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Crystal Valley Foods eyes holiday asparagus promotions

By

Tim Linden

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Though Peruvian asparagus importer [Crystal Valley Foods](#) expects a decline in volume this year, the company's marketing director, Katiana Valdez, said supplies will be sufficient for holiday promotions.



Katiana Valdez

She said the peak Peruvian season, which is typically October through November, is an ideal time to promote asparagus. “As of right now, we don’t expect any major weather issues that will impact volume,” Valdez said Sept. 1. “Retailers do a nice job with asparagus by putting it front and center during promotions and making it top of mind for their customers. Retailers can continue to educate consumers about asparagus usages and health benefits through traditional POS (point-of-sale material) as well as by sharing recipes and information on their websites and social platforms. In-store demos are also a great vehicle for increasing retail movement and offer customers a chance to try the product perhaps in a unique way that they might not have thought of before.”

The Miami company's marketing representative also reported that cross merchandising complementary products is a helpful way to increase sales. “Asparagus is popular prepared with lemons, meats (steak) and bacon so those products would be good to pair with the vegetable. It is also a favorite for spring and summer cookouts, parties, family gatherings and it is quickly becoming a holiday staple so retailers should cross merchandise asparagus with meats and other grilling and holiday essentials. It is also becoming a popular brunch item and can be added to quiches, frittatas

and other egg dishes.”

Valdez said Crystal Valley’s asparagus sales and marketing program should be very similar to last season. “We expect to have good volume in order to allow our partners to be able to promote throughout the season. We will continue with the same mix this year,” she said. “We do green and white asparagus from Peru 52 weeks a year, and on a limited basis we have a small volume of purple asparagus four to five months of the year.”

She said sales of value-added products in the asparagus category continue to trend upward. “As has been the case for the last several years, we continue to see an increase in value-added/bagged asparagus. We have a variety of sizes and case packs available as well as tips and full-length spears.”

There have been no changes on the U.S. Department of Agriculture protocols as they relate to organic Peruvian asparagus so the product cannot be brought into the United States without fumigation, rendering it impossible to provide an organic asparagus option from that South American origin. “We currently have an organic program in the spring Mexican asparagus season, and we are constantly looking at new areas in the country that will allow us to expand our organic asparagus offering and availability,” Valdez said.

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Tim Linden grew up in a produce family as both his father and grandfather spent their business careers on the wholesale terminal markets in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Tim graduated from San Diego State University in 1974 with a degree in journalism. Shortly thereafter he began his career at The Packer where he stayed for eight years, leaving in 1983 to join Western Growers as editor of its monthly magazine. In 1986, Tim launched Champ Publishing as an agricultural publishing specialty company.

Today he is a contract publisher for several trade associations and writes extensively on all aspects of the produce business. He began writing for The Produce News in 1997, and currently wears the title of Editor at Large.

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