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# Pacificpro couldn't have special-ordered a better apple season

September 1, 2016

Randy Hartmann, vice president of Pacificpro Inc., said the 2016-17 apple season is going to be exceptional. "The growing conditions this spring and summer were ideal and should result in one of the largest crops in history," he told *The Produce News*. "Early estimates put it around 130 million boxes. We experienced very little inclement weather which should result in a very clean crop. The warm days and cool nights this summer have been great for size and color, and are resulting in a harvest on each variety that is starting one to two weeks earlier than last year. Based on national apple crop projections, limited 2015 storage inventory, and growing domestic and export demand, we expect a great year for growers, marketers and consumers."

Warm days, he said, mean fruit is sizing well. And cooler nights have translated to good color, he said. "The ideal growing conditions should result in sizing peaking around 80/88," he stated. "Early estimates do expect the crop to be heavier to larger sizes which could create some great buying opportunities on 80 count and larger. The larger sizing overall is contributing to the increased total box estimates."

Pacificpro markets a full apple manifest. Hartmann said acreage devoted to mainstay varieties such as Honeycrisp, Gala and Pink Lady has increased slightly in response to increasing consumer demand.

Its manifest expansion has occurred with the addition of club varieties. "These include but are not limited to Smitten, Jazz, Ambrosia, Envy, Crimson Delight, Sonya, Aurora, Rockit and many others," Hartmann stated.

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The company's organic offerings are a direct reflection of increasing consumer demand. "We expect it to constitute approximately 3 to 5 percent of our overall volume this year and grow going forward as consumer demand increases," he noted.

The harvest is already underway with early Gold and Gala apples. "We will ramp up with many of the largest varieties in early September including Red Delicious, Granny Smith, Golden Delicious and the early Fujis," he commented, saying the season will finish with the picking of Pink Ladies in late October or early November.

Retailers, he went on to say, should expect some great ad and promotion opportunities due to the large crop and large fruit size. Retailers can also count on a wide range of packaging options including tray, cell volume fill, euro boxes, poly and mesh sacks, and various variety-specific packaging including clamshells and sliced apple packaging.

On the facilities side, Pacificpro opened a fully staff consolidation and cross-dock facility to assist with procuring the wide-range of varieties, grades and sizing available statewide. "This continues to allow us to meet our customers varied needs while minimizing the logistical difficulties the multiple picks of a wide-ranging manifest can pose," he explained. "We have added great new teammates to our team over the last year in our transportation department, sales and marketing, warehouse and consolidation, quality control and accounting."

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