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GLC Cerritos CEO Cavaletto sees big growth

By

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Industry veteran Giovanni Cavaletto expects [GLC Cerritos](#), a Mexican avocado grower-packer-shipper, to register significant growth in the U.S. market over the next five years as its plantings mature and more groves are certified for exports to the United States.

Cavaletto, who spent more than quarter of a century with California avocado firm Index Fresh Inc., recently joined GLC Cerritos as its CEO. “I’ve known the family for 20 years,” he said of Grupo Aguacatero Los Cerritos, which is a Jalisco, Mexico-based farming entity. “They are a vertically integrated grower-packer-shipper that pays very close attention to detail.”



He said the family farmed avocados for many years but then got into the berry business, which gave the operation a great lesson in intensive farming. In recent years, the grower entity diversified back into avocados and now farms about 2,900 acres of avocado groves in several Jalisco municipalities. Cavaletto said much of Mexico's avocado acreage is in the hands of small growers who practice a passive approach.

"At Los Cerritos, they are much more intense," he said. "They have as much as 200 trees per acre, do annual pruning and utilize berms (an advantageous planting practice). At Cerritos, they are using 21st century cultural practices."

As a result, the farming company has many groves that are both GlobalG.A.P. certified as well as receiving certification from The Rainforest Alliance.

Cavaletto said controlling so much of its own acreage allows GLC Cerritos to deliver a high-quality and consistent pack of avocados to its customers. "The average grower in Mexico has five acres," he said. "That means on any pallet, you can have fruit from three to five growers and as many as 10 growers represented on any truck. Our trucks are full of single-origin fruit at all times."

Grupo Aguacatero has many new plantings pointing to significant growth in the coming years. "About one-third of our trees are under three years old and about one-third of our groves are in municipalities that have not yet been certified for shipments to the United States," Cavaletto said. "We are well positioned to have significant growth in the next three to five years."

The operation has been selling its production to Asia, Europe and Canada while waiting for the USDA to approve Jalisco's entry into the U.S. market. The U.S. sales organization was established about a year ago with Cavaletto coming aboard in early July. He said the company will continue to sell to other markets but it will also be concentrating on developing U.S. customers.

"We have a state-of-the-art packing facility that has all the capabilities of a modern facility such as pre-cooling, two-sizing machines and the ability to pack in multiple bags and cartons," he said.

GLC Cerritos packs in a label of the same name and also has another No. 1 label, Laute, as well as a No. 2 label called Avo & Cado.

Cavaletto said Jalisco is struggling with sizing, but he expects a larger size profile to develop by the end of August. He explained that almost all the certified avocado groves in Jalisco use irrigation, which should allow the crop to gain size on a faster time frame than fruit from Michoacan. Michoacan is expecting to return to normal sizing by mid to late September. “Jalisco will start seeing some good-sized fruit three to four weeks before that,” he said.

Cavaletto said that like Grupo Aguacatero Los Cerritos in Mexico, the GLC Cerritos office in the United States is family oriented. On the sales desk are two other Cavalettos: J.C., his wife, and daughter, Sophia.

[Tim Linden](#)

About Tim Linden |

Tim Linden grew up in a produce family as both his father and grandfather spent their business careers on the wholesale terminal markets in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Tim graduated from San Diego State University in 1974 with a degree in journalism. Shortly thereafter he began his career at The Packer where he stayed for eight years, leaving in 1983 to join Western Growers as editor of its monthly magazine. In 1986, Tim launched Champ Publishing as an agricultural publishing specialty company.

Today he is a contract publisher for several trade associations and writes extensively on all aspects of the produce business. He began writing for The Produce News in 1997, and currently wears the title of Editor at Large.

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