



- Advertisement -

SunFed seeing strong market for cantaloupes

By

John Groh

December 2, 2021

Rio Rico, AZ — SunFed was seeing high demand for its cantaloupes in early November, while its fall vegetable deal was getting off to a slightly late start due to wet weather early in the season.

“Currently, there is very high demand as well as a high market for cantaloupes,” said Craig Slate, president of SunFed. “Squash, on the other hand, has been more of a challenge and things got started a bit late due to the wet weather we had earlier this fall.”

Denise Quiroga, who is in sales at SunFed, agreed, adding, “There has been unusually high demand on melons. Production is where it should be at this point, so I can’t really explain the high demand we are seeing.”

Quiroga said cucumbers have been moving well, attributing that to the fact that more people are cooking at home these days. In general, there has been strong demand despite higher prices across the board for the items SunFed supplies. She expected markets and prices would level off by early December.

Slate said supply chain issues are another factor SunFed is facing, and he doesn’t expect to see a return to normal for six months or longer.

“But since we sell produce, we have an advantage because we have product to offer. We’re not trying to sell televisions that are sitting offshore in a container ship,” he said.

Despite the challenges, Slate likes where SunFed is positioned.

“We’ve had moderate growth over the years, and we have a good strong organic program that is going well,” he said. “We see organics as a good growth area, and I am proud to say SunFed was an early adopter of organics over 15 years ago, and we’ll continue to grow that category.

Another area for growth at SunFed has been its packaged line, and Slate expects that to continue.

“We use StePac for our bulk items and for our product packed under our top-quality Perfect Produce brand,” he said. “It works very well to preserve quality and extend shelf life.”

In addition to the aforementioned cantaloupe and cucumbers (English and slicers), SunFed ships Bell peppers, soft squash (zucchini, grey and yellow), eggplant, onions and Roma tomatoes, and honeydew and watermelon. Top-grade product is packed under the Perfect Produce label, while second-grade product is packed under the Almost Famous brand.

Photo: In the SunFed sales office in early November were Luis Gonzales, Miguel Gomez, Denise Quiroga and Craig Slate.

[Print](#)