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Ruiz says millennials hold key to future success of the

industry

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PHARR, TX – Richard Ruiz believes the key to future success of the produce industry lies in the hands of the millennial generation, and produce marketers would be well advised to meet the needs of that demographic.

“More than ever, consumers are hungry for information about the food they buy and where it comes from, and that is especially true for the millennials,” he said. “They value quality over price, and that can be a key for our success as an industry.”

Ruiz said that it is essential for both growers and retailers alike to focus on providing only the best quality and safest fruits and vegetables to the nation’s consumers. In fact, he said he likes to go to supermarkets and observe how people shop. Invariably, their purchase decisions are driven by quality.

“If we focus on that, it will result in repeat purchases, which is good for our industry, and it will create a healthier America, which is good for the country,” he said. “Healthcare costs are out of control, and we provide the best medicine there is. The millennials are especially aware of that, and we need to continue to meet their needs and the needs of all consumers.”

Ruiz said that we are living in a “very exciting time and we need to realize there are great opportunities to prosper,” adding that both large and small companies can reap the benefits.

“If we can keep our eye on quality and stay united as an industry, we will all be better for it,” he said. “Our real competition is the snack food and soft drink manufacturers, which continue to fill the store shelves with unhealthy food. What we provide is truly a natural preventative medicine.”

Ruiz laments the divide that currently exists in the United States, brought on by political differences. He points to policies put in place by the current administration as the main reason for the dichotomy.

“We have a bad government in place, and the only accomplishment in the first seven months has been to increase spending and raise taxes,” he said. “They have created bad policies that increased gas prices, increased electricity costs and raised the cost of all goods and services.”

Closer to home, he said the border situation is a “disaster under [President] Biden and [Vice President] Harris. They have refused an invitation July 30 by Hidalgo County Judge Richard Cortez to come to the border to check out the dangerous situation they created, the crime, drugs and human trafficking that exists and that endangers the hardworking legitimate businesses.

“As a native of the Rio Grande Valley, it is very sad to see what is going on,” Ruiz added. “The only way to stop the drastic rise in prices is to manufacture and buy American-made product, and make U.S. businesses profitable. We need to stop making it difficult for legitimate businesses here to prosper.”

Ruiz was quick to add that he is not a proponent of closing the border, as he still believes America is the Land of Opportunity. “But we need to have sound policies in place regarding immigration, and we need to do it by the book.”

Photo: Richard Ruiz

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