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**Smith's Farm looking forward to Maine broccoli season**

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By

John Groh, publisher

July 6, 2022

Last year, [Smith's Farm](#) saw an idyllic spring that set the stage for an outstanding season for its signature Maine broccoli, which started more than a week early and brought record yields.

While this season will see a more traditional start time in the second week of July, the company is expecting another robust crop, according to Tara Smith Vighetti, president of Smith's Farm Sales.



Sixth-

generation partners Emily Smith, Zachary Smith and Tara Smith Vighetti at State of Maine Industry Event.

“We’ve had a lot of rain this year, which caused some delays in planting, so it is a much different

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season than last year,” she said. “But we are still expecting a normal start with no delays or gaps predicted.”

Smith Vighetti also said the season differs from last year due to some additional challenges brought on by the current state of affairs in the United States.

“The cost of everything is up this year, including fertilizer, freight, packaging, labor – you name it,” she said. “We have been able to offset some of the added costs by careful planning early in the year, locking in deals with our suppliers. And we were very lucky to have the support of our retail customers, who have worked with us to get prices more in line with costs.”

She said that much of the credit goes to her sister Emily and cousin Zach, fellow sixth-generation family members who run the farming and production side of the operation.

“Emily and Zach are amazing,” she said. “They have been hard at work since early in the year to get everything ready for our summer season. Pre-planning is so important for a successful season. In fact, they are now already working ahead for our Georgia deal in the fall.”

But back to the season at hand, Smith Vighetti said with an expected typical volume out of Maine, Smith’s Farm is focused on the dedicated acreage it has to meet its contracted volume. There will be a little overflow for the open market, but not as much this year as it is running a tighter operation with less risk.

During challenging times like these, Smith Vighetti said it would be easy to get down and adopt a negative mindset, especially for smaller grower-shippers. “But in my experience, the produce industry as a whole is extremely optimistic and resilient,” she said. “And a reason for that is a willingness to partner and collaborate. It’s the principle of strength in numbers, and we can all benefit by working together as much as possible to be innovative and creative. The network of partnerships we have built on the East Coast has been essential to scaling our business. It is not done alone.”

Smith Vighetti said that Smith’s Farm works with other growers in Maine in various ways, especially in trading ground for rotational crops. Smith production in Florida, Georgia and North Carolina are all supported by regional partnerships that make achieving year-round production of their core commodity offerings of broccoli and cauliflower possible.

She also points to the many dedicated industry members who volunteer in industry associations and boards, such as the IFPA, as evidence of the industry working together for the good of all.

In fact, she enthusiastically serves on the IFPA’s Grower-Shipper Council, and urges those with a desire to impart their expertise to get involved. Smith’s Farm team members also actively engage with the state Departments of Agriculture in all their operating areas, as well as the NEPC, SEPC and the FFVA.

“Our industry associations need engagement from us to serve membership well,” said Smith Vighetti. “This is a more important time than ever to be engaged and not pull back and isolate.”

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[John Groh](#)

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## About John Groh |

John Groh graduated from the University of San Diego in 1989 with a bachelors of arts degree in English. Following a brief stint as a sportswriter covering the New York Giants football team, he joined The Produce News in 1996 as an assistant editor and worked his way up the ranks, becoming publisher in 2006. He and his wife, Mary Anne, live in northern New Jersey in the suburbs of New York City.

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