



- Advertisement -

Grapeco Farms adds Marc Serpa to sales team

By

Keith Loria

June 7, 2023

Grapeco Farms LLC, a new venture that was formed this year by industry vets Robert Cadena and Jared Lane, is working to offer a year-round supply of high-flavor tri-color varieties to retailers.

“We set out to have the best quality fruit for the correct customers,” said Jared Lane, CEO for the Delano, CA-based company.

Together, Lane and Cadena offer a combined 50 years of experience and a united philosophy of providing the highest quality grapes to customers while maximizing the return to the grower.

Last month, Grapeco hired Marc Serpa, who spent over 18 years at the Oppenheimer Group, to serve as its new vice president of sales.

“He is very knowledgeable about the year-round grape industry, from the imports to South America, Mexico and the California deal,” Lane said. “His experience will allow us to grow and operate in a manor where we can supply our customers with the best fruit. He is very well known throughout the industry.”

As of mid May, Grapeco was shipping grapes out of Mexico, and is experiencing what Lane describes as “an anomaly,” as the fruit is not just late, but extremely late in timing, the most extreme he’s seen in his lifetime.

“We’ve been able to sell high prices for a decent period of time,” he said, “but the Grape supply pipeline is so empty, there’s no fruit on any of the retailer’s shelves and until we fill that up, I just don’t see the market loosening up.”

California currently is about 12-14 days later than usual, which considering that Mexico is going so late, it works out well.

“For the California season, overall bunch counts are extremely good,” Lane said. “Growers have been able to trim their crops and select the bunches they want. The big question mark in California is what the production volume will be.”

He noted there’s a lot acreage that’s not being farmed for table grapes this year that previously were, so those in the industry don’t have an overall handle on what the overall volume will wind up being in 2023.

“We do know it will be less than it was a year before,” Lane said. “We’ll have to wait and see how that shapes out.”

In 2022, prices were better than the previous year and Lane feels the California grape industry is on an upward trend.

He mentions varieties such as Sweet Globe, Jack's Salute and Great Green as those that are most in demand by customers these days.

"We'll also have added volume of Candy Snaps this year," Lane said.

For packaging, clamshells and bags are the two most common options.

"I think bags are the best for consumers and clamshells work best for the club stores," Lane said.

"We have a new label that folds over the clamshell and helps keep it shut and is recyclable."

The biggest challenge the company faces is the quality of labor and finding people who will perform at a high level. But Grapeco continues to deliver the highest quality of fruit on a year-round basis thanks to the great team already in place.

"I'm not looking to be the largest grape shipper with the most volume," Lane said. "What I want is to be known for having the highest quality and the best service available."

[Keith Loria](#)

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.

[Print](#)