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Equifruit readies expansion into U.S. as it strives for global fairtrade banana domination

By

Keith Loria

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[Equifruit](#), Canada's leading Fairtrade-certified banana supplier, is comprised of a team of diehard believers in ethical fruit sourcing.

The company's genesis dates back to 2006, originally distributing in Quebec and Ontario. Since that time, Equifruit has grown from supplying a bunch of independent chains to the larger chains in Canada.

"We are a Canadian brand, and we have been spending the last 15 years disrupting the banana industry by bringing in a 100 percent Fairtrade-certified model," said Kim Chackal, director of sales and marketing for the Montreal-based company.

While the company focuses on the Canadian market, over the last year it has been putting efforts into expanding to the U.S. and is ready to hit that market sometime soon.

"We do plan to attend and exhibit at the IFPA Global Show this fall — our first time attending at booth No. 4579 — and it will provide an opportunity for buyers and distributors to come and see a banana brand that's really innovative and doing things differently," Chackal said. "We're coming in with a very fun, fresh and bold approach."

The booth will include members of the team in banana jumpsuits and a six-foot shark, which represents a fun slogan of the company — the only banana that sharks eat.

"We're coming in with a very loud voice, and calling out this problem that we have internationally, which is cheap bananas," Chackal said. "It's cheap bananas that are keeping banana farmers in a cycle of poverty. Our brand addresses that."

Equifruit was readying to enter the U.S. market in early 2020, but its plans were put on hold due to the pandemic.

"We felt that before we get serious about the U.S. market, that we should do a major rebranding, because we wanted to make some improvements on our packaging, our website and social media — and we're really glad that we did," Chackal said. "Although we did start to promote our brand in the U.S., in 2020, we were also doing this major rebranding."

Today, Equifruit's banana cases are very colorful and bold, which is not too common in the banana industry.

"The banana industry is full of a bunch of beige boxes, but the Equifruit box is bright and colorful, and

it literally says on the side of the box that this is “the only banana you should buy,” Chackal said. “We want to jump-start the conversation — especially with Millennials and Gen Z, on why paying a bit more for bananas has a huge impact on farmers who have been stuck in generational poverty due to greed of large corporations in the north.”

Sustainability is an important component of the company, and being 100 percent Fairtrade-certified enables Equifruit to know exactly where its bananas come from, including knowing the names of farmers who picked them, and the date they were picked.

“I think we find ourselves in a climate, especially with Millennials and Gen Z’s, who are looking for brands to solve the world’s greatest problems,” Chackal said. “If we don’t farm sustainably, we’re not going to have bananas in the future. We want to address the social, economic and environmental elements.”

The truth is, it might cost a regular banana consumer about \$10 more a year to buy an Equifruit banana that’s Fairtrade-certified, and the impact on farmers is incredible and can be life-changing.

“We’re already seeing a keen interest in Equifruit in the U.S., and the more we travel to the states, the more we realize our marketing message is working,” Chackal said. “I feel an enormous amount of optimism in our mission — global Fairtrade banana domination.”

[Keith Loria](#)

About Keith Loria |

A graduate of the University of Miami, Keith Loria is a D.C.-based award-winning journalist who has been writing for major publications for close to 20 years on topics as diverse as real estate, food and sports. He started his career with the Associated Press and has held high editorial positions at magazines aimed at healthcare, sports and technology. When not busy writing, he can be found enjoying time with his wife, Patricia, and two daughters, Jordan and Cassidy.

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