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Sunny Valley hosts first sustainability training session

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Glassboro, NJ-based Sunny Valley International hosted a sustainability training session Feb. 20 in conjunction with the Jersey Fruit Cooperative Association for New Jersey stone fruit and blueberry growers.

Chad Puschel, a sales associate and account manager at Sunny Valley, wrote the grant for the training session last year and has been busy planning and organizing the event ever since.



Chad Puschel

“I wrote [the grant] for the Jersey Fruit Co-Op to bring it into the forefront of sustainability,” Puschel told *The Produce News* Feb. 23, following the successful session. “I knew sustainability was the new buzzword — the newest direction that everything was going to go in — so I decided that Sunny Valley and Jersey Fruit should be at the forefront of it and leading the changes.”

Attendees of the training session were representatives from farms and organizations throughout the

state of New Jersey, including SureHarvest,



Sunny Valley International hosted a sustainability training session Feb. 20. Rutgers Fruit Research & Extension Center, Big Buck Farms, Clark Farms, Heilig Orchards, Summit City Farms, Glossy Fruit Farms, Larchmont Farms, LoSasso Farms, Mill Rock Farms, Stoney Creek Blueberries, Whalen Farms, Lanza Farms and Sunny Valley International.

This first training session, Puschel noted, was a precursor to see how receptive New Jersey growers would be and whether or not they were already in line with some of the sustainability practices.

“We found out we already [are in line with some sustainability practices], but there’s still a lot more we can learn,” Puschel said. “This is really just the first step in Jersey Fruit becoming a sustainable entity.”

Going forward, Puschel said Jersey Fruit plans on applying for another grant to further this movement throughout the state.

“Sustainable farming is a journey and not a destination,” he said. “Jersey Fruit has taken the first steps toward sustainability, with the overall goal of leaving the farm in as good or better shape for the next generation.”

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