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J.E. Russell offering tours of Ontario Food Terminal for CPMA guests

By

Keith Loria

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While [J.E. Russell Produce Ltd.](#) is not exhibiting at the upcoming Canadian Produce Marketing Association trade show, the company is very happy to have the convention in its home city of Toronto.

“This gives us the unique opportunity to play host to many current and prospective customers, as well as attend the show and all the various events,” said Hutch Morton, senior vice president of the Toronto-based company. “At the show, Russell will have members of our purchasing, sales, IT and HR teams representing the company and seeking out new opportunities.”

Additionally, the company will host many meetings and tours during the weekday mornings at the Ontario Food Terminal where it operates its wholesale business.

“This is the best way to learn about our company and see all of the great people that make Russell a success,” Morton said. “Lastly, Toronto is the entertainment and culinary capital of Canada, so we have some fun evenings planned with partners.”

The Ontario Food Terminal is one of the biggest in the world and supports over 14.5 million people in Ontario and even more than that with produce that travels all the way to the Maritime provinces. It’s a vibrant hub for fresh produce and a critical cog in the food chain.

“Showcasing our wholesale operations to partners who have never been here is a joy and a real point of pride for the company,” Morton said.

J.E. Russell has a long and deep history with CPMA. Over the course of many years various members of the team have served on the CPMA board and on a variety of committees. That continues today.

“The CPMA Convention brings together a wide and varied collection of global companies from all parts of the produce ecosystem who have business, or want to do business, in Canada,” Morton said. “The CPMA does a really great job of highlighting what is unique and different about this market, and I think that attendees have really come to appreciate this.”

Morton feels that the sources and impacts of inflation will be a hot topic on the show floor, as food pricing continues to be a pain point for consumers.

“Of course, there is no produce without Mother Nature and this year has been a challenging one for many parts of the world which means many categories have felt the impact,” Morton said. “Also, I believe that innovative technologies and the impact of our changing global climate will be important

discussions. Canadians care deeply about our planet and our native land, and conservation is a key philosophy underpinning much of the industry in Canada.”

The company starts strategizing for CPMA weeks before the show to ensure that its partners who are coming from out of town will have the opportunity to meet either at the business or at the show.

“Deepening existing relationships and building new ones is always the number one goal of our presence at a trade show,” Morton said. “This will always be our primary focus when getting together with our industry partners and friends. Whether it’s new business that immediately materializes after the show, or a new seed that is planted with a prospective partner, it’s all about relationships for us at Russell.”

The company continues to grow year after year by almost every measurement, and has seen sustained growth trajectories in its newest categories like melons, grapes and citrus.

“It’s exciting to see a new group of leaders really come into their own as senior executives and build on the legacy that incredible men and women built here over the past 45 years,” Morton said. “The core of the business also is expanding, and we are constantly looking to do more for all of our customers and the shippers who we work on behalf of. It is a blessing to work closely with so many well-known and deeply respected consumer brands and to represent them every day here in Toronto.”

In 2023, the company is preparing to expand its operations outside of the terminal which really opens a lot of great opportunities for shippers to grow along with it.

“It will be a new challenge and a welcome opportunity to prove ourselves as a valuable partner to our customers and to our shippers,” Morton said. “2023 has been a solid start to the year. It wouldn’t be the produce business if it wasn’t full of new challenges daily. Thankfully, we are blessed to have a team that thrives when given the opportunity to find solutions for our partners and customers.”

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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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