



- Advertisement -

Jersey Fresh high in demand

By

Keith Loria

May 19, 2022

Spring is an important time for growers in New Jersey, and the New Jersey Department of Agriculture does all it can to help them succeed — especially in a year like this one where so many challenges are impacting the industry.

Naturally, Jersey Fresh continues to be the benchmark in statewide produce branding programs, and farmers who enroll in the Jersey Fresh Quality Grading Program are eligible to use the brand on their packaging and capitalize on the successful marketing efforts that have been evolving since the program's inception in 1984.

That's important to a company like Consalo Family Farms, which grows a full line of produce in New Jersey, with a history in the state that goes back to 1927.

"New Jersey is one of the top 10 producers nationally for blueberries, cranberries, spinach, squash and many other crops," said Chelsea Consalo, executive vice president of the Vineland, NJ-based company. "Most New Jersey farmers grow multiple items, which helps agriculture make a strong impact on the state's economy."

There are more than 100 different varieties of produce grown locally. You even see items like methi, daikon radishes, and bok choy now amongst traditional items like cilantro, dill, romaine lettuce, and beets.

"The state's unique geographic location makes transportation to retailers up and down the East Coast very easy," Consalo said. "Timing wise, there is a great window of opportunity for many vegetable items with the season beginning in April and usually extending into November for some crops. New Jersey blueberries are available June through early August."

Sunny Valley International, which operates out of Glassboro, NJ, is excited about the anticipation of the start of the New Jersey season and knows consumers are looking forward to the local produce.

"We have been a leading marketer of New Jersey stone fruit and blueberries for nearly 30 years," said Tom Beaver, director of sales and marketing for the Glassboro, NJ-based company. "Our New Jersey programs are a cornerstone of our business. We spend all winter and spring preparing for our local programs. Now it's about putting the final pieces in place to make sure that our growers have an outstanding season."

Jay Krichmar, president of Krichmar Produce, operating out of Vineland, NJ, noted that the spring season in New Jersey has started a little slow this year because of the cold weather.

"Everything is a little behind and we lost some plantings because of frost, which we generally don't

get in April,” he said. “Still, we are looking forward to a good productive season and should have plenty of product.”

One issue that the state is dealing with is a lack of younger produce talent coming into the farming industry.

That has meant the loss of some farms this year, though others are planting a little extra to make up the difference.

“None of the kids want to get into farming and that’s a problem,” Krichmar said. “These older growers don’t want to keep putting money into the farms, especially with the costs going up, and that’s a potential problem going forward.”

However, the NJDA is doing what it can to entice youngsters into the business and is finding more consumers supporting local Jersey Fresh, which will help growers get through the tough times.

Retailers continue to be great ambassadors of the Jersey Fresh brand and that should only lead to even better sales in the year ahead.

[Keith Loria](#)

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.

[Print](#)