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## **Lakeside Organic Gardens explains philosophy in new video**

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During the recent Produce Marketing Association Fresh Summit in Anaheim, CA, Lakeside Organic Gardens introduced a new video to help inform its customers of its philosophy and commitment to the organic sector.

“We are a vertically integrated company and our video portrays all facets of growing, harvesting, cooling, selling and shipping,” said Marliese McWherter, creative marketing manager for the Watsonville, CA-based firm. “We are 100 percent organic and the largest family-owned-and-operated, solely organic vegetable grower-shipper in the USA.”



Crops being harvested at a Lakeside Organic Gardens farm. She noted that the video was well received at the company’s booth and is currently available for viewing on its website: [lakesideorganic.com](http://lakesideorganic.com). McWherter said the length of the video is perfect — “short enough to keep everyone’s attention, but long enough to fully capture the scope and breadth of Lakeside Organic Gardens and what makes us different.”

The five-minute offering features the company founder and grower, Dick Peixoto, as well as some longtime employees, including Rene Orozco, the planting supervisor, who has been with Lakeside for 34 years. Peixoto revealed that he was once one of the larger conventional growers in the area but saw organics as the future. “We developed the business plan and over a period of years it took over to the point that I dropped the conventional and moved onto organic,” he said.

He said that at Lakeside they “work with Mother Nature to try to help her do a better job. We have a saying in her company, we farm the soil and the soil grows the crop.”

He added that with organic farming the soil improves every year. “If we have healthy soils, we have a healthy company.”

The company grows about 2,000 acres in Watsonville and another 1,000 acres in the Imperial Valley during the winter months.

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Speaking to *The Produce News* during the last week in November, McWherter said the company was completing its transition from its home turf to the Imperial Valley for the winter deal. “We are starting to ship our full line out of the Imperial Valley Dec. 2. We grow up to 50 organic vegetables year-round with the exception of our summer veg crops,” she said, adding that zucchini, cucumbers and Bell peppers are not produced in the winter months.

As the shift to the Imperial Valley takes hold, McWherter noted that the company will have especially strong volumes of sweet baby broccoli, carrots, dandelions, and spinach this winter with each offering promotional opportunities. In addition, she added that Lakeside Organic planted a few acres of peppermint chard, which is expected to be harvested in mid-December. She noted that the company is constantly listening to its customers and altering its crop mix to meet demand.

Looking ahead, McWherter said supplies of the organic leaf items and cabbage could be in short supply from the company this winter.

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