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## Bagged produce a priority for consumers

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In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic we are seeing a constant transition to the landscape of the produce world. Due to the ever-changing rules and regulations, certain markets are seeing a surge in business where others are in a standstill. The one thing that has been constant is the need to adapt. Many players in the produce industry are making transitions to keep their product active in the current market. Retail has become the main focus for many with this shift, but this is where the consumer purchasing habits can be a deciding factor.

The recent changes in consumer shopping patterns along with retailer safety regulations due to the COVID-19 outbreak are showing that the need for bagged produce is continuing to be a priority for consumers. The surge in retail sales can be seen across all commodities who are reporting significant growth on that level. This can be seen significantly on the bagged produce portion of the store due to the consumers current concerns and shopping patterns.

“Consumer’s habits are transitioning to not only spending less time in stores but also visiting them less often as well,” said Jeff Watkin, director of marketing at Sev-Rend. “Bagged produce is a more convenient option for the consumer right now to help prepare for the longer durations of cooking at home along with a safety factor due to limiting exposure. The perception is that un-bagged produce may be unsafe and we are seeing a surge in packaging demand across all areas of our products partially due to this.”

Sev-Rend is seeing a growth in demand for packaging materials that serve the consumer sized packages of fresh produce, which is typically package sizes ranging from two to five pounds. “We are seeing an increase in need for all packaging types right now,” said Art Vega, vice president of sales and marketing. “We are meeting demand head on to support our client’s need for pouches, film, netting, and tags. With this sharp increase on demand we have increased throughput to make capacity for the additional business.”

Capacity is one item Sev-Rend has been planning for. The need for bagged consumer packaging is going to grow with new regulations going in place to ensure the concerns and safety of the public. Along with that many aspects of the business will need to adapt to ensure safety and continuity. This surge for packaging materials can stress the supply chain with many suppliers being forced to push out lead times due to lack of raw materials. Sev-Rend has strategically navigated this and has capacity for additional business.

Since the product being manufactured is critical to the food supply, Sev-Rend is doing all we can to ensure this continuity. “From the safety of our work force to the demand for food packaging materials — Sev-Rend is looking to the future to keep our part of the supply chain in check,” said Greg Petermeyer, COO of Sev-Rend. “We will continue to monitor federal and state guidelines and if anything were to affect our normal operations we will let our industry partners know.” With the everchanging landscape we know that the need for packaged produce is going to grow as we see growers and packers transition to meet the market’s needs.

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