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NJDA showcasing New Jersey growers at NEPC expo

By

Keith Loria

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The New Jersey Department of Agriculture once again looks forward to the 2023 NEPC show as New England is the second largest market for Jersey Fresh fruits and vegetables outside of the immediate tri-state market of New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.

“New England is such a prominent market for New Jersey growers and we hope to continue strengthening established relationships and to forge new relationships with retail buyers,” said Joe Atchison III, NJDA’s marketing and development division director. “We will have an eye-catching display — at booth No. 725 — of some of the best summer crops New Jersey growers have available.”

Thanks to the timing and proximity of the NEPC show, the NJDA can showcase in-season crops that have been harvested from the Garden State just 24-36 hours prior to the show.

Depending on the location, New Jersey farmers have faced a variety of weather conditions with some experiencing weeks of drought followed by heavy rains but overall, 2023 has been a better season for both volume and quality throughout the state.

“We have been involved in a lot of discussions about weather related issues, and we are pleased to promote the fact that New Jersey crops are all excellent quality and volume and available from our Garden State growers,” Atchison said.

The NJDA continues to support its growers through a variety of marketing efforts, and are continuing to establish an organic, sustainable, regenerative agriculture program to provide technical advice and marketing support for growers interested in that growing segment of the market and to meet the ever-growing demand of such products.

“We also plan to increase participation in our value-added program, ‘Made With Jersey Fresh’ to extend the season for New Jersey’s growers,” Atchison said.

With some recent rain, the NJDA expects nothing but the best throughout the rest of the summer and fall seasons with top quality sweet corn, tomatoes, peaches, peppers, squash, eggplant, greens, cranberries, broccoli and so much more still being grown.

The NJDA provides marketing support for New Jersey growers through traditional media including outdoor, aerial banners, radio, TV and print advertising, as well as social media.

“We also provide point-of-purchase materials including bin wraps, banners, price cards, aprons and hats to retailers to denote products grown in the Garden State,” Atchison said. “This year, we also have sampling events on some of the largest tourist destinations, the boardwalks along New Jersey’s shore giving away famous New Jersey blueberries, tomatoes and peaches. With over 100

million visitors each year from all over the country, this provides a high-profile opportunity to reach new audiences.”

This year, the NJDA is looking to grow the Jersey Fresh marketing department by hiring two marketing specialists and are currently updating its FindJerseyFresh.com website so that all Jersey Fresh businesses can manage their own profile pages and update content, photos and events in order to better promote what they have going on at their individual locations.

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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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