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Fall deal looking strong for Val Verde

By

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After a 30-year hiatus, Val Verde Vegetable Co. is again producing Texas-grown broccoli. Frank Schuster, who heads the McAllen-based grower-packer-shipper, said he once produced as much as 350 acres of broccoli a year. That volume was split between freezing and fresh customers. In his return to the broccoli business, all production is destined for the fresh market to suit specific customer demand.

Val Verde's broccoli deal will first be shipped about Dec. 1.

Early indications are that this will be a high-quality broccoli crop.

The production of earlier-producing vegetables also looks good.



Frank and his son, Kurt Schuster.

Schuster said Oct. 23 that Val Verde began shipping a small volume of greens that week. In the last week of October “we’ll be shipping a broader line of vegetables and by Nov. 1 we’ll ship about everything, except for cabbage, which will probably be harvested about Thanksgiving or so.”

South Texas has enjoyed good production weather this summer and early-fall. The most significant event was 10 inches of rain from Hurricane Hanna on July 24. That was early in the planting stages and not a significant production issue. It was hot in the region early this fall, which accelerated production, making earlier-than-expected harvest dates.

“We’re looking pretty good. The retail business has been good! We look forward to another year.”

Val Verde added to its ice making capacity and will be installing another hydrocooler this fall. This will mainly be used to cool the broccoli, greens, and perhaps cabbage.

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