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**Procacci Bros. bullish on Philadelphia market**

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By

Keith Loria

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[Procacci Bros.](#), one of the top wholesalers in the Northeast, operates Garden State Farms at the Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market, a warehouse in South Philadelphia and a farming operation in South Jersey.

The company provides a full line of produce, and not only back-of-the-line items like salads and dressings, but also floral, organic and specialty items.

“Business has been good so far this year,” said Mike Maxwell, president of Procacci Bros. “You have to work with your customers more than ever before to get orders — you have to go that extra mile to make sales, and just play ‘small ball.’ There are no homeruns in this business. You have to be at it every day, and our company never stops.”

Procacci Bros. has four units on the Philadelphia Market and hawks its wares to the local consumer while promoting a lot of locally-grown product from New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and of course, Pennsylvania.

“It’s springtime now, so a lot of that stuff is starting to come in,” Maxwell said. “We look forward to this weather to get off our back and start showing us some spring-like temperatures. Mother Nature hasn’t been too kind yet. We’re waiting for some of our customers to open up their seasonal businesses and look forward to the local farmers participating in sales.”

The company loves working in Philadelphia, with Maxwell calling it “the most modern market in the world,” highlighted by it being totally enclosed with a mean temperature of 50 degrees, keeping the cold chain correct so it doesn’t impact the product.

“We’re also fortunate enough to be able to get to 50 percent of the population in the United States in 10 hours,” Maxwell said. “And we have the infrastructure to help us do that. The city has invested a lot of money in the river and the ports, so we can bring in larger fruits, and 60 percent of all South American fruit comes through the Port of Philadelphia and the Delaware River. So, you can’t be more ideally located.”

Rick Feighery, Procacci Bros.’ vice president of sales, noted with the pandemic hopefully coming to a close and restaurants opening back up, the food scene will return to being one of the best in the nation.

“It’s just incredible here in Philadelphia,” he said. “Whether it’s a juice bar or a retail establishment or a combination of both, which there seems to be more and more of, the food scene has really shifted in the last few years. For a long time, it was getting away from the city and going to the suburbs, but now there are different sections of the city really hopping with a lot of startups.”

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The pandemic has also brought on a new business mindset, Maxwell said, noting there's a lot of new food businesses in operation, such as the food boxes which buy produce for the neighborhoods.

"We do a lot of meal kits, and these businesses are growing as well," he said. "The pandemic actually created new ways for people to procure produce. That's exciting to see that entrepreneurial spirit still there."

Looking ahead, Procacci Bros. will continue to have its frying pan on the burners and dabble in different areas that can help it grow and increase business.

"There are new opportunities that we are developing and exploring," Feighery said. "There are machinery upgrades that we put in place for ease of packing and due to the reduction of labor. We completed a \$6 million capital improvement on packing lines, and we're looking at what best can streamline operation."

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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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