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**GR Fresh expects normal winter after extraordinary summer**

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By

Tim Linden

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By all accounts it has been an extraordinary summer for vegetable producers with FOB prices on some items rising to levels never seen before, but Tony Incaviglia of [GR Fresh](#) expects a much more normal winter season as supply and demand get back in sync.

“It was an exceptional summer to say the very least,” quipped Incaviglia, vice president of sales and marketing for the McAllen, TX-based firm. “It is not a normal situation as we continue to see western veg lettuce prices at \$70, \$80, \$90. I have to believe even the old timers have never seen prices like this.”

Incaviglia said the transition between summer and the winter program is always challenging but weather problems in multiple districts saw unprecedented supply issues and the sky high prices.



“Everyone was impacted by weather, with heavy rains and hurricanes hitting Baja California, central Mexico, Florida and Georgia, and California had its problems with quality issues,” said Incaviglia.

But, in early November, he said the Mexican winter deals were just starting to produce crops and so far, it looks like the supply situation is going to resemble a normal season.

Incaviglia said GR Fresh’s core items start with Roma tomatoes and include avocados, green Bell peppers, colored peppers, eggplant, squashes, and cucumbers. The company also offers round vine ripe and grape tomatoes, as well as onions and wet vegetables on a seasonal basis.

“We will be starting our pepper program before Thanksgiving and by the time we get into December we will be going full tilt on most of our other items,” he said.

“Our main goal this year is to focus on what we do best,” he said. “We are focusing on our core



commodities and increasing our business every year.”

The company did a major cooler facility expansion in 2021 and expects to continue to expand that operation in 2023 with another 50,000 square feet of space. Incaviglia said much of the growth has come from the ground up, as it has added new business and has grown with its customers.

“We do expect to continue to increase our business every year,” he said. “We are projecting growth.”

But he also noted that we are living in interesting times with new challenges and hurdles presenting themselves every year. “You do ask yourself, what’s next?” he said. “We’ve had a pandemic and inflation. We have to deal with a big uptick in costs.”

Incaviglia noted that about 40 percent of the company’s business comes from the retail sector with foodservice sales and wholesale distributors accounting for most of the rest of its sales. The company does offer many different packs specifically for retail, restaurants, and other foodservice customers.

GR Fresh is focused on three specific sectors that have become the company’s pillars for success: production, distribution, and transportation. As the company’s website notes: “Through these efforts, we’ve been firmly rooted in the fresh produce industry and stick by our firm beliefs in sustainability, social responsibility and excellence in safe food production.”

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That website proclaims the company's promise that has been forged over six decades of producing top quality product in Mexico: "GR Fresh is dedicated to ensuring that our customers receive the freshest and highest-quality produce through the use of innovative technologies while upholding high standards throughout production and distribution. We pride ourselves in high-yield production practices and a strong social commitment to our customers, employees, and the environment. Our promise is that, by choosing us, we will always uphold these standards for your satisfaction."

*Top photo: Tony Incaviglia*

[Tim Linden](#)

## 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

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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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