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**Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market remains vital to City of Brotherly Love**

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By

Keith Loria

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Since opening in 2011, the updated [Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market](#) has wowed customers and companies alike for being the world's largest fully enclosed, fully refrigerated wholesale produce terminal. The facility's main building is one-quarter mile long and 686,000 square feet, bigger than 14 football fields.

There are 20 companies on the market, and it's been said by several merchants that the "secret sauce" is that everyone works together for the betterment of all.

"Through teamwork and cooperation, we trade amongst each other, deliver each other's produce to shared customers, and have formed the foundation of a thriving market through spirited competition along with a trust and mutual respect," Mark Smith, general manager of the Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market, said. "Our companies come together to offer an incredible selection of the finest produce available in the world, with combined sales estimated to be more than \$1 billion."

In 2022, leadership at the Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market is on a path to reduce costs and eliminate landfill waste, teaming up with various organizations to meet these goals. Currently, its landfill diversion rate is about 65 percent and has recorded a 50 percent reduction in waste costs.

"We partnered with area food banks, led by Sharing Excess to increase food donations and decrease waste," Smith said. "Sharing Excess has taken a spot in our market breezeway, and they sort through produce every day from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m., which they in turn share with community hunger organizations."

Since July of 2021, the Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market has donated around 3.8 million pounds of food to local food banks in partnership with Sharing Excess and is very proud of this win-win collaboration.

It's important to get the word out about the market and let people know the latest endeavors, Smith said. For instance, during the year, the Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market hosts various trade groups, such as the recent Meet & Greet Educational meeting sponsored by Avocados from Peru and Philaport in May. It also plans to have four booths at the New York Produce Show in December.

"We are a strong produce town in part because we are ideally situated in an area with a tremendous port," Smith said. "Philaport is the fastest growing port in the United States and is No. 1 in terms of having the largest refrigerated facilities. This has led to cold supply chain expertise that allows for the rapid movement of perishables."

Philadelphia shares many of the same produce advantages New York might claim, such as proximity

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to major ports with produce handling infrastructure, airports with direct connections to Europe and South America, and a huge diversity of ethnic communities that create pull for variety and volume. But Philadelphia is also sandwiched directly in between two major vegetable growing regions — Lancaster and South Jersey.

In addition to the Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market's proximity to the port, the facility is well-suited to take advantage of air, rail and easy drop-off and pickup for trucking partners. "And, of course, Philly is in the heart of locally grown," Smith said. "Whenever the season obliges, we purchase PA Preferred, Delaware Grown, and Jersey Fresh."

Customers love the market, he added, as it's open to the public because it wants to share this asset and give access to fresh food to as many people as possible in the region.

"Customers are invited to take a tour if it's their first visit," Smith said. "The Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market is easy to navigate because we are fully-enclosed and fully-refrigerated, lanes are clearly marked, and salespeople are always ready to assist."

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## About Keith Loria |

A graduate of the University of Miami, Keith Loria is a D.C.-based award-winning journalist who has been writing for major publications for close to 20 years on topics as diverse as real estate, food and sports. He started his career with the Associated Press and has held high editorial positions at magazines aimed at healthcare, sports and technology. When not busy writing, he can be found enjoying time with his wife, Patricia, and two daughters, Jordan and Cassidy.

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