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Fall is an important season for New Jersey growers

By

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The Garden State is home to more than 9,900 farms covering 750,000 acres, and New Jersey is among the leaders in many forms of agricultural production. That includes spinach, Bell peppers, peaches, blueberries and cranberries — all produce items in the top 5 of the nation.

New Jersey also does a great deal with tomatoes, corn, apples, strawberries, potatoes and soybeans, among others.

“New Jersey was ranked annually among the top 10 producers in the nation in apples, though the U.S. stopped measuring our apple production a few years ago,” said Joe Atchison III, NJDA’s assistant secretary of agriculture. “New Jersey also remains one of the top producers of pumpkins in the country as well.”

The state growers operate within the Jersey Fresh program, the longest-running state produce marketing program in the U.S., which continues to be an industry leader.

The Jersey Fresh season goes through November for many of New Jersey’s growers, so that means plenty of greens, beans, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, cranberries, kale, leeks, potatoes, spinach, winter squashes and root vegetables will be in plentiful supply this fall.

“The fall season is an important time for many New Jersey farms as they have various agritourism activities that offer opportunities for people to visit their farms and pick their own fruits and veggies, experience family fun activities and learn about agriculture,” Atchison said.

In addition to supplying the produce to retail and foodservice customers, many of the state farmers provide their products at the more than 2,000 on-farm markets run by local farmers.

When growers are packing and shipping under the Jersey Fresh imprint and retailers are leveraging

the brand, they are tapping into a truly powerful marketing tool, according to the NJDA.

In fact, based on the NJDA's most recent annual survey, consumers' recognition of the Jersey Fresh emblem in the major mid-Atlantic and New England markets is on-par with that of most major national brands. Across the board, these same consumers rate the quality of Jersey Fresh fruits and vegetables better than products from elsewhere.

Last fall, state growers experienced crops that had a lower volume than usual for several items, but the NJDA anticipates a robust crop for 2023 and is excited about what's to come in the months ahead.

"As we do with much of our produce, we promote different crops as they come into season," Atchison said.

With the weather having cooperated for the most part, the 2023 crops should make for a strong season.

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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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