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## **Wholly continues Focus on the Convenient Avocado Space**

By

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MegaMex Foods, the maker of the Wholly brand, responsible for Wholly Avocado and Wholly Guacamole, has persevered since the pandemic hit and is doing its best to keep products on the retail shelves for its customers.

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“There was a learning curve early on, but we have quickly adjusted and have become accustomed to our virtual work environment,” said Eric Gudgel, director of sales for the Orange, CA-based company. “Our focus has been on working with our retail partners to ensure their shelves are fully stocked. Overall, we are seeing growth in the category at retail, but with foodservice we are in the midst of a slower recovery. We remain optimistic about the future growth of our company.”

For its retail business, the company is continuing to see strong growth in 2020. As a category, IRI data shows an 8.5 percent growth since March vs. 7.4 percent pre-COVID-19, which Gudgel credits to a new packaging design and increased distribution growing market share and attracting new consumers to the category. That’s been a real bright spot for the company and it plans to continue that success in the months ahead.

To further get the word out, the Wholly team will be participating in the virtual PMA and have pivoted its strategy from its customary complex booth space to a simple, focused approach to the virtual show.

“We would much rather be in person in Dallas, but right now, virtual is the best option to keep everyone in our community safe,” Gudgel said. “We feel that now, more than ever, it is important that we come together as a PMA community. This event will give us the opportunity to catch up with our established contacts, make new connections and immerse ourselves in the content that will be featured.”

Just like being in-person, the company understands that when it comes to PMA, success is all about making connections.

“We won’t be able to share in one of our famous Guac Dogs that we sample at the show, but I would encourage everyone to go out and get some Wholly Guacamole and enjoy as you would have at the in-person show,” Gudgel said. “At the end of the day, our goal is to be there to support our industry and our customers and provide them with best-in-class customer service while supplying safe, great tasting products that our consumers love.”

With that in mind, the brand priorities are centered around the company’s value proposition of delivering real, convenient and delicious products.

“For Wholly Guacamole, as America’s No. 1 refrigerated guacamole brand, we are able to deliver on a product that tastes as good as homemade guacamole but without the hassle or prep,” Gudgel said. “We are focused on increasing distribution on our chunky flavor and increasing households by investing in marketing. With our innovative Wholly Avocado line of products, we can solve for the pain points of an over or under ripe avocado by providing consumers with a perfectly ripe avocado that is ready when they are. These new products will also bring new households into the category and increased sales for our retail partners by offering a very different usage occasion like on salads, toast, sandwiches and soups.”

The company is also thinking past the PMA show and coming up with ways to continue innovating in the category.

“We are first to market in this convenience avocado space and are investing our time and energy in driving trial and awareness to ensure success of our new product launch,” Gudgel said. “We are very excited to be expanding our line of Wholly Avocado products in retailers across the country and see solving for consumer pain points with the avocado as a huge opportunity. We see this convenience

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avocado space as ripe — excuse the pun — for growth with both light and heavy avocado buyers.”

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