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Harvest Best offers vegetable variety

By

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With products ranging from specialty Asian items to the top sellers in the vegetable category, south Texas-based [Harvest Best Inc.](#) has a diverse portfolio of Mexican grown crops for its equally diverse customer list.

CEO Nasser Halim and Chief Operating Officer Jacobo Romero started the company in 2018 after spending many years in the vegetable business working for others. “I grew up in the San Joaquin Valley and worked in the Salinas Valley for many years before moving out here (Texas),” said Halim.

Romero started his produce career in Nogales, AZ, where he grew up, before moving to Texas more than a half-dozen years ago. The two men were working at a different produce operation when it shut down. “We built the business back up with many of the same growers and customers,” Halim said.

Romero is heavily involved in grower relations and sales while Halim focuses on marketing and sales. However, Halim said both partners are involved in all aspects of the company’s strategy development and decision making.

Harvest Best sources from several growing districts in Mexico to offer year-round production and a solid sales list. That list includes the top vegetable items for any retailer including broccoli, bell peppers, hot peppers, iceberg lettuce, squashes, celery, cucumbers, cauliflower, carrots and tomatoes. It also includes a number of items targeted to the Asian market, including Asian-cut broccoli crowns, and value-added, packaged Chinese vegetables such as baby bok choy.

The company sells its produce under several labels including Fu Choy for its Asian line, Bella Bells peppers and HarvestBest for the core vegetable items. And its newest label is HarvestBest Sweeties for its new line of winter strawberries. Sales Coordinator Travis Camph told *The Produce News* the strawberry production from Mexico is under way and the company will ship through the winter into March. “We are expecting to add other berries to the line, but we are not ready to announce that yet,” he revealed.

Halim reported that about 45 percent of its sales are to the wholesale community, with 35 percent to retailers and the remaining 20 percent to foodservice. “Foodservice fell off during the pandemic, but it is starting to come back,” he said. “Retail really picked up last year and it is still pretty good.”

He added that their geographic sweet spot is from Texas through the Midwest to Chicago and then over to the Northeast. While its Fu Choy brand does accurately portray that the company has many Asian customers, Halim said they sell a wide range of buyers throughout their target markets.

All of their growing partnerships are operated on a contract basis, mostly with growers in the Central Mexico districts of Puebla, Bajio and Guadalajara.

Harvest Best has two offices in Texas and another in Mexico. It's U.S. offices are in San Antonio and Pharr, TX, where it has space in the Evergreen Cold Storage facility. Halim said that is an excellent location as it is very close to the Pharr International Bridge, where most Mexico-produced product crosses into Texas. It is also a popular warehouse site for several buying operations. The Mexico office is in Guadalajara.

Photo: The Harvest Best sales team at the 2021 Viva Fresh Expo: Jaime Lucero, Jacobo Romero, Nasser Halim, and Fausto Morales.

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