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Five Crowns predicting same Peru asparagus volume as 2021

By

Tim Linden

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Los Angeles-based [Five Crowns Marketing](#) had a significant increase in its volume of Peruvian asparagus during 2021 and it is expecting status quo to be the operative descriptor this year.

“We have increased our production from Mexico and therefore our supply from Peru will stay comparable to last year,” said Cruz Carrera, who is director of sales and business development for the company’s asparagus division. He said last year’s increase from Peru was significant while this year’s growth in volume is coming from Mexico.

Over the long term, Carrera said Five Crowns will continue to increase from both origins. The company sources from Peru beginning in the May-June time frame with shipments typically lasting into January. Carrera said there should be promotable Peruvian asparagus from October through the middle of December, which is the peak of the season for the South American product.

He noted that, overall, U.S. retailers have done a great job of promoting asparagus. “They do an excellent job and as a result this commodity has become a staple item,” he said, adding that secondary and front-end displays, as well as cross merchandising and promotional opportunities, are excellent strategies retailers employ to boost sales.

Five Crowns offers both a one-pound and a one-kilogram (2.2 pounds) bag option. The larger packer is typically preferred by the club stores. The importer also offers a tray option, which comes in two sizes: 12 and 16 ounces.

Five Crowns also offers bulk asparagus from all three of its distribution centers: Los Angeles, Tracy in Northern California and the Miami operation in Florida. Carrera said Five Crowns’ marketing strategy typically is to service its customers east of the Mississippi with Peruvian asparagus. “But when it is necessary, we will bring the Peruvian asparagus to the West as well,” he added.

While organic asparagus supplies cannot come into the United States from Peru because of the fumigation protocol required by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Carrera said Five Crown continues to grow that side of its business with its Mexican asparagus production. He noted that the Peruvian Asparagus Importers Association has discussed the possibility of eliminating that fumigation protocol with USDA, but it has not happened yet.

While the company is not anticipating any logistics problems this fall, Carrera said it is always a challenge to secure freight space from Peru as demand increases in the October-through-December period. The company uses both air and sea shipments to bring Peruvian asparagus to the United States.

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About Tim Linden |

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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