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## Divemex thrives as bell pepper specialist

By

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With production in three Mexican states, [Divemex](#) believes it is the only company in Mexico providing U.S. customers top quality bell peppers on a year-round basis.

Marketing Manager Christian Avalos recently told *The Produce News* that while Divemex also grows a several other items, including cucumbers, it is its bell pepper program that sets it apart. The robust program includes colored peppers and mini peppers, grown conventionally, certified organic and Fair Trade certified. The company packs all its items under the Divemex brand but it also works with retailers all over the United States and Canada providing private label packs. Working with a retailer on its private label, Avalos said within about 10-11 days the grower-shipper can provide the bell peppers in whatever retail-ready pack the buyer prefers.



Avalos revealed that Divemex can offer consistent year-round production because the company, which is headquartered in Guadalajara, grows in the states of Jalisco, Nayarit and Sinaloa. With production cycles that overlap, he said the firm can always ship top quality product from the more than 500 acres it farms. He said there are always top quality peppers available from at least one operation and often all three of the greenhouse-centric programs.

Looking at the 2022 year, Avalos said the production is currently ramping up in Sinaloa with excellent quality peppers and no cultural or weather issues that are expected to impact supply. The grower-shipper's other operations also are in production, including in its state of the art greenhouses in Nayarit, where Divemex is increasing its volume.

Avalos said a major part of Divemex's value proposition is its commitment to its workers as well as its sustainability effort. The company is moving toward transitioning all its production to organics. "Customers are always looking for product that is better for the planet," he said. "Over the next five years, our main goal is to be 100 percent organic."

The company's sustainability efforts go beyond organics as it includes technology to reduce the use of water, it uses bicycles rather than motorized vehicles for on-site transportation, and it employs heat-exchange technology to moderate greenhouse and packhouse temperatures.

Avalos said the company is also working on more sustainable packaging to reduce its use of plastics and non-recyclable material.

Another big initiative for Divemex is the welfare of its workers. Avalos said the company has many corporate and worker-directed programs that improve their employees' quality of life and future prospects. He added that Divemex is constantly touting its Fair Trade certified cartons, which come at a 50 cent premium deposited directly into a workers' fund, controlled by the workers. The company's website noted that "thousands of our workers and families benefit from medical, optical (everything from eye glasses to cataract surgery), dental, and child care, in addition to a scholarship program that has helped over 1,000 people cover education-related expenses like transportation, books and university tuition."

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Avalos said many of the agricultural workers in Mexico come from small villages in the southern part of the country seeking a better quality of life. Divemex feels a great responsibility to help them improve their lives and the lives of their extended families.

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