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**Wada Farms looking forward to new crop in Colorado**

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By

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[Wada Farms](#) is seeing a bit of a delay with the start of its potato harvest in Colorado, and it anxiously awaits the influx of additional product in the currently depleted pipeline.

“We have nothing left in storage right now [in Colorado], and we’re seeing record high markets,” Michele Peterson, who works in sales for Wada Farms, said Aug. 11. “We usually start harvest around August 15, but we’re a couple of weeks late this year.”

Once harvest does commence later this month, Peterson said she is looking forward to a high-quality crop, though volume and sizing are still unknown.

She said early digs indicate that things are “hit or miss” at this point, depending on the farm and the location. “Some are on track, while others are a bit behind, and sizing is variable. But we try to diversify so that not everything we have is invested in one area. From what we have seen so far, quality is looking outstanding. We’ve had good weather during the growing season, with warm days and cooler nights, with some rainfall.”

Peterson said things should even out after Labor Day, when more farms and warehouses are going strong.

Echoing what other growers have experienced this year, Peterson said Wada has had to deal with challenges related to the higher cost of production, labor and transportation.

“Costs have been through the roof,” said Peterson. “Diesel fuel, fertilizer, cartons and pallets have all up significantly this year. I think pallets are double what they cost last year.”

She was quick to add that Wada’s customers have been understanding of any uptick in prices. “We absorb what we can, but we have a wonderful customer base that works with us when possible.”

Transportation has been another area where Wada has been challenged, but Peterson said that market is starting to ease a bit.

“Truckers have to cover their costs, we understand that, but the last few months have been challenging for us with such a tight market,” she said. “Fortunately, it has loosened up a bit lately, and we hope that trend continues.”

Peterson said labor has also been a bit of a challenge, but she added that Wada has a dedicated workforce with minimal turnover, so it hasn’t affected the company as much as some others. “But it’s something you have to keep on top of and manage well,” she said.

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While Wada Farms is heaviest to russets in Colorado, Peterson said they also have reds, yellows, fingerlings and organics as part of its offerings.

“Organics are a pretty small part of our program, but we want to have them available so we can keep our customers from looking elsewhere,” she said. “We want to be the one-stop shop for them.”

Peterson said Wada supplies both the domestic and export markets, with Mexico being a significant market outside the United States. With that country’s recent ruling to open shipments of potatoes beyond a 26-kilometer border zone, she sees more opportunities on the horizon.

“I’ve been getting a lot of calls from Mexico lately,” she said.

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