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**Sage Fruit excited for 2023 Northwest cherry crop**

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By

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The Northwest cherry season is fast-approaching, and [Sage Fruit Co.](http://www.sagefruit.com) of Yakima, WA, is well-positioned for an excellent size crop, with high-quality cherries. Industry-wide, last year's Northwest cherry crop was hit hard by Mother Nature throughout the growing season, which resulted in a significant decrease in volume over 2021. This year, however, is shaping up nicely.

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“After a challenging season last year, we’re looking forward to promoting a large cherry crop in 2023,” said Kaci Komstadius, consumer marketing manager at Sage Fruit.

While weather in the Northwest has seen a run of warm weeks, the cold, mild winter, in conjunction with an early April storm, delayed bloom and will push back Washington’s normal start date. “Given the later bloom, our season looks to be running about 10 days later than a typical season,” said Komstadius. Even with the delay, Sage is seeing good separation between districts, which will allow for promotable volume well into the month of August.

Sage’s cherry season will kick off mid-June, with the grower-shipper offering both Dark Sweet and Rainier cherries throughout the season. Sage’s portfolio will also see an increase in volume of their Organic Dark Sweet cherries.

For a second season, Sage has partnered with Chelan Fruit. The deal leverages considerable volume for Sage Fruit, as Chelan Fruit brings with it a nearly 3,000-acre operation of apples, pears and cherries, complete with packing lines and cold storage facilities. Komstadius said, “The additional acreage Chelan Fruit will be contributing, spans the northern growing region of Washington state, providing Sage Fruit with greater geographical diversification.”

Sage Fruit will operate two separate packing facilities for the upcoming cherry season: one in Wapato, and the other in Chelan. “Our teams have heavily invested in their packing line equipment to ensure only the highest quality product is shipped to our retail and wholesale partners,” said Komstadius. Both lines come fitted with optical sorting, increasing the quality and consistency of Sage’s packs.

Komstadius emphasized Sage Fruit’s commitment to supporting retailers with unique and customized programs running the length of their season. “We offer a variety of pack styles, sizing, and in-store POP material.” She added, “our goal is to help customers maximize their sales dollars through a tailored approach.”

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