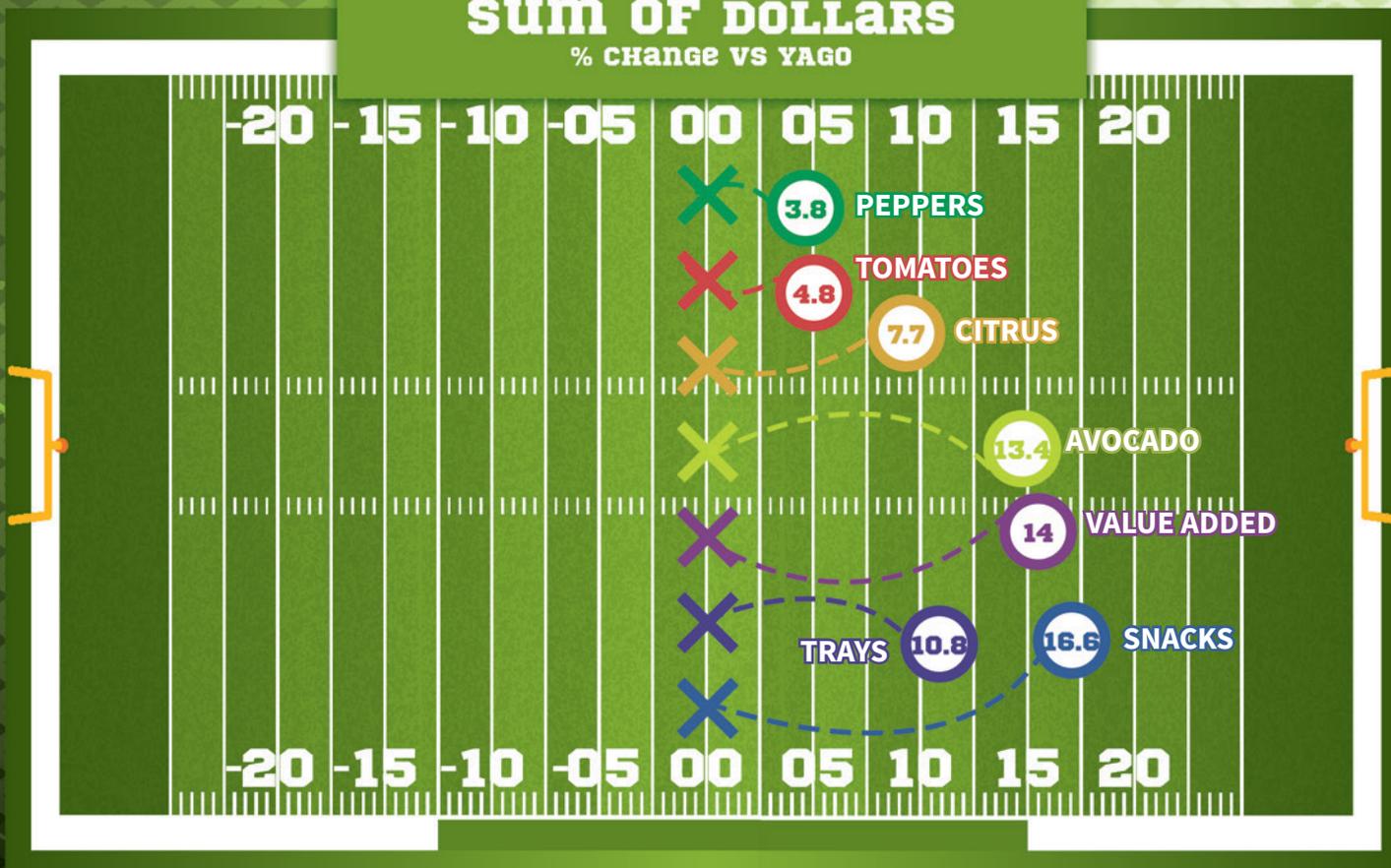
**W**ith an average 114.4 million viewers during Super Bowl XLIX during 2015, according to CNN, there are sure to be many a ravenous appetite, or at the very least, a perpetual snacker in the bunch. As consumers look to add more healthy options to their Game Day spread, we caught up with the Nielsen Perishables Group to share some of the produce categories that historically have sales spikes during the week of the Super Bowl.

