



- Advertisement -

JUICI apples and Starr Ranch Growers: Certifiably good

By

Kyle Eberth

November 17, 2021

“It’s all in the name,” said Krista Beckstead, brand manager at [Starr Ranch Growers](#), commenting on the company’s new premier offering, JUICI apples. Described as “a wonderful balance of sweet and tart flavors, plus an amazing crunch,” the cultivar is unique to the central Washington-based company. “It’s our proprietary apple with us being the only ones who developed and grow it,” said Beckstead, praising the R&D team at Starr, which invested years of work cultivating and curating this sought-after apple.

Building upon characteristics of a Braeburn and Honeycrisp, JUICI is known for its “unique physical characteristics which make it stand out on the shelf— its vibrant red hue, thin skin, and dimple-texturing (think golf ball).” When asked if JUICI’S dimpling characteristic adds to its speed and flight path on the driving range, the company was tight-lipped: “It’s an apple” and “that’s proprietary information.” All kidding aside, JUICI is an excellent product that Starr is proud to promote: “It’s truly the apple for everyone, everywhere, for every lifestyle.”

Behind the scenes of the JUICI apple, Starr Ranch Growers is excited about its recently gained certification from Fair Trade USA. Fair Trade is a global movement, spanning industry and sector, the logo has become synonymous with a company’s commitment to sustainability and equitable practices along its supply chain. The Fair Trade movement represents “thousands of products, improving millions of lives, protecting land and waterways in 62 countries and counting,” with “\$846 million to farmers and workers since 1999.” This model of conscious consumerism and responsible business practices, places a high value on the economic empowerment of the people and place: farmer, workers, their families and the land they work on.

Working to garner the designation from Fair Trade USA was a collective effort by the team at Starr Ranch and a focused outgrowth from company core values. “The goal of becoming Fair Trade Certified has been a top priority of ours as we’ve built upon our sustainability program,” said Brett Reasor, CEO of Starr Ranch Growers. “We’ve placed a significant emphasis on generating sustainable solutions. The core pillar of our sustainability initiatives begins with the people — which is why we value farm worker welfare and community development while nurturing the land in which we grow.” Starr makes its case — empower the workforce through equitable practice and responsible land stewardship — benefits communities at large.

The impact is real, as 80 percent of premiums are paid back directly to the farm worker, which in turn supports local communities at large. For the company, the end result is additional support and compensation for employees and personnel working directly in the orchards. “Our farm workers and

labor personnel are the backbone and core of our business — this is our commitment to providing further incentives, support and opportunities for all,” said Reasor.

While the company was granted this initial Fair Trade certification right before fall harvest — solidifying 3,300 acres in both the Wenatchee and Quincy Custom Apple Packing facilities — the certification is currently specific to its apples. The company does plan to expand its rigorous standard across its other commodities in the new year.

“It is our social responsibility to ensure every Starr Ranch Growers employee has a seat at the table — whether they’re in an orchard, warehouse or office,” said Jim Thomas, owner and president of Starr Ranch Growers. This worthwhile endeavor centers people and practices, alongside the product. “It started out as certifying allocated sites within our operations, but we quickly knew we couldn’t stop there, and have since expanded certification to all Starr Ranch orchards and Custom Packing Warehouses — benefitting nearly 1,800 farmworkers. I couldn’t be prouder of our team on this milestone achievement.”

Starr has added a new HIC2 Recyclable Pouch Bag and Corrugated Consumer Box to the JUICI product line. These additions have not gone unnoticed, the team has received a considerable amount of positive feedback from retailers and consumers, “sustainable packaging is a trend that continues to take off.”

While Starr Ranch recognizes the progress they’ve made in sustainable farming — an achievement worth celebrating — the company looks toward the future and its continued partnership with Fair Trade USA and the innovative practices it will continue to foster. Working toward a future where people, the product, and communities thrive on a holistic level is more than a trend with marketing, it’s just good business sense.

Look for the Fair Trade logo on JUICI apples and remember to recycle those boxes.

[Print](#)