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**Myrick entering year two of Michigan operations**

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By

Keith Loria

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It was only about a year ago when Edward L. Myrick Produce, which had decades of experience in Florida and Georgia, decided to open a Michigan facility to increase its year-round supply of fresh fruits and vegetables.

So, it began operations in Benton Harbor, once known as the Fruit Belt, and increased its presence in Michigan, allowing the company to supply customers with fresh eastern vegetables during the summer months.

“Michigan helped fill a gap for us so we could be a year-round solution for all our customers,” said Jimmy Myrick, vice president of Edward L. Myrick Produce. “As people realize we’re in Michigan and do the same thing we do in other areas of the country, I think our customers will only grow.”

With summer about underway, the company is just moving into its second year with the Michigan crop, though the state has been a little bit on the dry side because there has not been a lot of rain.

“Planting has been a little bit of a struggle, but overall, the crops that have been planted look good and we are looking forward to a good season there,” Myrick said.

The main crops in Michigan that the company works with include squash, cucumbers, peppers, beans, eggplants, hot peppers, corn, cabbage, tomatoes, celery and it also dabbles in some fruit.

“Last year, we were kind of testing it out and this year, we are growing and will have more product,” Myrick said. “We’re hoping to keep growing every year.”

As of early June, the farmers the company work with were estimating growing on about 1,500 acres this year, which is similar to the acreage it does in Georgia.

Part of the success of the Michigan program so far has resulted from the company acquiring Parrish, FL-based Voyager Farms, which has a 40-year history of business relationships with customers and growers alike in the Southwest Michigan growing region.

“When they merged into us, they just fit in the puzzle of what we were doing,” Myrick said. “They helped us steady our supply to our customers.”

Edward L. Myrick Produce has had an okay start to its 2023 season, with Myrick describing it as “decent.”

“The market has been a little cheap for the farmers, but movement has been good and it’s been an OK year so far,” Myrick said. “For us, it’s all about making sure we take care of the customers the

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best that we possibly can and have quality product that looks good on their shelves and is easy for them to sell.”

Rising costs and labor continue to challenge the company, and it’s no different in Michigan than anywhere else the company operates. It’s just one of the things that Edward L. Myrick Produce continues to learn and work around.

“If you’re not learning every year, you’re not working correctly,” Myrick said. “Michigan is still a new deal for us and a lot of farmers really did a great job for us and we learned a lot about the area and how to market the product to certain areas of the country. We definitely will be learning more this year and using those lessons to make things better for everyone.”

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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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