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## **Ocean Mist Farms spreads the joy (and health benefits) of artichokes**

By

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Ocean Mist Farms is changing perception of artichokes season. The company, headquartered in Castroville, CA, has been growing artichokes in Coachella for a number of years, but it has recently invested in a consumer-focused promotion that is designed to increase sales of artichokes in the

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winter.

“Most people think of artichoke season as spring, and certainly that’s a tradition,” said Diana McClean, the firm’s senior director of marketing. “But Ocean Mist Farms has had a year-round program for years, and now for the third year, we have been emphasizing that winter growing region to educate both our trade partners and shoppers about the fact that artichokes are available this time of year.”

She said that after looking at data and sales numbers, Ocean Mist Farms saw trends that indicated significant artichoke consumption in January and February, thus creating an opportunity to build excitement around this delicious and versatile vegetable.

“I thought, ‘Wow, that’s great, this is when we have significant production,’” McClean said. “We’re one of the only producers at this time of year, so let’s educate our trade partners that shoppers are looking for artichokes now.”

The promotion, titled Peace, Love and Artichokes, engages customers on artichokes and the Coachella growing region in order to drive in-store sales of fresh artichokes through initiatives such as collaborating with influencers on how to easily prepare artichokes through recipe preparation using multicookers, which can steam artichokes in 20 minutes.

“We want to make it easy for shoppers to prepare artichokes,” McClean said. “We’ve been growing artichokes for nearly 100 years, but there still are those pockets of the country that don’t know about artichokes and don’t know how to prepare them, and certainly consumer trends today show people are looking for simple ways to prepare nutritious foods.”

Educating consumers on the health benefits of eating artichokes is key to the program, as artichokes are among the highest foods in antioxidants. That’s key this time of year as shoppers set goals for healthy eating in the new year. Many people are also adopting healthy habits and thinking about self-care as they quarantine and cook more at home.

“With what we’re dealing with in the country now, certainly we need to maintain our nutrition and eat fresh fruits and vegetables that are going to build our immunity, and artichokes are ideal for that,” McClean said. “We’ll be focusing on how to take care of yourself in this pandemic timeframe, when we’re all managing a little bit different lifestyle than we have in past years.”

Another goal of the Peace, Love and Artichokes campaign is to remind people in the produce trade that Ocean Mist is a top-tier brand and artichoke grower, and to draw consumers to its online store locator so that they can buy the company’s artichokes.

“They’re fun to eat, they’re delicious, and there’s a variety of ways you can prepare them,” McClean said. “Whether you are going to grill, or bake, or grill, they are a food that is worth the effort in regard to the powerful nutrition that they hold.”

