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2019 Mexican grapes present promotable volumes

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TUBAC, AZ— North American retailers need to plan on Mexican grape promotions this spring.

The first harvest is running a few days late, but AALPUM, the Mexican grape growers association, is recommending that for two weeks, beginning the week of May 19, there will be promotable early-



green volumes available.

The Mexican grape crop this year brings high quality, strong volume and many new varieties to highlight in promotion.

At the Mexico Table Grape Spring Summit March 21 in Tubac, AALPUM indicated the best promotion period for Flames is expected to run from Week 21 to Week 25 — May 19 through the week of June 19.

Mid-season green seedless promotions should be best from the weeks of June 2 through June 23.

Retailers are encouraged to promote Red Globes for the weeks of May 26 through the week of June 16.

Mexican grape growers expect to ship 22 million cartons of grapes to the North American market this spring. This is up 25.6 percent from 2018.

About 4 million cartons of grapes are expected to be sold within the Mexican market. This production is in addition to the 22 million cited for export.

Mexico's North American export grape pack out in 2018 was 16.4 million boxes. In 2017 that total was 21 million.

The Sonoran grape harvest is to begin in early May.

This Mexican grape crop enjoyed needed chill hours early in the winter, and the weather was good enough in February and March to present a very good crop this spring.

Growers and distributors all mention there are many bunches on Mexican grapevines this year, which gives choices for selecting the best.

Thus, quality is very good and quantity, as noted above, will provide promotable volumes.

One anomaly is that black grape production in Mexico is to be down for the third straight year. The 2019 estimate anticipates 1 million boxes. Black grape pack out in 2018 was 1.2 million, down from 1.3 million in 2017. One distributor indicated that this season some black grape plantings had some problems getting a good set.

Sonora will continue to ship the overwhelming majority of Mexico's table grape volume.

But there is an exciting new wrinkle in the business, with Fresh Farms' new vineyard in Jalisco coming into commercial production this year. This brings Mexico's production into early April for the first time. Fresh Farms' Jalisco production will be increasing in years to come.

Divine Flavor also has vines in Jalisco soil. It will begin shipping from Jalisco in 2020.

Divine Flavor is also under way in planting in northern Baja, which will eventually give Mexico production near San Diego, CA, that will compete in the summertime grape deal.

AALPUM statistics list six categories of Mexican table grapes: green, Flame, Sugraone, Red Globe, Black and others. "Others" includes the many new high-taste varieties that have been planted in recent years.

It is the new varieties that are bringing a special excitement to retailers. Different colors and shapes and, especially, flavors are expected to create great consumer interest as Mexican growers

aggressively expand their production and technology.

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