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**Henry's distribution center in Charlotte has a fresh way to service the Philadelphia**

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By

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When [Henry Avocado](#) expanded to open its seventh distribution center in Charlotte, NC, the Philadelphia marketplace benefited from the avocado ripening and distribution center's improved proximity. Opened in 2017 by the grower-shipper from Escondido, CA, the expansion established the presence of Henry's CustomRipe operation in a very fresh way to millions of new retail and foodservice customers.

Facility manager Ricardo Guillen said the main source of product will be conventional and organic avocados from Mexico supplemented by fresh fruit in season from sources in California and emerging growers in the Americas.

"Henry promotes 'Always fresh, Always on time,' so a new center is only opened when we know fresh delivery is absolutely assured within the expanded market," said Guillen. The CustomRipe program is marketed under Henry's premium Bravocado and Green Goddess brands.

Henry began custom ripening in 1983, offering buyers five levels of ripeness for delivery. The options allow a more precise ordering palette to meet a variety of customer requirements. For example, retailers may require a rotating stock volume to accommodate impulse buying or special promotions, while foodservice menu planning may vary season to season among the holidays of each.

Henry's overall goal is to give its customers a fresh competitive advantage to increase their individual sales volume. The nine ripening rooms in the Charlotte facility are part of the 120 nationwide that provide a steady flow, and impressive range, of product readiness.

The ripening expertise enables Henry customers, however, to enjoy more than a unique ordering flexibility. The planning and capability combine to maximize customer sales and minimize shrinkage. An indication of the popularity and performance of Henry's CustomRipe program is that after four decades it accounts for 80 percent of the company's sales.

Another Henry consideration is that every minute counts in the fresh chain. Strategically selected for its location by a major transportation hub, the 25,000 square foot center is within minutes of interstate and intrastate highways.

These routes crisscross the mid-Atlantic and southeast regions of the U.S. where population growth and vibrant economies reflect those of Charlotte.

The five loading bays at the center are departure points for the refrigerated fleet of delivery trailers that feature on time distribution.

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A one-page Hass Avocado CustomRipe Ordering Guide, a marketing fixture in the industry for almost 30 years, is available from any of Henry's marketing and sales offices listed on its website. The guide has helped inform nearly two generations of avocado buyers about the five separate and distinct stages of ripening that are available at every Henry distribution center.

A grower since its founding in 1925, Henry became a year-round distributor in 1990. Like Charlotte, all of Henry's seven distribution centers are Primus GFSI certified and meet or exceed federal, state and industry Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) guidelines. Two are located in Escondido, CA; one each in Milpitas, CA, San Antonio, Houston and Phoenix.

All seven also have Oxyion air purification systems to maximize surface sanitation. The process reduces bacteria, viruses and mold to keep the safest, most sanitary fresh chain environment possible.

Photo: Ricardo Guillen

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