



**- Advertisement -**

**Top club apple SweeTango launches big return**

---

September 22, 2021

The SweeTango apple harvest is in full swing, and growers with Next Big Thing, A Growers' Cooperative are encouraging food retailers to stock up now so they are ready to ride the club variety's perennial fall category-busting sales wave.

"SweeTango was the top-selling club apple from late September through the end of October last fall, in both dollars and volume sold — by far," said Brianna Shales with SweeTango western region sales desk Stemilt Growers. "So this year, retailers won't want to wait to get in on the action."

And don't stop after October, said Scott Swindeman with midwest region sales desk Applewood Fresh. "Last season our fans clamored for SweeTangos well into the spring. Retailers who kept this apple on their shelves kept on making money."

The season is already off to a fast start, reports Dennis MacPherson with Canadian sales desk Scotian Gold. "This year has been the quickest we've gotten out of the gates, ever. We couldn't get trucks on the road fast enough to fill demand," he said. "This is by far the best apple on the shelf, and we are beyond excited to get started again – and so are all our fans out there."

Growers in all regions report this year's fruit quality is outstanding and color is up, overcoming localized weather challenges to deliver "that trademark SweeTango flavor and crunch," said Swindeman. "We're getting that nice SweeTango background that is indicative of high sugars," said Austin Fowler of eastern region sales desk Fowler Farms.

Seasoned growers celebrate SweeTango's return. "I've missed that SweeTango fracture, that eating experience. I eat my apple a day, but when SweeTangos are here, it's more like five a day — I'm eating them all day," said Fowler. He reported the eastern region expects to have more fruit this season.

"Mother Nature presented us with a few challenges, but for every curve ball thrown we're making it work, delivering quality fruit to consumers," said Angela Sommers with midwest Region sales desk BelleHarvest Sales. "It's incredible how they weathered through our heat out West," remarked Shales, who reported that region's SweeTango crop is up 30 percent.

SweeTango sales desks are prepared to help retailers capitalize on the new season's sales opportunities as pandemic shopping and eating continues, offering new marketing tools for in-store and online use to push consumers to purchase. Meanwhile, the brand and its sales desks are coordinating a B2C strategy across North America, with unified consumer-facing messaging to pull in long-time fans and new consumers alike.

That's the power of a strong SweeTango brand, noted John Cushing with eastern region sales desk New York Apple Sales: "At retail, we've re-energized our branding, and streamlined messaging across all our sales desks. For the marketplace, we're concentrating on direct-to-consumer channels," both digital and in-person.

"Our marketing campaign is as aggressive as the crunch of this amazing apple," agreed

---

MacPherson.

To support retailers continuing to help consumers cope with eating more meals and snacks at home, the cooperative unveiled new point-of-sale materials with a cool-toned, contemporary design, including an eye-catching display bin. Sales desks will once again offer SweeTangos in a range of options, including bulk, two- and three-pound pouches and totes. Retailers can download SweeTango-branded sales tools through their sales desk's web portal, such as digital ads, social posts and photos.

To drive consumer engagement and demand, the brand's grower cooperative is orchestrating a spoke-and-wheel approach with sales desks. To alert long-time fans that SweeTangos are back in stores across all markets, while also creating awareness among potential new fans, the cooperative is running online video ads with family-friendly stories injecting SweeTangos into popular moments in history. A national radio and streaming audio campaign is running this fall, with 6.5 million impressions planned across all U.S. regions. NBT is also partnering with national influencers including The Produce Moms, David Leite and Emily Laurae, and are rewarding superfans with gift boxes to encourage them to word-of-mouth market. Consumers can find a store locator to help them find SweeTangos in store in real time, along with recipe and pairing ideas, on the [SweeTango website](#).

At the regional level, the sales desks are deploying a range of marketing tools to reach local fans old and new, from outdoor billboards to geofenced Facebook ads; and each sales desk is engaging local influencers. Fowler Farms has wrapped a semi-trailer in SweeTango graphics, to serve as a rolling billboard or a stationary backdrop — for example, at pop-up car races the company is sponsoring near its New York headquarters. Applewood Fresh is working locally with The Produce Moms to promote SweeTango's snackability, unveiling a dip and sauce e-book tailored to today's flexitarian diets.

"SweeTango has a lot of super fans, people look to these voices and they can impact purchasing. They are spreading the message for us. We know when we can transition consumers to a superior apple, they will come back for it time after time," said Sommers.

"Our working marketing theme this year is 'big' — big crunch, big taste, big support," said the cooperative's Jennifer Parkhill. "We feel good about our product and marketing mix, and how that fits with what retailers are doing. Good luck keeping them on shelves this year!"

"SweeTango is the best proprietary variety out there early in the season, it has been part of the mix for several years. Retailers anticipate it now — that feels good, it has definitely made its mark," said Shales.

[Print](#)