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Topashaw Farms anticipates better sweet potato season than 2022

By

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[Topashaw Farms](#) has been packing and shipping sweet potatoes since 2010.

The company grows sweet potatoes on 3,200 acres, packing and shipping MS Beauregard variety sweet potatoes year-round. It also has some outside growers that grow an additional 2,500 acres.

“Our top objective is to provide the industry with the highest quality sweet potato possible,” said Joe Edmondson, owner of the Vardaman, MS-based company. “Since our farm is family-owned- and-operated, it is of the utmost importance to ensure that when a consumer purchases a Topashaw Farms sweet potato, their satisfaction is guaranteed.”

Edmondson has been growing and farming sweet potatoes for more than 45 years, so he understands the segment as well as anyone in the industry.

In 2022, Topashaw Farms experienced an “average year,” due to some challenges that the industry faced. For instance, last year, there were some quality issues with the sweet potatoes, but that’s not expected this season.

The company is well into the 2023 harvest already and Edmondson notes the yield and quality of the sweet potatoes have looked good and from what he’s seen, it should be a better year than last year.

“If we continue to get the dry weather, we should put up a pretty decent crop,” Edmondson said. “We’re hoping that we can get some of this pricing back because we fell back, and that’s one thing that’s really hurt us. Everyone has the same story about the input costs, you’ve got the fertilizer, the equipment and labor has gone through the roof. I’m hoping it will support some better pricing on this upcoming crop.”

Topashaw Farms sells its sweet potatoes to several processors that make a variety of products, mainly chips and fries, while its fresh packs go primarily to major chain stores and some markets in bigger towns.

“We haven’t really taken on any new customers, but as far as our existing customers, business has increased significantly over the last year, so that’s very encouraging,” Edmondson said. “They are definitely looking for a lot of specialty items like U-bags, micro and tray packs. There’s more interest in that than there has been.”

Recently, the company launched some new packaging options to fill those needs and are seeing good results from its customers for those.

While Topashaw doesn't grow any organics on its own farm, it does have a grower that supplies organics and the company has seen an increased demand.

The company uses two Kerian mechanical sizers and can grade multiple sizes at the same time, and its sweet potatoes are handled just once in order to protect quality. They also have a third sizer, and those are enough to handle the quantity that Topashaw works with.

“As far as growth, there are opportunities out there if you look for them,” Edmondson said. “We’re trying to look at some possibilities of using some of the product that we’re a little stagnant on, and trying to find some avenues to move that. We like to sell everything we plant here.”

[Keith Loria](#)

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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