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Consalo Family Farms opens new packing facility and expands traceability

By

J. McHenry

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This year marks the opening of a new cold storage and packing facility centrally located in Vineland, NJ, for Consalo Family Farms. “The facility has six new forced air coolers, which allows for cooling of 60 pallets of blueberries or vegetables at a time,” explained Chelsea Consalo, vice president of

produce operations. “The new space holds more than 1,000 pallets per day at a time. The increased storage space in Vineland allows us increased packing capacities on our farms. We are able to harvest, pack, and move product efficiently to be cooled and shipped to customers.”

The company will also be updating and streamlining the electronic field traceability system on its farms, an effort spearheaded by Consalo. “After months of hard work, we are able to implement this new system allowing us total traceability,” she said. “We are partnering with Orange Enterprises to use their technology, PET Tiger: Payroll Employee Tracking. This will incorporate different tools such as handheld devices in the fields and biometrics.”

The family has been in the produce industry since 1927 and remains dedicated to excellence in farming, quality product, commitment to customers, and to sustainable production. “We currently package our blueberries using top-seal packaging, which contains 35 percent less plastic than everyday packaging materials,” said Consalo. “It is eco-friendly and produces less waste. We are constantly monitoring all new sustainable packaging innovations throughout the fresh produce industry.”

Consalo expects a great coming season. “Our target volume is 9.5 million pounds and so far we look to be on track,” she stated. “Timing wise, New Jersey blueberry season usually starts around the second week in June and goes through early August. This year, we expect our seasonal crews to begin arriving the first week in June for orientation. I expect harvest to start approximately June 14th. We will begin with the duke variety.”

“Blueberries is one of our top items, and our passion for quality is unmatched,” added Consalo. “I personally am extremely passionate about our growing operations and am looking forward to getting started.”

The company distributes its blueberries in both the U.S. and Canada allowing the crop a national and international reach. “We are a vertically integrated grower, packer, and shipper and are strategically located in southern New Jersey,” said Consalo. “Our location allows us to make deliveries of fresh produce overnight to retailers from Toronto to Florida.”

Yet, Consalo also sees a significant demand for New Jersey blueberries locally. “Local produce is increasingly popular,” she said. “It was always sought after, but now it is becoming more demanded. When consumers know where their food comes from and who grows it, they know a lot more about that food.”

Photo: AJ Consalo, Chelsea Consalo, Skip Consalo and Jeff DiMatteo.

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