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## **Nash Produce ready to talk sweet potatoes at NY Produce Show**

By

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With continued optimism in the upward sweet potato industry, [Nash Produce](#) continues to improve and grow its Nashville, NC-based facility to include additional storage space.

“Our team is hard at work adding an additional state-of-the-art controlled atmosphere storage that will be ready May of 2022,” said Randi Ricks, a customer service representative for the company. “This is to ensure we are able to provide the best quality and services in the sweet potato industry.”

Nash Produce specializes in an assortment of sweet potato varieties, packaging options, and private or value-added labeling capabilities all year long.

The company’s packaging facilities have the size and capacity to package premium U.S. No. 1 sweet potatoes in bulk, individually shrink-wrapped or in steamable pouches ready for the microwave, tray packs in quantities of three or four potatoes, 40-pound boxes, and convenient mesh bagging.



“While our orange fleshed Covington sweet potatoes may be the most popular option, we also provide two specialty varieties — Bonita and Murasaki,” Ricks said. “Our experienced staff and local, quality grower base strive to deliver a product that surpasses expectation through all stages of growth and production. We are pleased to offer both organic and conventional sweet potato options and hold food safety to a high standard by upholding USDA GAP, GlobalGAP, USDA Organic, and PrimusGFS certifications.”

With the calendar turning to December, Nash Produce is excited to be gearing up to attend the New York Produce Show & Conference and seeing its northeastern friends and customers in person for the first time in more than a year.

“Our team members have built relationships with other industry professionals that, like us, come back to the show annually,” Ricks said. “It is a big, produce reunion and something that we look forward to each year. The show is important to Nash Produce because we have such a concentration of business and we see continued opportunities to grow through the show.”

Nash Produce’s president, Thomas Joyner and his wife, Melissa, will be available at booth No. 437, and those coming to stop by can expect to learn about an array of impressive facility capabilities such as electronic sizing, multiple packaging opportunities, various sweet potato variety options, and logistic resources to name a few.

“Our team will be bringing our traditional Covington sweet potatoes fresh off the line,” Ricks said. “These will be displayed in many different packing options we provide. While Mr. Yam brand will be on full display, we are also able to provide private label packaging to customers that are interested.”

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The company expects to be discussing the good quality of the 2021 sweet potato crop and its ability and desire to provide all customers with great customer service.

“We are having to, hypothetically, wipe the dust off our booth materials as we are switching gears from a year of virtual shows to having the chance to gather in person again,” Ricks said. “Planning for a show begins many months in advance scheduling logistics and all necessary behind-the-scenes preparation. Typically, a week before a show, we gather our booth materials together and double check that we have all needed items packed. We enjoy being able to show-off our products for customers to touch and examine, so the sweet potatoes that make it to the show floor are gathered straight from the packing line the day before our representatives leave.”

Naturally, it's always important to get in front of customers face to face to discuss opportunities and any issues they are encountering, and this year, it's more important than ever.

“Face to face conversations allows us to really read the customer whether they are a current customer or a potential new client,” Ricks said. “It allows us to make sure we understand the needs and wants of the customer. The in-person shows allow for a better exchange of information by establishing loyalty and trust needed to build our strong relationships.”

Looking ahead, Nash Produce is optimistic regarding new opportunities, especially in increased value-added products.

“Products such as our 3- and 5-pound mesh bags are extremely popular as they are quick and convenient grab and go options,” Ricks said. “Similarly, the three- and four-count tray packs have seen an increased demand. We are carefully reviewing ways to enhance our value-added options for the coming year.”

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