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LGS working to increase consumption of Peruvian avocados

By

Keith Loria

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Luke Sear, owner of [LGS Specialty Sales](#), is a member of the Peruvian Avocado Commission and the New Rochelle, NY-based company has a deep association with the Peruvian avocado segment.

Juan Monsalve serves as the category manager for avocados at LGS, handling everything from the negotiations with the company's partners in Peru to working with the sales team to get programs in place with the customers.

"Avocados are one of our most important commodities that shows growth year after year," he said. "Before joining LGS, I was a national buyer for avocados and have seen how Peruvian avocados have firmed up their presence in the U.S. market during the summer months. Many retailers have joined and continue to grow their Peruvian avocados programs for the summer months."

Peruvian season is late to start this year by about a month and as of early June, LGS was just starting to put fruit on the water. There will be opportunity to prolong the season past September, however that will be dictated by the quality of the fruit as well as the situation with the Mexican market at that time.

"The reason for the delay on the start is due to rain in Peru which has slowed down the maturing process of the fruit," Monsalve said. "Now we are finally at the appropriate levels of dry matter to get the programs started. There are regions of the country that have high potential to increase their avocado consumption. With that, I believe this is where we have the biggest opportunity for growth."

The company has been successful with Peruvian avocados for numerous reasons, including being able to guide its customers on when to promote and handling the fruit upon arrival, helping retailers take advantage of promotions through the different avocado commissions and having a strong relationship with partners in each country of origin.

"In our new state-of-the-art warehouse in New Jersey we pride ourselves in having the best practices handling the fruit, as well as catering to our customers' needs on how they would want to receive the fruit," Monsalve said. "At the warehouse, we have three ripening rooms with a capacity of 30 pallets each and the opportunity to add more rooms if our customers' needs require it."

Monsalve, who is also part of the Hass Avocado Board, collaborates with others in the industry on finding ways to increase consumption of avocados.

"One of those ways is by funding studies that show all the health benefits of the fruit," he said. "The board is composed of producers and importers whose goal is to work together toward making avocados the most desired fruit in the world."

That's why he recommends stores sell ripe avocados over green hard fruit as sales on ripe fruit is always higher.

"I would also recommend stores to sell at least two different sizes of avocados; in addition, it is always a plus to have a bagged and organic program," Monsalve said. "Stores can be better on rotating their fruit by making sure that the newer harder fruit is on the back of the display and the riper in the fruit in front. Stores should have at a minimum two displays of avocados at all times to help increase sales."

Peruvian avocados have improved their quality over the years to a point where they can compete against fruit from other countries of origin.

"The uniqueness during the Peruvian season is the ability to price out the entire summer for an extremely competitive price therefore retailers are able to plan their promotions well ahead of time," Monsalve said.

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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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