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**Fru-Veg expands with Northeast office**

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By

Keith Loria

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[Fru-Veg Marketing](#) is a top importer of fine produce from the best growers of Europe and Latin America. Since its founding in 1988 by Conchita Espinosa, and through the partnership of current co-presidents Steven Espinosa and Albert Grimaldi, the company's philosophy has revolved around the principal of selecting the finest growers in each region.

"By representing only the top growers each region has to offer, we are able to offer unrivaled quality and volume," Espinosa said. "Fru-Veg's success stems from surpassing the benchmarks of its competitors and working closely with its customers to meet their needs on a year-round basis. Through quality and consistency, we ensure that all customers receive the maximum shelf life of products. We look to give the customers what they need, when they need it, and at the highest quality."

With Espinosa and Grimaldi in charge, the company has remained both family-owned and privately-owned.

Over the course of 2022, the company will launch its domestic vegetable program, run by its Northeast division.

"We see plenty of opportunities in the year ahead," Grimaldi said. "With domestic vegetables — blueberry, avocado and asparagus. Every category is growing and is exciting."

The Northeast office is in Landisville, NJ, run by the team of Todd Scarpaci, Adam Dandrea and Ali Dandrea.

"Todd has been in the produce industry for more than 30 years and Ali and Adam are fourth-generation produce industry professionals," Grimaldi said. "They bring an amazing energy to our team."

The reason the company decided to open a Northeast division was because it had relationships with people in the area, and it made for an exciting complement for what Fru-Veg was currently doing. It also was something that customers had been asking for.

The company is dealing with some challenges as it plans its growth, most notably the same issues that most produce companies are dealing with — logistics, cost of goods, and freight costs rising astronomically, including 40 percent higher from Peru and 50 percent higher from Chile.

"Cost of importing product is just increasing and increasing," Grimaldi said. "One of the biggest challenges is the cost to produce goods has gone up 40 percent. The fresh produce sector has seen the lowest inflation value overall."

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Fru-Veg has partnered with Berry Bros., which has allowed the company to sell domestic blueberries to customers from farm-to-table and also create a 12-month, year-round supply of fresh blueberries.

“In addition to our import blackberry program, we now have one for blackberries out of Georgia,” Grimaldi said. “Matthew Benito joined our sales team almost a year ago and will be moving to New Jersey to oversee our domestic blueberry program.”

The entire company culture is built on the team concept, and both Espinosa and Grimaldi noted that’s a big part of Fru-Veg’s success.

“We invest in people,” he said. “For instance, Amber Milligan, director of sales, has been with Fru-Veg for more than 10 years. Our team members believe in hard work, customer service and have a passion for what they do.”

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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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