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Ohio Apples takes a Fresh Forward approach

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Families throughout the Great Lakes region have ample access to fresh, local produce at their favorite grocers like Heinen's, Buehler's and Wal-Mart, thanks, in large part, to Ohio Apples. Ohio Apples has rebranded as Fresh Forward in a move that reflects the strategic expansion of its farmer member base. In recent years, this membership has grown beyond Ohio to include orchards and farms across Pennsylvania, Michigan and Virginia that offer a seasonal selection of fruits and vegetables.

The new brand, Fresh Forward, and tagline, "Harvested from Great Lakes Farms," better represent the regionality of both the farmers and the families it serves.

“The Ohio Apples brand has served us well, but it does not accurately represent our current member services, geographic region and harvest offerings,” said Fresh Forward President Alex Buck. “Our membership extends across a multi-state region and we’re pleased to offer a variety of local vegetables in addition to fruit.”

While shoppers may be more familiar with the consumer-facing brand of Ohio Apples, which often appears on bags, boxes and signage in stores, Fruit Growers Marketing Association is the parent organization wholesale buyers know as a trusted regional procurement source.

“Our brand may have changed, but our organization’s mission remains the same,” said Buck. “To provide the highest quality fresh market produce to help independent farms and communities thrive.”

Fresh Forward is committed to making a lasting positive impact in local communities. All member farms are Primus-certified as part of the Global Food Safety Initiative, an organization that benchmarks food safety standards. The farms take a proactive, industry-leading approach to energy efficiency and waste management.

This evolution is timely as local food purchasing is on the rise. A new study shows shoppers are increasingly adopting a “healthy for me, healthy for we” mindset, as the majority of consumers prefer to purchase foods that nourish and support their communities. This demand has sparked an increase in local sourcing, especially among forward-thinking grocers who seek out regional cooperatives like Fresh Forward for quality, convenience and a true taste of place.

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