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More mushrooms to the masses, as Phillips nears completion of expansion project

By

John Groh, publisher

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[Phillips Mushroom Farms](#), a leading producer of fresh mushrooms based in Kennett Square, PA, will soon have more mushrooms to offer customers as a result of a large-scale expansion of its farming operations.

Sean Steller, director of business development, said the company is in the process of adding six additional growing rooms in nearby Jennersville, PA. At full production, the farm will produce 300,000 pounds of mushrooms per week, or more than 15 million pounds per year.

Steller said construction is expected to be completed before the holiday season and in time for the peak demand period in November/December.

“This expansion will complete the full build-out of the new, Dutch-designed, state-of-the-art farm,” he said. “This facility is designed to grow *Agaricus* (White/Crimini) mushrooms using high-efficiency environmental controls, utilizing automation to deliver consistent results.”



Steller said the additional production will be needed, as he feels there is much more potential to increase consumption among consumers.

“Mushrooms remain a somewhat polarizing produce item, as recent survey results indicate only about 50 percent of Americans consume mushrooms regularly,” said Steller. “The industry has grown immensely and come a long way in recent years, but a huge opportunity remains to educate consumers and expand accessibility.”

He said varieties such as Shiitake, Maitake and Lion’s Mane are getting more recognition due to their unique flavors and their potential health benefits, and Phillips tries to remain on the leading edge of research and development.

“With our in-house spawn lab, Phillips is always testing and growing different mushroom items to evaluate for the fresh and dried markets,” he said. “For example, organic Lion’s Mane mushrooms are really starting to gain traction as more studies are completed on their health benefits.”

Steller added that along with its fresh mushroom offerings, Phillips has in-house drying capabilities and is able to offer eight varieties of dried mushrooms, including White, Crimini, Portabella, Shiitake, Oyster, Maitake, Royal Trumpet and Lion’s Mane.

“This provides a great domestic option for consumers, as well as industrial applications as ingredients,” he said.

Steller said summer tends to be a slower time for retail sales, as many people are traveling. Grilling, especially Portabellas, provides a promotional opportunity at retail, but otherwise the foodservice segment leads the way throughout the summer.

However, when the weather starts cooling off, retail sales pick up and Phillips will be ready with its increased production.

“This is when mushroom demand gains traction heading into the fall season,” he said. “January also remains a busy time for mushrooms as consumers are looking for healthy options to start the year

off.”

[John Groh](#)

About John Groh | 

John Groh graduated from the University of San Diego in 1989 with a bachelors of arts degree in English. Following a brief stint as a sportswriter covering the New York Giants football team, he joined The Produce News in 1995 as an assistant editor and worked his way up the ranks, becoming publisher in 2006. He and his wife, Mary Anne, live in northern New Jersey in the suburbs of New York City.

