



- Advertisement -

Meena's micro-climate a key factor to its California cherries

By

Kyle Eberth, Northwest editor

May 1, 2023

California cherry season has a noteworthy early opening at [Meena Farms](#), a Merced County-based operation. Chris Medeiros, general manager, is quick to credit all the hard work, investment and sweat equity that goes into producing cherries at a high-level, and also explained that sometimes it simply comes down to where you are located.



“Certainly, all the work and effort that we do here on the farm and in the field contribute, but a lot of our success has to do with

our microclimate," he said. Meena's motto of "quality over quantity" is what makes it so special. "We have a unique climate here between that Los Banos and Newman corridor, where we are able to bring our fruit early to market," often before many of the southern, Kern County growers said Medeiros.

"Early timing was the reason behind planting cherries in Kern," said Medeiros. "However, on average, we are able to harvest cherries seven to 10 days earlier than Kern County cherries."

Born and raised in Gustine, CA, Medeiros is an experienced industry vet, having worked with several large farming outfits. He said, "It was great and I learned a lot, but wanted to get back to my roots." Medeiros was intrigued by the Meena Farms group, as it was apparent they had a premium product.

The family-run, single-grower operation embraces its identity and builds upon its reputation with the added benefits of good soil and weather. "The goal is not to be the biggest, but the best. However, Meena Farms continues to regularly invest in new genetics," said Medeiros. "At Meena we are focused on being the most premium supplier of fresh cherries out of California."

"We had a friend in Korea who wanted us to export cherries," Medeiros said. "What started off as a small order of six pallets ended up being seventy!" Meena now exports to more than 20 countries.

Meena Farms largely deals in export sales. Medeiros elaborated with pride, "In a lot of these countries, Meena Farms is one of the leading labels of choice for California sweet cherries." The Meena team just finished an extensive trip visiting customers across Asia. Meena Farms is always looking to align with quality-oriented, like-minded customers. Medeiros said, "We've been meeting with customers trying to identify ways we can add value, grow the Meena brand, and promote collective wins for our partners and the consumer."

Medeiros, humbled by it all, said, "It's quite the experience — the growth we've had year after year, promoting and improving the product."

Quality is key to Meena Farms. Medeiros emphasized the importance of his team's close connection to the field and consistent growing practices. According to Medeiros, that operational buy-in is noticed by customers and helpful to Meena in achieving its goal of delivering premium stone fruit.

As for the season, talk across the industry is that harvest is running late but looks promising. Medeiros said, "We know that we're not going to be as early as we were last year, but we're seeing good fruit sets on the trees." The Meena Farms group anticipates average crop size, latent with potential.

While California's much-publicized winter weather has pushed harvest back into May, Medeiros reiterated the positive. "California has been in a dire situation with drought, but we've made up a lot of ground and brought in a level of stability for years to come with some dispatchable storage. The rainfall affords Meena a sense of reliability." Medeiros jokingly said, "Water's not something you can just go and get a truckload of — supply sets us up for the next few years, but now I'm ready for some good heat."

Meena Farms' California season is about to bloom, albeit a few days late. Its premium label is sought after and well-established. "What this microclimate produces is special — we build high Brix, firm texture and large-sized fruit that translates into a strong product for our clients and consumers," said Medeiros.

[Kyle Eberth](#)

About Kyle Eberth |



Kyle Eberth is new to the produce industry, but has grown up around it, in proclaimed "Apple Capitol of the World," Wenatchee, WA. For the past 14-years he has worked in the non-profit sector with an emphasis on brand storytelling, community engagement, and donor relationships.

Kyle graduated from Whitworth University (Spokane, WA) in 2007. He and wife Kelsey were married shortly thereafter, when they moved to Wenatchee to launch their careers. Kyle is "Dad" to Brooklyn and Hudson, together the Eberths enjoy skiing, biking, their family and friends, and playing together in the beautiful place they get to live.

[Print](#)