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Divine Flavor in peak shipping period

By

Tim Linden

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January is typically one of the heaviest volume months for [Divine Flavor](#) LLC., and, in late December, all indicators pointed to a typically strong first part of the season for the West Mexico vegetable deal.

Speaking to *The Produce News* on Dec. 29, Michael DuPuis, quality assurance and public relations coordinator for the company, said that in December the shift to the Culiacan production area in the state of Sinaloa begins and by January the company is operating on all cylinders. This season that region has had very good growing conditions and volumes are expected to reflect that as the season progresses. “We have had favorable weather and our continued investment in technology and innovation has kept us ahead of the game,” he said, adding a great cadre of experienced growing partners is one of the keys to Divine’s success.

He noted that both organic and conventional production of a host of items, including colored and mini-peppers, grape and round tomatoes, and cucumbers were maturing on schedule as the new year was about to dawn.

“When it comes down to it, one of our bigger advantages is that we have built a great grower alliance,” he said. “We believe we have the best group of growers in all of Mexico as well as other parts of the world.”

For 2022, DuPuis noted that Divine Flavor is intent on continuing to build grower relations to help the company achieve consistent supplies of its core crops on a year-round basis. “We want to be able to take care of our customers on a year round basis.”

The company’s vegetable crops have been grown in both Central and West Mexico for many years with significant production in Baja California and Sinaloa. It has also been increasing its production in the state of Jalisco, which DuPuis said offers a nice bridge for its bell pepper and tomato crops during the summer months. Baja also offers significant summer production, which is the time of the year that Sinaloa is in its offseason for most commodities.

Divine Flavor is also a grower of both conventional and organic grapes and utilizes production in Mexico, Peru and Chile to remain in that crop for an extended period of time.

DuPuis said another ongoing project that will get increased attention in 2022 is the firm’s sustainability project. “We continue to move forward on issues surrounding sustainability. We have our own in-house auditing of sustainability practices, and in 2022 we want to take it one step further,” he said.

He said it is difficult to implement sustainability practices throughout the firm’s grower community,

but they continue to move forward. “We are making sure we are doing it right by taking one step at a time and measuring the results,” he said.

The company partners with Fair Trade, which is an important aspect of its sustainability project. Through both Fair Trade Certified funds and its own foundations, Divine Flavor is constantly engaged with its workers to bring them programs they desire and comfortable working and living conditions.

DuPuis added that Divine Flavor continues to increase its organic footprint as another element of its sustainability program. He said not all its organic production is sold as such, but that fact points to the company’s commitment to that earth-friendly growing technique.

He admits that one area that is proving to be difficult for the entire industry is a switch to environmentally friendly packaging. DuPuis said there needs to be more industry action on this front as it is one of the greatest challenges in the ag industry. “It’s a tough problem. It (environmentally friendly packaging) is tough to find and it gets expensive very quickly.”

But he said the industry does need to move in this direction and Divine Flavor is on board in that effort.

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