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## **Yes! Apples offering RAVE for first time ever**

By

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Yes! Apples is a consumer-focused brand that New York Apple Sales launched in 2019.

Powered by more than 100 years of experience, New York Apple Sales is comprised of professionals that have spent years in the produce industry and have been a part of all aspects of the industry.



“The seeds of New York Apple Sales are passion, patience, and persistence — and we’ve planted those same seeds in Yes! Apples — something consumers can both taste and feel,” said Kaari Stannard, president and CEO of the Glenmont, NY-based company. “Now, we can share our stories, passion, and apples directly with consumers through Yes! Apples.”

What’s more, the company partners with multi-generational apple growers that bring as much growing and farming expertise to their craft.

“Our relationships with our growers are paramount to providing the best-tasting apples to our retail partners and their customers,” Stannard said.

The Yes! Apples season is just getting started, and everyone involved is excited to be offering New York- grown RAVE for the first time, along with Honeycrisp, Gala, Fuji, Pink Lady and a select handful of club varieties that includes KORU, SweeTango, Snapdragon, Evercrisp and RubyFrost.

“As we continue to market the Yes! Apples brand, we reach new consumers,” Stannard said. “The growth of the brand helps us develop new partnerships that will boost our distribution across the country. We also grow and sell several club varieties like SweeTango, KORU, and New York-exclusive SnapDragon and RubyFrost that do not have country-wide penetration. Collaborating with other shippers and opening up new sales channels will allow more consumers to access these specialty varieties.”

One challenge that is impacting the business right now is freight. There’s been massive inflation in shipping lanes, forcing the company to leverage its volume and consistency of shipping to help limit

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cost increases, though that's been a difficult battle.

"Another challenge we've had to address is packhouse labor," Stannard said. "There's a lot of competition for labor, as well as a dwindling population of workers."

Yes! Apples focuses on the various channels to reach consumers, and that has changed over the years.

"We are always looking for new channels to expand into, whether new brick and mortar retail partners, e-commerce channels, or direct to consumer," Stannard said. "Today, 73 percent of consumers use multiple channels throughout their shopping process, and we want to meet consumers where they are."

Success, Stannard noted, comes from solid relationships with growers and retailers; a strong, experienced team; and avenues to reach consumers.

"Our team has many years of experience," she said. "We've been in the industry a long time, so we know how to produce and distribute a quality product that consumers seek out. Our relationships with retailers rely on honesty and supplying accurate information."

In other words, communication and service are as important as fruit quality.

"While ultimately our goal is to get our fruit in the hands of consumers, we need first to sell the entire package to the retailer, allowing them to comfortably rely on us to get our fruit to their consumers," Stannard said.

Last year, there was an early frost in the acreage in the lower Hudson Valley. This year, it expects the overall volume to be slightly up.

"Most varieties came back with solid crops, with Honeycrisp being slightly down from last year," Stannard said. "We anticipate fruit size to be up one to two sizes on most varieties versus last season due to the summer rain events across the state. At this time, we do not expect any quality issues."

Thankfully, weather has been great in New York this season and the trees made it through the frost season with minimal damage allowing for full crop potential on almost all varieties.

"Since bloom, we have received adequate rainfall, allowing for good fruit sizing, as well as tree growth for new orchards," Stannard said.

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