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Divine Flavor credits its growers for ongoing success

By

John Groh

February 13, 2023

Now in its 16th year in operation, [Divine Flavor](#) has carved out a niche as a leading supplier of Mexican produce. While the reasons for its success are varied, at the crux is the relationship it has with its growers.

“Divine Flavor is a brand represented by the best growers in Mexico and the entire world,” said Michael DuPuis, quality assurance and public relations manager at Divine Flavor, based in Nogales, AZ. “They are growers who have generations of experience, loads of passion and the know-how to responsibly grow the freshest and most flavorful produce for our customers.”

DuPuis said when Divine Flavor was formed just over 15 years ago, the idea was to be a brand and marketing arm for its principal grower, Grupo Alta. Soon after, the founders of Divine Flavor — Pedro Batiz, Carlos Bon and Alan Aguirre — brought on other key growers to complement Grupo Alta, including Hortifresh, a prominent component to the company’s Bell and mini pepper program led by Ernesto Urtusuastegui, and Viva Organica, an organic specialty grower that specializes in grape tomatoes, cucumbers and blueberries run by David Bon.

“Another original grower is Campaña Agricultores, owned and operated by Francisco Campaña and his brother Horacio,” said DuPuis. “These three are the principal growers of Divine Flavor’s West Mexico winter and spring deal and have been working with Divine Flavor since the beginning, so they are a very important part of our program.”

Working with such high-quality and dedicated growers has been at the heart of Divine Flavor’s success, according to DuPuis.

“Our growers understand the importance of West Mexico for the United States, and they understand that successful agriculture depends on experience and passion, as well as investing in sustainable programs and social responsibility,” he said. “Most of our facilities in West Mexico incorporate newly built greenhouses and irrigation systems, which helps maximize production while conserving precious resources, especially our water supply.”

Divine Flavor offers both conventional and organic product, but DuPuis said most product is produced to organic standards even when sold as conventional.

“This is because we know the more we produce that is organic, the better we can preserve the land and environment,” he said. “Growing organic on a mass scale does present some challenges, but it gives our brand a significant upside. We are dedicated to this method of growing, and our growers understand that.”

Another way that Divine Flavor demonstrates its commitment to good growing practices is via its Fair

Trade certification, which it first earned a decade ago.

“Divine Flavor greatly values our partnership with Fair Trade USA and we believe their values are aligned with ours, as it relates to preserving the planet and improving the livelihood of our workers,” said DuPuis.

He said that since 2013, Divine Flavor’s Fair Trade program has generated more than \$8 million in premiums, which has helped the company provide fair wages to its employees while also creating safe working conditions free of discrimination or abuse, which helps empower farmworkers to improve their livelihoods.

“Being Fair Trade certified validates the social standards we implement at our farms, and it holds us accountable for producing in a socially responsible and sustainable manner,” he said.

DuPuis reiterated that while other companies might not place as great an emphasis on grower relations, Divine Flavor does not take that aspect of its business for granted.

“Our growers are more than just a business partnership, they are a network who share knowledge and who work together to provide different products at different times of the year,” he said. “They are a strategic alliance who believe in producing in unison with one another and maintaining the continuity of our brand, which is known by consumers across the country and in various parts of the world.”

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About John Groh |

John Groh graduated from the University of San Diego in 1989 with a bachelors of arts degree in English. Following a brief stint as a sportswriter covering the New York Giants football team, he joined The Produce News in 1995 as an assistant editor and worked his way up the ranks, becoming publisher in 2006. He and his wife, Mary Anne, live in northern New Jersey in the suburbs of New York City.

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