As for this year, Super Bowl 50 will be hosted in our backyard in Northern California on February 7, 2016 in the City of Santa Clara at the state-of-the-art Levi's® Stadium. And, according to Reuters, the Super Bowl is the most expensive TV program for advertisers, who paid up to \$4.5 million for a 30-second commercial in 2015.

### SUM OF DOLLARS in millions

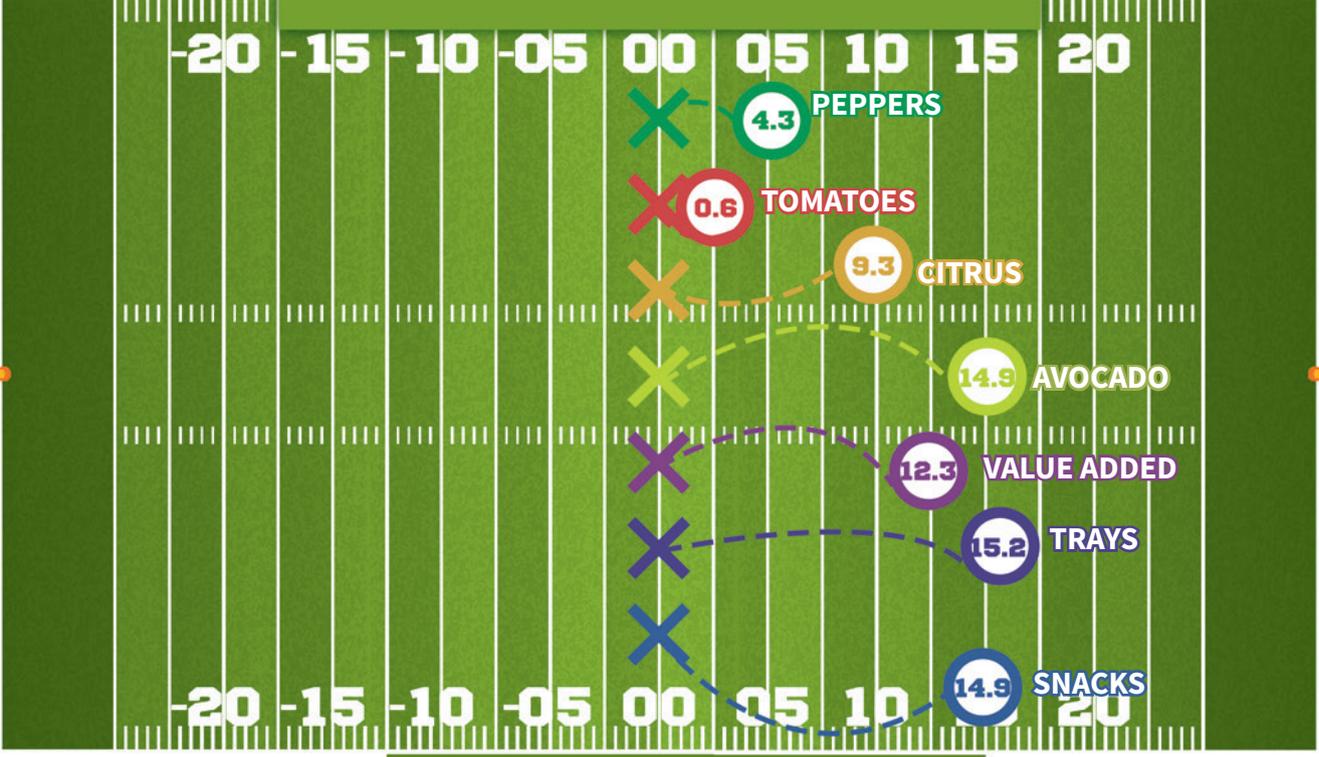


