
- Advertisement -

SugarBee apples open doors, close sales

June 12, 2020

Chelan Fresh's SugarBee apple has hit a market sweet spot for retailers and growers alike, as the new variety heads into its fifth season. In addition to doubling the harvest each year, Chelan Fresh has added online shopping and SugarBee cider to the mix for this successful variety ahead of the coming fall harvest.

Now proven at retail, SugarBee is reigniting consumer excitement about apples and giving some much-needed support to retailers' top lines, reported Julie DeJarnatt, Chelan Fresh retail strategy manager.

To attract returning consumers this fall, the company has updated SugarBee's branding, adopting a more reflective tagline and refreshing its package design with a vintage flair, she said.

To build buzz for fresh-market SugarBee apples ahead of this year's harvest, SugarBee-branded cider will ship to food retailers for sale in August, DeJarnatt said. SugarBee cider is pressed from whole apples, then ultra-pasteurized and packaged in shelf stable 64-ounce, recyclable PET plastic containers bearing the iconic SugarBee mascot on the label.

"Our cider is not just another good-tasting cider, it truly captures the essence of fresh SugarBee

apples,” she said.

Chelan Fresh is adapting production to respond to strong consumer demand. “We sold out very quickly last fall. That left our partners wanting more,” said DeJarnatt. “So this season we held back fruit in controlled atmosphere storage, so that we could get started on cider earlier this fall.”

When SugarBee apples return to grocery stores in September, consumers will be welcomed with a new tagline, “Oh honey, that’s good!”. DeJarnatt said the update is both strategic and tactical. It signals the variety’s evolving personality, while better evoking the apple’s complex Honeycrisp-inspired flavor profile and the rich honey yellow color of the apple’s flesh.

“I call this a seven-step apple,” she said. “Even the most skeptical consumer gets about seven steps away from our sampling table when it really hits them. They immediately stop in their tracks, turn around and come back for more. They get the initial snap of sweet, then they get the acid, and they realize that this is a really unique apple. We’ve actually had customers tell us, ‘oh honey, that’s a good apple!’”

“With so many apple varieties out there, as a grower you better have one that stands out. SugarBee does just that,” said DeJarnatt. “This apple has opened doors for us with new retailers and premium accounts, once they tried it for themselves.”

SugarBee’s unique honeycomb-shaped PLU sticker makes it easy for shoppers to spot the apple at retail, DeJarnatt noted. The vintage look of SugarBee’s packaging has also proven popular with consumers, who are now even requesting SugarBee apparel, she said.

“We are on our way to being both a known and trusted year-round brand, and an omnichannel brand,” said DeJarnatt.

[Print](#)