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Hapco Farms' Brian Pollak is making waves in the produce industry

By

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Riding waves has always been one of life's greatest pleasures for 29-year-old Brian Pollak of Watermill, NY. But now the fourth-generation family member of [Hapco Farms](#) is putting down his surfboard and putting on his sales hat — at least, during the workday.

“I have been surfing for over 20 years,” Pollak told *The Produce News*. “I used to compete more, but now I just do it for the pure love of it. It's more than just fun for me, it's a way of dealing with stress and letting go of pressures.”



Brian Pollak showing off Hapco

Farms' East Coast
crop of cauliflower.

Growing up, Pollak would compete in local and national surf competitions and has enjoyed traveling and surfing around the world — some of his favorite spots being Hawaii, Mexico, Tahiti, Indonesia and of course, his home state of New York.

Pollak said one of the biggest lessons he's learned from surfing — and applied to his career in produce — is that not every wave is worth the chase.

“Not all waves are worth riding,” he said.

That mentality has helped him zone in on his goals as a sales representative for Hapco Farms and create a new niche of customers for the family-owned-and-operated company.

“I have been working with people my age in the industry that have been buying for fast casual chains or home delivery chains,” he said. “They aren't the typical customers that my father and grandfather have worked with, which are supermarkets.”

Pollak added that it's been fun for him to find his own niche with these customers because he can relate to them and find common interests outside of work.

“My motto has always been to keep the work talk to a minimum until the customer is ready to discuss details,” he said. “Then I make sure to have the smarts to back up what they are looking for.”

Pollak's laid-back approach and friendly demeanor has proven to be a winning combination both on and off the surfboard — bringing in more business for the Westhampton Beach, NY-based grower of fresh fruits and vegetables.

“My favorite part of the job is being able to work alongside my father, grandfather and cousins,” he said, adding that working closely with family members can also be the most challenging part.

“Making sure you clearly separate work from personal has been helping me in that area a lot, even though it can be challenging.”

As for the future, Pollak hopes to continue riding this wave of success he's on by being a main produce supplier to his customers and widening his item list.

“I want to push our service level and market share to new heights,” he said.

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