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D'Ottavio off to slow start this spring in New Jersey

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“We are off to a slow start in Jersey this spring,” Michael D’Ottavio, president of D’Ottavio Farms in Vineland NJ, told *The Produce News* the first week in May. “With so much of the Northeast shut down, I feel a couple weeks behind at the farm may not be a bad thing.”

He added, “Our blueberries and blackberry crops look phenomenal, and we should begin harvesting around June 10. With the continuing focus on growing the largest berries possible along with fantastic taste, we continue to plant 20 acres a year organically and conventionally. Keeping up with new varieties and new technologies like satellite irrigation and articulated trellises will help us achieve our goals.”

Looking back at last season, “We had really good success with our pole cucumbers program, so we

increased our acreage this season to meet the strong demand for the quality and shelf life that we can't get by growing cucumbers on the ground," he said. "This summer we will experiment growing yellow and green squash on poles, hoping for way less scarring along with much better shelf life."

The company president continued, "We also increased our eggplant, bell peppers and hot pepper program to meet last season's strong demand."

On the topic of the COVID-19 situation, D'Ottavio stated, "As our country begins to re-open, I strongly believe this will be a very good season for all the farmers on the East Coast with stronger demand creating better markets than we ever have seen in the past. Together with our retailers, wholesalers, truckers and growers, we can come back stronger, smarter and create a safer environment for the customers and employees to shop and work in."

Photo: Michael D'Ottavio, Anthony Castellini and Dave Duquette in a D'Ottavio Farms cilantro field.

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