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Ayco Farms focusing on packaged asparagus

By

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So far, the Peruvian asparagus deal has been a challenge with much less volume than a year ago, but that hasn't stopped U.S. importer Ayco Farms from moving forward on one of its key initiatives: value-added options.

"Ayco is focusing on more packaging for retailers especially with our asparagus," said Shani Nir, who handles marketing for the Pompano Beach, FL-based company. "We offer anything from bulk packaging to private label packaging. Our packaging includes tray packs, pouch bags, and flow pack bags."

She said Ayco is one of the few companies that have in house packing for multiple options such as tray packs, flow packs, and pouch bags.

Nir said the last few months have been challenging due to weather issues, including both heat and rain. "Volumes and prices will depend on weather for the remainder of the season," she said, but also noted that so far lower volume and higher prices has defined the summer season.

Nir did not venture a guess as to when volume might be sufficient to allow for promotable pricing. "As more volume becomes available, more promotions will be entertained by retailers," she reasoned.

Nir does not expect there to be significant changes in this season's Peruvian asparagus shipments to the U.S. markets, noting that "we don't expect any new challenges in logistics. Availability of container shipments will continue to increase and become more available" as the season wears on.

Like virtually all Peruvian asparagus importers, Nir reported on Sept. 21 that year to date Ayco Farms volume is lower due to weather conditions and higher prices. "But Ayco expects to catch up in Q4 as volume and prices become more in line with retail promotions," she added.

Ayco primarily focused on green asparagus throughout the year having both conventional and organic options from multiple sources of origin. Nir noted there have been no new protocols approved yet for organic asparagus from Peru. "We import organic asparagus from multiple areas where organic asparagus is allowed into the U.S.," she added.

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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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