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Generational know-how keeps Pacificpro at the top of its game

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It's an exciting apple season for three generations of the Hartmann family at Pacificpro Inc. "Washington apples have been the core commodity of Pacificpro and the Hartmann family since they first started in the business 50 years ago," Vice President Randy Hartmann told *The Produce News*. The company is headquartered in Bellevue, WA.

Craig Hartmann's grandfather, Bill, grew up on his father's farm.



Randy Hartmann and his wife, Stephanie, wed this past June. Hartmann is flanked by his father, Craig, and brother, Marcus. *(Photo courtesy of Amelia Soper Photography)* Bill Hartmann eventually partnered with a grower and handled the marketing side of business, and he later worked for the Washington Apple Commission as a well-known and respected voice in promoting Washington apples globally.

Today, Craig Hartmann, the company's president, is joined by sons Randy and Marcus, who serves as the company's vice president of operations.

"Our goal is to exceed our customers' expectations, every time," Randy Hartmann stated. "We exist to meet the customers' needs, and we value and appreciate the opportunity to assist each of them with their Washington produce procurement."

Pacificpro Inc. procures and ships apples, pears and most other commodities grown in the Pacific Northwest to its retail, wholesale and foodservice customers throughout the United States. The company provides full load and LTL shipments to all regions on a daily basis. "We believe our knowledge of the Northwest produce market, our unrivaled access to quality product, long-standing relationships with preeminent growers and shippers throughout the region, along with our expertise in logistical management and oversight from loading to delivery makes a great strategic partner for produce buyers and consumers nationwide," Hartmann stated.

He was asked how the 2013 Washington apple production season is progressing. "Warm, dry weather in our growing regions the last couple months, combined with a strong bloom should result in a good sized, clean crop overall with decent color, shape and larger sizing on average," he replied, adding that he anticipates volume for the statewide crop will be down slightly from 2012.

Pacificpro's extensive apple manifest includes Red Delicious, Gold Delicious, Granny Smith, Gala, Fuji, Honeycrisp, Braeburn, Jonagold and Pink Lady. "In addition, we also are promoting many of our valued partners' trademarked varieties," he went on to say.

The harvest is already under way for Galas and early Golds. Hartmann said Honeycrisp production was expected to ramp up at the end of August followed by Golden Delicious and Granny Smith at the beginning of September. Red Delicious production is expected to begin in mid-September, with most other varieties coming online by the third week of the month. Cripps Pink is the last variety harvested with activity concluding in early November.

Early projections point to sizes peaking around 80-88 count. "Quality looks nice and clean overall," Hartmann said.

Organic apples account for approximately 5 percent of Pacificpro's overall apple volume. "We do work with many of the preeminent organic growers in the Northwest and maintain great access to organic apples as late as they are available in the season," Hartmann said.

Pacificpro provides its customers with a variety of packaging options including 48-175 count grays, three- and five-pound poly and soft-net bags, cell packs, euro packs, recyclable plastic container single-layer gift boxes, multiple sliced apple packs and some loose packs for U.S. #1 graded fruit.

On the facilities side of business, Hartmann said some of the company's partner packinghouses are installing new packinglines, and overall production and capacity will increase as a result. Pacificpro also works hard to meet and exceed customer food-safety requirements. "It remains a priority to keep them updated on the steps our growers, warehouses and overall supply chain are making to ensure quality and overall safety," he commented.

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