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Apple dollars up, volume down

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Apple dollars increased and volume was down slightly at the end of 2020, while the top four of the five apple varieties showed dollar gain, according to data ending Dec. 26. Brianna Shales, Stemilt's marketing director, and Katie Harmon, communications manager, started 2021 by analyzing the last 12 weeks of Nielsen retail scan data during Stemilt's Fast Facts: The Cast video analysis.



“We are comparing a shorter apple crop to a record year, but retailers are making up for it by inching retail prices up, and that is going to help make up for less volume this year,” said Shales. “Honeycrisp was 30 percent of the category dollars and 22 percent of volume. Although not in the top five, Pink Lady apples are another variety that retailers need to promote.”

Shales suggests retailers run multi-variety ads, including Pink Lady to promote bulk which is down 7 percent in volume while packaged apples are up 8 percent. Organic bulk is down 8.5 percent in volume, but packaged organic apples is up 15 percent. Shales explains that the pandemic altered consumer shopping habits which is encouraging many apple consumers to reach for bags.

“Retailers have reacted well to the need for no-touch product and bags continue to be in high demand,” said Shales. “We’re seeing more people use tote bags to promote bulk, like our Farm + Famous paper tote bag, to promote larger sizes of core varieties.”

This data set also includes the market’s newest variety, Cosmic Crisp. In the weeks that the Cosmic Crisp has been available, it ranked 14th for sales by variety across the U.S. and ninth in the West region thanks to its increased volume.

“It’s not a lot of data to make a complete assessment, but it is interesting to see how quickly it climbed to the top 20,” said Shales. “As we continue into 2021, we will be able to read more into the

variety's contribution to the category. In the meantime, retailers can increase apple promotion activities by utilizing multi-variety ads."

Shales suggests sticking to core varieties like Fuji, Gala, Honeycrisp and Red Delicious for their multi-variety ads but also educating shoppers about other varieties too.

"It's a big apple world," said Shales. "So, make it simple for your shoppers by utilizing signage and other tools to explain the flavors and uses of each variety. Then let our World Famous flavors delight them so they keep coming back for more."

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