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## Mother Earth boosts conventional mushrooms

May 27, 2020



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With 53 growing houses throughout southern Chester County in West Grove, Oxford, and Landenberg, PA, Mother Earth LLC continues its strong legacy in the organic mushroom industry.

Like most in the produce industry, they have been adjusting to the new normal brought on by the coronavirus.

“It’s been an interesting time,” said Meghan Klotzbach, vice president of sales for the company. “It’s a new thing every day and trying to learn the new policies we have to follow, such as mandatory masks and the extra sanitizing we are doing, there are so many things that we never thought we would have to do before.”

Still, the company is packing mushrooms and selling mushrooms on a somewhat normal pace, as it continues to grow mushrooms every day of the year.

“The crops lately have been interesting, and I think we’re going to see a little shortage coming up here because of everything that happened with COVID-19, a lot of people stopped filling some of their houses, so as an industry as a whole, there will be shortages,” Klotzbach said. “But we’re still growing at the same capacity we were, so we hope to be able to continue to fill our customers’ orders without too much of a void.”

She noted the mushroom industry in Kennett Square, PA, is very collaborative, with companies buying from one another and supporting each other, and that continues in the wake of the pandemic.

“Before this hit, we were on something of an uphill run,” Klotzbach said. “2019 was kind of a rebuilding year for us, getting some new customers and we really pushed out our New Moon brand, which is our conventional line, and really started to grow that.”

It was back in 1989 when the company transitioned to selling organic mushrooms, and that’s been a big push for more than 30 years. But over the last few years, there’s been a lot more people coming into organics, and the company decided it was time to put more of a focus on the conventional side of things.

“We had always sold conventional, but never really pushed them or marketed them,” Klotzbach said. “We made the decision to come up with this brand and we’re all really excited about it. We have a full line of conventional mushrooms that we offer and we’re now starting to see it all over the place at retailers.”

That upswing in sales has helped Mother Earth work through everything happening in the world today and has kept them strong.

“I feel confident we are going to come out of this ok,” Klotzbach said. “Mushrooms are extremely beneficial. They are full of a lot of vitamins and nutrients. It can also be a great meat substitute or great to be blended with meat, pulling out the flavors of everything people eat.”

Furthermore, there are so many practical uses for mushrooms, be it in omelets for breakfast, on a sandwich for lunch or on steak or pizza for dinner.

“They are so versatile, I couldn’t see why people don’t want to include them on their grocery list,” Klotzbach said.

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