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## **Giumarra offering Fair Trade Certified avocados grown in Mexico**

November 19, 2020

The Giumarra Cos. announced a partnership with the Genel family of Rancho Agua Blanca to offer Fair Trade Certified avocados grown in the state of Michoacán, Mexico.

Rancho Agua Blanca is family owned and operated, and recently received its certification from Fair Trade USA in early 2020. The Genel family – comprising Isabel Valencia Zepeda, Rafael Genel Valencia, María Isabel Genel Valencia, Marcela Genel Valencia, Gustavo Adolfo Genel Valencia, and Carlos Genel Valencia – farms 250 hectares of Fair Trade Certified avocados and governs the company via a family board.

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“We are immensely proud to be working with the Genel family to provide high-quality, Fair Trade Certified avocados to our customers and support important social and environmental initiatives in Mexico with the fair trade program,” said Bruce Dowhan, senior vice president of the Giumarra Cos.

Through this new partnership, Giumarra will offer promotable volumes of Fair Trade Certified avocados from September through May every year. The product will be available in all pack styles Giumarra currently offers for its avocado program.

Rancho Agua Blanca has had existing environmental and worker health programs in place since the company’s inception more than 40 years ago. In 2010, Rancho Agua Blanca opened a local school for its employees and their children.

The avocados are sold at a premium and funds generated by fair trade product sales support community development programs voted on by farm workers, which may include elementary and adult education, medical services, recreation, and skills training.

“The fair trade program allows us to continue to serve the unique needs of each region in our community. Our family considers our employees more than workers; they are collaborators in our business and a vital part of our operation,” said Carlos Genel Valencia, member of the family board of Rancho Agua Blanca. “In speaking with our family of employees, we’ve uncovered that key areas of education, health, and environment are important to them and they look forward to using fair trade funds for new and existing programs.”

“We’ve seen increased interest from retailers for Fair Trade Certified avocados so we are thrilled that Giumarra has launched this program and is expanding the supply of certified avocados in the market,” said Jesse Appelman, head of fresh goods at Fair Trade USA.

Per data from Fair Trade USA, consumer demand is growing; after being educated about what fair trade is, 63 percent of consumers say they are more likely to seek out Fair Trade Certified produce.

“Now more than ever, retailers are recognizing the importance of building resilient supply chains that protect and support farm workers,” said Abby Ayers, head of retail at Fair Trade USA.

Avocados are the most recent item to join Giumarra’s fair trade product line from Mexico, which also includes seedless watermelon, winter squash, Bell peppers, table grapes, and asparagus.

*Photo: Carlos Genel Valencia (second from the left) with Rancho Agua Blanca workers.*

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