### SUM OF DOLLARS % CHANGE VS YAGO



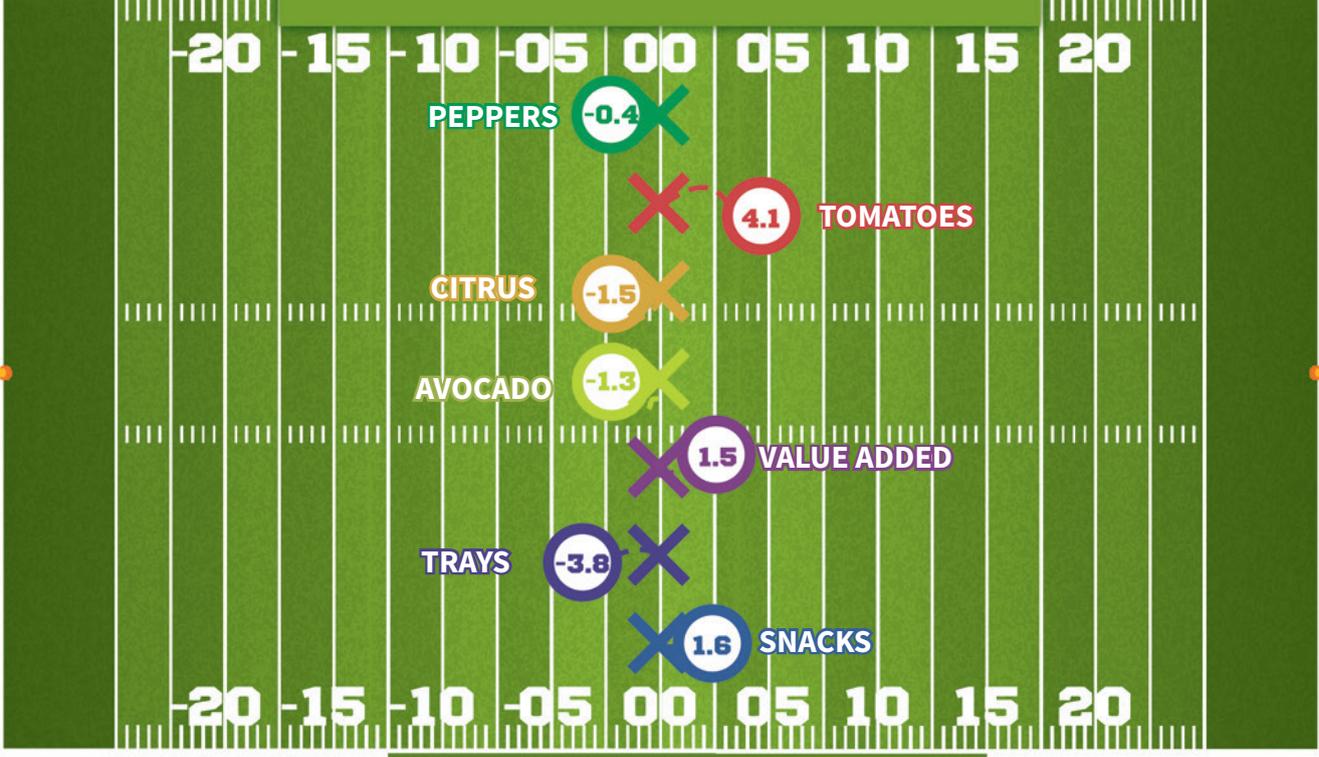
## SUM OF VOLUME

% CHANGE VS YAGO



## SUM OF AVERAGE RETAIL

% CHANGE VS YAGO





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\*Nielsen FreshFacts most recent 52 weeks through 9/26/15 vs YAGO.  
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