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GoVerden's expanding marketing reach helps retailers go for green

By

Tim Linden

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GoVerden, a Mexico-based, vertically integrated grower and processor of avocados, is expanding its marketing efforts in the United States to more fully promote its own brand.

Rick Joyal, vice president of North American sales, and Rosalia Miranda, commercial manager, recently discussed the company's background with The Produce News and its goals moving forward. GoVerden is owned by three of the larger avocado growers in Mexico, who represent the third generation of avocado production in the state of Michoacán. The family farming operations date back more than three decades with a rich history of producing avocados for both the fresh and processed markets. Four years ago the three growers got together, formed GoVerden and began construction on a state-of-the-art processing facility.

The GoVerden name is a cross between English and Spanish that could be translated as "go for green." Joyal, who previously worked for Calavo in processing sales, joined the company in the middle of 2018 to help them sell their guacamole products as the facility was completed and items began to be marketed.

Today the company has 14-20 retail packs and also has items designed for the foodservice arena. Miranda said GoVerden has customers throughout the United States, including some of the larger retailers, with most of the production appearing in retail supermarkets packaged in store brands. In fact, the company's own GoVerden brand is only sold at the H.E.B. supermarket chain in Texas.

Joyal said GoVerden has disrupted the avocado processing industry with its volume and many different packs. In the future, it plans to continue to expand its GoVerden line to other processed fruits. He noted that the vertically integrated business model, which is different than the other major avocado processors, allows GoVerden to take complete control of the avocados used in its process and "be more selective. We have been very successful," he said.

GoVerden exclusively uses avocados grown in Mexico and has an abundant year-round supply. Joyal noted that while GoVerden offers a wide variety of packs, the eight-ounce mild guacamole dominates sales. "It represents 72 percent of all guacamole sales," he said.

Miranda said that the two-ounce cup would be the second most popular item, but its volume pales in comparison to the eight-ounce pack. She added that guacamole sales – like the fresh avocado itself – have been on an upward trajectory for many years. "Guacamole is registering 17 percent growth in sales year over year," she said.

The field price of avocados fluctuate on a continuing basis, which means the raw cost of the guacamole is constantly changing. But Joyal said GoVerden has adopted a year-round pricing model that accounts for the ups and downs of the market.

Though growth has been excellent, GoVerden believes that to continue to expand the category and promote marketing campaigns, the company need brand recognition on a national scale. Miranda would like to offer consumers discount coupons but said she needs national distribution to make it work.

Joyal said GoVerden wants to create a long-term marketing program for all of its retail and foodservice partners to grow the GoVerden brand and increase guacamole sales. The company is anticipating a big increase in sales in 2021 as the United States and the world rebounds from the pandemic. The GoVerden executives noted that retail sales of guacamole did very well throughout the pandemic and foodservice sales picked up rather dramatically in the last half of the year as they began to open again.

Joyal reiterated that the company's point of differentiation is that it controls supply and so it can

divert as many pounds of top quality avocados to the processing facility as is necessary to fill its orders.

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