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IPR Fresh anticipates market stabilization

By

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IPR Fresh has a good plan for the fall and winter Mexican vegetable deal.

An improvement in the markets will boost the likelihood of strong success for IPR Fresh's (and other Nogales firms') plans.

On Nov. 9, Jose Luis Obregon told *The Produce News*, "It's been a difficult year, to say the least."



Jose Luis Obregon, president of

IPR Fresh,
stands in his Nogales cold storage facility.

In March as the Covid pandemic broke, there was “a big retail surge” that subsequently moderated. Lost foodservice sales impacted much of the produce industry, which is “still missing a lot” of sales.

The early fall Nogales deal has suffered from “very, very low prices,” Obregon said, because warm fall weather across the nation kept home gardens in production, and certainly boosted ongoing commercial vegetable production in the southeastern United States.

As Obregon spoke with *The Produce News*, estimates were coming in on the extent to which Tropical Storm Eta would reduce Florida production. Given these factors, the Nogales deal had not picked up as it normally does in October and November.

Obregon noted that IPR was cautiously monitoring Eta’s impact on Florida growing districts to assure accurate pricing in what was expected to be a dynamic market.

Looking ahead, “life goes on and crops are still coming in. I hope that COVID will be under control one of these days. Meanwhile, we continue to ship high-quality products.”

In 2020-21, IPR Fresh will continue its organic and conventional colored Bell peppers through the end of May.

Also expected through late May for IPR Fresh are good supplies of European and slicer cucumbers. It’s wide variety of squashes — zucchini, yellow and all the hard varieties — will be shipped in the IPR Fresh label.

The Organic Republic label will carry IPR's organic Bells. Fresh Republic brand is used for conventional Bells.

Obregon added that "this year we're increasing our corn and watermelon." Watermelon shipments were underway in early November and the sweet corn was expected to be on the market in the first week of December.

IPR Fresh enjoys "a lot of wholesale business and our retail offerings have increased, also."

Some of what's sold to wholesalers ultimately goes to processors, and so that market segment leading to foodservice "has slowed a little bit. But we've been picking that up somewhere else. We're hoping that this will get better starting with the new year," Obregon said.

"We're looking forward to a good season," he added. "It has started slow. We just hope for a better draw in the next couple of months."

Obregon concluded, "With Thanksgiving and Christmas coming and crop supplies ending across the country, we hope our products will be better-received and that the growers can make up for some of the low prices that kicked off the season."

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