



- Advertisement -

Phillips Mushroom Farms thriving despite challenges to industry

By

Keith Loria

September 29, 2021

Phillips Mushroom Farms is the largest grower of specialty mushrooms in what is considered the Mushroom Capital of the World. The Phillips family started growing mushrooms in Kennett Square in 1927, on the same property now utilized to ship fresh mushrooms from coast-to-coast.

“Quality and consistency are the most important measure of success within the mushroom industry,” said Sean Steller, director of business development for Phillips Mushroom Farms. “Customers are looking for a high-quality product that shows up reliably and looks great on the shelf.”

The company is a leading grower of exotic mushrooms, including Shiitake, Oyster, Royal Trumpet, Lion’s Mane and Maitake.

“Phillips has invested in state-of-the-art growing facilities to focus on quality, while also providing ideal conditions for all employees,” Steller said. “Food safety and employee safety are a top priority, and well-lit growing rooms combined with mobile harvesting lorries represent a big improvement.”

While 2020 was something of a challenging year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the company is finding 2021 to be just as problematic, if not more so.

“Between supply chain issues and labor shortages, the mushroom industry is struggling to keep up with strong demand,” Steller said. “We have seen a resurgence of foodservice demand and some weakness in retail demand as more consumers travel and eat at restaurants.”

Sustainability and nutrition have always been areas where mushrooms shine, and these are things that those behind Phillips Mushroom Farms care a great deal about.

“The Mushroom Council has launched some great campaigns around these topics to educate consumers,” Steller said, citing Feed Your Immune System, which highlights all of the nutritional benefits contained in mushrooms; and The Mushroom Sustainability Story, depicting industry data showing the resources required to produce mushrooms.

“Mushrooms use a small amount of water, energy and land to grow. What a great way to eat healthy while reducing our impact on the environment,” he said.

Despite the challenges, mushrooms are as popular as ever and the company has seen a rising demand for its products.

“Sliced mushrooms are really popular for the added convenience factor,” Steller said. “We are working on a few different organic blend options as well as more exotic options.”

Retailers continue to do their part to help in the popularity of mushrooms and this is something that the company has appreciated through the years.

“At the store level, rotation and attention to detail are extremely important,” Steller said. “A well-stocked, fresh display will continue to keep mushrooms flying off the shelf. Retailers are always looking to maximize return on shelf space. To that end, the mushroom category continues to gain space on many shelves by adding larger value packages, and more organic options.”

Phillips has long focused on production of high-quality mushrooms and to fuel continued growth and improvement, a new state-of-the-art growing facility is under construction in Pennsylvania, to be completed by the end of 2021.

“This facility will be very similar to our existing operation in Warwick, MD,” Steller said. “This expansion will allow Phillips to keep up with the growing demand for mushrooms, while continuing to elevate the standards for mushroom quality and food safety.”

[Print](#)