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Farm Fresh Produce making a name in summer vegetable deal

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Take a young couple with strong roots in the produce industry and a determination to build a business that evolves and expands with every season, and you have Farm Fresh Produce in Faison, NC.

Husband-and-wife owners Steven and Bethany Ceccarelli may be young, but they know their business and they are packed with energy to build what has already become a well-known supplier of summer vegetables.



This summer Farm Fresh Produce

has a new grower-partner growing Bell peppers exclusively for the company. "We are very excited about the opportunities that our new summer deals will provide to our customers and prospective customers," Bethany Ceccarelli told *The Produce News*. "This summer we have a new grower-partner who is growing 50 acres of Bell peppers exclusively for us."

The new Bell pepper program, however, is merely one of the several new and exciting things going on at Farm Fresh Produce.

"Overall, we have expanded our summer vegetable offerings," Ceccarelli added. "We are really putting ourselves out there in summer arena. We also had a gray squash program that just wrapped up. This is a bit of an unusual item for the U.S. Most of the crop was sent to Canada. It's a small gray squash, about the size of a credit card, and it sells very well in the Montreal market. Steven's roots are in that region, and he likes to tailor our customer's needs and requests to what he can supply."

Farm Fresh also had a highly successful Napa cabbage program out of North Carolina this spring. It had over 70 acres of the product from Clinton and Mount Olive that started in early May.

"We're still moving the Napa," Ceccarelli said June 6, "but the program is winding down now.

"We are also doing some specialty hot peppers, which we're gearing up now to begin," she continued. "The line includes Jalapeños, Cubanelle, long hots and Hungarian Wax. We'll also have some Poblano and finger hot peppers this summer."

Farm Fresh Produce's summer line also includes fancy large choice eggplant, with the program expected to kick off in early to mid-July.

"Our goal is to be a one-stop shop for our customers," said Ceccarelli. "We have broadened our selection of summer vegetables, and by doing so we're moving closer to our goal of eventually having year round supplies."

If customers are looking to simplify things by coming to Farm Fresh Produce for numerous items, that's what the company will set out to do, and to do it throughout the year. The company already offers sweet potatoes on a year-round basis.

Within its strategy is the goal of building brand identity. It has designed boxes for its individual produce programs. The "Farm Fresh Produce" Napa cabbage box was introduced with the spring movement.

"The logo and design is attractive and easy to identify," Ceccarelli noted. "We now have a Bell pepper box, and we'll have a squash box as that program begins.

"And we're highly service minded," she continued. "We don't expect problems to occur, but if they should arise, we step up and handle them quickly and efficiently."

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