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Del Rey to introduce dedicated California avocado bag

By

Tim Linden

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In April, as the California avocado industry enters its peak shipping period, [Del Rey Avocado Company](#) is planning to roll out a new bag that specifically touts the Golden State origin of the fruit.

Del Rey President Patrick Lucy said the graphics will highlight “California” even more than the company as that is the specific message the company wants to tout with this new retail option. He said bags have become an increasingly important part of the avocado marketing scheme, which is the impetus behind this new rollout. “We will use the California bag for all sizes and both organic and conventional fruit,” he said.

Speaking to The Produce News in mid-March, Lucy said the California season has been a bit delayed because of the constantly rainy weather and lower prices, but volume should begin picking up in late March. “From April 1 to July 31st, we expect to be in maximum production throughout the state,” he said, reasoning that the peak of the season has been truncated so peak volumes will have to be shipped every week for that four-month period.

He also added that Del Rey, which has significant grower representation in the most northern growing district of Morro Bay, will be marketing fruit in the fall. “There is a bigger crop coming out of Morro Bay this year,” Lucy said. “We know it will last much later than last year. That is an exciting thing about this year’s situation.”

The Del Rey executive also said that transportation rates appear to be favorable for California fruit to be shipped even to the East Coast. “At least right now freight rates from California to the East are similar to what they are from the Mexican border (in Texas) to the East Coast,” he said. “That means we could see more California fruit in the Midwest and even the East.”

But there is no doubt there is going to be less fruit to sell as the California crop has been estimated at 257 million pounds, which is less than last year’s volume. Lucy said the organic volume from California appears to be down even a greater percentage. “The organic volume is down a bit,” he said. “It usually represents about 10 percent of California’s total volume. This year, it might only be at 6-7 percent.”

That decreased volume should lead to higher prices. Del Rey is a leader in organic avocado sales. Lucy said during the mid-March conversation that the current gap between conventional and organic fruit was about a 15 percent premium for the latter category. “But once Mexico’s organic volume starts to decline in late April, we could see some pretty good organic FOBs,” he said.

The Del Rey executive also previewed another newsworthy event that was scheduled to be released by the company a little bit later in the week. He spared the details until the actual press release was approved by all parties and officially released, but it involves the San Diego County company partnering with the San Diego Padres to become the official avocado supplier for the baseball team.

Promotions with the organization will feature California avocados.

Lucy said Del Rey team members are big fans of the local Padres and he agreed that this might be a special year for the baseball team. They are currently one of the top five betting favorites as forecasters are predicting a lot of wins this season for the star-laden team.

[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 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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